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# THE 1975 REFERENDUM

By

**David Butler**

*Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford*

and

**Uwe Kitzinger**

*Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford*

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The writing of serious contemporary history must depend upon the quality of news coverage and upon the willingness of the principal actors to lend their co-operation. Anyone studying British politics learns to rely upon the press for basic facts and quotations and for much perceptive analysis and commentary. But because the journalist is under pressures of time and space, it is necessary to turn to the fuller documentation in the files of the participants and to their memories of what really happened. We have been exceptionally fortunate in writing this book. During and, even more, after the referendum we talked with a large proportion of those most closely involved in the events which we describe.

We have also been allowed access to many of their files and private polls by Britain in Europe and the National Referendum Campaign, as well as by the European Movement and other bodies. We are deeply grateful to all those who have given so many hours of their time to guiding us. Consideration for them restrains us from naming them publicly. Though many of them have commented helpfully on parts of our manuscript, we have no reason to suppose they would agree with it as a whole. The responsibility for what we write rests entirely with us and not with our generous critics and informants.

But though we do not name here the public figures who have done so much to help us, we can thank some of the academic friends who have read our manuscript or our proofs in whole or in part: Hugh Berrington, Martin Cannon, Chris Cragg, Patrick Dunleavy, Dennis Kavanagh, Anthony King, Robin Paxton and Philip Williams.

We can also express our gratitude to the polling organisations who have allowed us to draw so extensively on their findings.

One more word. One of us has written books on elections to which colleagues of all party persuasions have contributed as co-authors or writers of chapters; he has never found their politics interfered with their academic objectivity or felt it necessary to make protestations about the neutrality of the endeavour. This occasion would be no different were it not for the fact that Uwe Kitzinger worked in Brussels from 1973 to early 1975 as Adviser to Sir Christopher Soames, and that on returning home he took part as a speaker in the pro-Market campaign. In this book he has been scrupulous to draw only on the public record in relation to the diplomatic events of which he was a privileged observer and his co-author can testify that his partisanship in the campaign has not inhibited his easy contacts with the other side or the detachment of his retrospective assessments.

We must end with the routine but none the less sincere acknowledgement of the tolerance of our wives and our children as they suffer the consequences of our psephological obsessions or our Europhilia.

DAVID BUTLER  
UWE KITZINGER

Nuffield College  
January 1976

## Chronology

1946

Sep 19 Winston Churchill's Zurich speech urging Franco-German partnership and 'a kind of United States of Europe'

1948

May 7 Congress of the European Movement opens at the Hague

1949

May 5 Signature of the Statute of the Council of Europe

1950

May 9 Announcement of the Schuman plan for a European Coal and Steel Community (set up in 1952)

1954

Aug 30 French National Assembly vote against Treaty for a European Defence Community

1955

June 2 Messina Conference of the Six sets up committee under Paul-Henri Spaak (which recommended the creation of an Economic Community)

1957

Mar 25 Signature of the Treaties of Rome establishing EEC and Euratom

1959

Nov 20 Establishment of the European Free Trade Association after the failure to agree with the EEC on a wider European free trade area

1961

Aug 9 Harold Macmillan's government applies for negotiations for EEC entry

1963

Jan 14 President de Gaulle's veto on British entry

1967

May 10 Harold Wilson's government applies for EEC membership  
Nov 27 President de Gaulle's second veto on British entry

## 1969

- Apr 28 President de Gaulle's resignation (Georges Pompidou elected President June 15)  
 Dec 2 The Six agree at the Hague 'to complete, enlarge and strengthen the Community'

## 1970

- Feb 10 British White Paper on Costs and Benefits of Entry (Cmnd 4289)  
 June 18 Conservatives win general election  
 June 30 Opening of Accession negotiations

## 1971

- May 20 Heath-Pompidou meeting in Paris  
 Oct 28 House of Commons (356 to 244) approves the principle of joining EEC

## 1972

- Jan 22 Treaty of Accession signed in Brussels  
 July 13 House of Commons (301 to 284) passes European Communities Act

## 1973

- Jan 1 Britain, Ireland and Denmark become members of EEC

## 1974

- Feb 28 General election leading to Labour Government  
 Apr 1 Jim Callaghan asks the EEC for a renegotiation of the terms of membership  
 Apr 2 Death of President Pompidou (Giscard d'Estaing elected President May 18)  
 June 4 Jim Callaghan presents more detailed list of topics for renegotiation  
 Oct 19 General election; Labour government re-elected  
 Nov 30 Helmut Schmidt addresses Labour Party Conference  
 Dec 9 Paris summit meeting

## 1975

- Jan 2 Sir Con O'Neill opens Britain in Europe (BIE) office  
 Jan 7 National Referendum Campaign (NRC) publicly announced  
 Jan 23 First Government statement on referendum procedure  
 Feb 26 White Paper (Cmnd 5925) on referendum  
 Mar 11 Dublin summit meeting completes renegotiation  
 Mar 11 House of Commons (312 to 262) votes for holding referendum  
 Mar 18 Cabinet votes (16 to 7) to endorse renegotiated terms  
 Mar 26 Britain in Europe organisation publicly announced  
 Apr 9 House of Commons votes (398 to 172) to endorse the continuation of Britain's membership of the Community  
 Apr 10 House of Commons (312 to 248) votes 2nd Reading of Referendum Bill

- Apr 26 Labour Party special conference recommends a No vote  
 June 5 Polling day. 67.2% Yes

For more detailed chronologies on all but the final period see Uwe Kitzinger, *The Second Try* (Pergamon, 1968) pp. 49-56 and J. Barber and B. Reed, *European Community—Vision and Reality* (Croom Helm, 1973) pp. 3-7.

# 1 Introduction

Thursday, June 5, 1975 saw the first nationwide referendum in British history. The electorate were asked, 'Do you think that the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community (the Common Market)?' Seventeen million voted Yes and eight million voted No.

The referendum has a triple interest. Firstly, although it was proposed and championed by those who saw it as the best means to prevent Britain from joining the European Community (and later to extricate her from membership) it had a result that endorsed British participation with a degree of emphasis beyond the dreams of the pro-Europeans (almost all of whom had in fact opposed the holding of a referendum). Secondly it provided a historical episode of peculiar fascination, shedding light on established patterns of party politics and governmental procedure. Thirdly it represented a distinct innovation in British constitutional practice.

This book makes no attempt to be a constitutional treatise on referenda. Its aim is to tell the story of how Britain's first nationwide referendum was called, and how it was conducted; it focuses on the issues involved and on the way in which British politicians and British people reacted in an unfamiliar situation.

Yet in any picture of Britain in this period it would be wrong to over-emphasise such constitutional and policy issues, let alone the details of the campaign. The referendum must not be assigned too prominent a part in the political and social consciousness of the country during the first half of 1975. Politicians and people knew that, important as it was, it remained an exercise to be 'got out of the way' before facing the sterner economic challenges that were waiting. These would, of course, be affected by the referendum verdict — but whatever the electorate's decision the vote would by itself solve none of the deeper problems. Quite apart from those who feared that the referendum could return the 'wrong' verdict from their own

point of view, and those who feared its consequences on the parliamentary and party system of the country, many thus regarded the referendum as at best an irrelevance, a period of phoney politics before the core issues could be squarely faced.

The year and a half since October 1973 had seen the sharpest break in post-war economic history. The rise in oil prices suddenly demonstrated the abject dependence of the world on Middle East suppliers. Food and commodity prices soared. The consequent balance of payments deficits and monetary disorder affected the Western and the developing countries alike. Most industrial nations were able to take steps to damp down domestic inflation, contain their balance of payments difficulties, and more or less to ride the storm. Britain, however, was in a worse position for two reasons. On the one hand she had, for decades already, been lagging behind in the rate of investment and the rate of growth of production, productivity and wages: labour productivity for example, from being 10% higher than the Common Market average in 1961, had by 1974 fallen nearly 40% below that in the Six (see Table 1). Thus Britain went into the world crisis with dangerous tendencies to inflation and balance of payments disequilibria even when the world economy as a whole was faring well. On the other hand her ability to make political decisions and implement them against internal opposition was paralysed at the very time the world difficulties began to be reflected on the domestic scene: it took two consultations of the electorate, on February 28 and on October 10, 1974, to get a government with at least a hairsbreadth majority in Parliament, and even then the referendum still had to be disposed of before a stand could really be made against inflation.

In the twelve months to May 1975 consumer prices had risen by 25%. They rose 3.9% in the month of April and 4.2% in May, suggesting during the referendum campaign a rise of 50% per annum. (None of the Six had an increase of more than 0.8% in May.) Unemployment was rising (from under 500,000 at the end of 1973 to over 800,000 in May 1975). The terms of trade had shifted sharply against Britain, but in volume terms the balance of exports to imports had not adjusted, so that the current balance of payments deteriorated by more in 1974 than it had done in the two previous years put together (see Table 2). The pound, which had been worth US\$2.50 soon after it began to float on June 23, 1972, had drifted down to US\$2.32 by the

Table 1. *Some Basic Statistics on Britain and the Six*

		1961	1973	1974	Change 1961-74
Total Population (millions)	UK	53	56	56	+6%
	Eur 6	174	193	194	+11%
	UK/Eur 6	30%		29%	
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices (000m units of account) <sup>a</sup>	UK	76	139	151	+99%
	Eur 6	210	671	737	+251%
	UK/Eur 6	36%		20%	
Gross Fixed Capital Formation (000m u/a)	UK	13	27	30	+130%
	Eur 6	48	160	173	+258%
	UK/Eur 6	27%		17%	
Exports (000m u/a)	UK	15	32	41	+169%
	Eur 6	39	159	213	+448%
	UK/Eur 6	38%		19%	
Imports (000m u/a)	UK	15	36	50	+224%
	Eur 6	37	149	206	+462%
	UK/Eur 6	41%		24%	
Gross Domestic Product per head (u/a)	UK	1,439	2,486	2,700	+88%
	Eur 6	1,207	3,484	3,806	+215%
	UK/Eur 6	119%		71%	
Labour Productivity (GDP per person gainfully employed, in u/a)	UK	3,098	5,555	6,012	+94%
	Eur 6	2,814	8,784	9,658	+243%
	UK/Eur 6	110%		62%	
Average Wages and Salaries (u/a)	UK	2,018	3,668	4,209	+109%
	Eur 6	1,818	5,873	6,624	+264%
	UK/Eur 6	111%		64%	

<sup>a</sup>A unit of account is equivalent to a dollar at its pre-1971 gold parity. In 1961 therefore there would have been 35.7 new pence to the unit of account. The average market rate of exchange in 1973 was 51.1 pence and in 1974 53.4 pence per unit of account. (By June 1975 the rate was 60.7 pence)

Source: Eurostat, *General Statistics*, Nov 1975, pp. 90, 94-5, 169.

Table 2. *The United Kingdom's Current Balance of Trade (£m)*

1971	+1,152
1972	+82
1973	-1,117
1974	-3,828

beginning of June 1975, and was clearly doomed to fall further (it sank to US\$2.03 by the end of the year). On both sides of the referendum campaign, responsible advocates stressed that, in or out of the Community, only Britain's own efforts could save her from a very uncomfortable situation: the country would have a future either in or out of the Community, but in neither case could it, in the short term, be bright. It was no wonder that the people had a certain sense of unreality, of being 'kidded along' until after they had voted, and felt that whatever measures were currently being taken, worse was to come once the referendum was out of the way.

The dedicated activity and exhilaration of the partisans in the referendum must thus be seen against a background of widespread economic apprehension linked to a general feeling of despondency about national politics as a whole. At the same time the difficulties in Northern Ireland were spilling over into acts of terrorism in the rest of the United Kingdom. Scotland and Wales saw a surge of nationalist revolt against government by Westminster: in October 1974 30% of the Scottish vote went to the Nationalists. But the break with traditional voting patterns was countrywide. In every election since 1945 the Conservative and Labour parties had each won more than 40% of the United Kingdom vote; each fell below that figure at both the 1974 elections (see p. 25).

Under the circumstances some feared, and others hoped, that the electorate might either stay away from the ballot boxes altogether, or that, when all three party leaders were asking them to vote Yes, the people might use the opportunity to repudiate all of them at once by voting No – not so much No to the Community as No to the established leadership of the country. It was remarkable, and perhaps significant at a more profound level than anything to do with the European Community, that two-thirds of the electorate turned out to vote, and two-thirds of the voters voted Yes.

But that is to anticipate the story which must begin with the two separate strands that became intertwined in the 1975 referendum – the story of Britain's relations with the Community, and the notion of the referendum as a constitutional device.

#### *Britain and the Six*

'We are with them, but not of them' was Winston Churchill's phrase and that, fundamentally, described British attitudes for

fifteen years after the liberation of the continent of Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> Indeed even when the official course was completely reversed in 1961, the bulk of British people clung to that view and for many it would long prevail, referendum or no referendum.

In the early post-war years British policy encouraged the efforts of the continental states of Western Europe to integrate politically, economically and for their defence. Britain herself was ready to co-operate with them inter-governmentally in institutions like the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, and, provided the United States was taking part (as in NATO), Britain was also prepared to go well beyond the merely inter-governmental level. But whenever there was a proposal for a purely European effort at joint decision-making that could override national views, Britain stood aside. This was true for the triptych of 1950 – the Schuman Plan for the Coal and Steel Community that came into being in 1952, the Pleven Plan for the abortive Defence Community Treaty that was rejected by the French National Assembly in 1954, and the draft Treaty for a Political Community that was abandoned when the Defence Community failed to materialize. What is more, it remained true for the plans that were elaborated after the Messina Conference of 1955. A British representative had been observing the talks about an Atomic Energy Community and an Economic Community, but he was unable to subscribe to the principle of majority decision-making on substantive policy matters, and so withdrew at the end of that year. Thus when the Atomic Energy Community and the Economic Community came into being from January 1, 1958, it was the six states already joined in the Coal and Steel Community, and only those six, who became members.

The late fifties, however, made necessary a thorough reappraisal of Britain's position, of her economic prospects at home and of her influence in the world – and hence also of her relationship with the emerging European Community. In economic prosperity, the Six were about to overtake Britain. Of the classic 'three circles' – the Commonwealth, the 'special relationship' with the United States, and Western Europe – the first two appeared to be in danger of evaporating, while the third seemed to be taking on more concrete shape without Britain. For some years Britain had tried to get 'the best of both

<sup>1</sup>House of Commons, May 11, 1953.



worlds': she attempted to obtain the advantages of setting up an industrial free trade area with the Six but without undertaking any of their joint obligations to implement a customs union and a common agricultural policy, or sharing in their moves towards greater economic integration. Then, in 1959, Britain joined with some of the other peripheral West European states in a Free Trade Association separate from the Six. Finally, in August 1961, Harold Macmillan's government asked for negotiations to see if suitable terms could be agreed for the United Kingdom to join the Six after all.

For the first fifteen post-war years, then, though invited (and at times implored) by the Six to join them, Britain had held aloof: for the next decade the boot was to be on the other foot. For in January 1963 these negotiations were broken off. France, under President de Gaulle, declared British membership to be politically unacceptable.<sup>2</sup> Four years later, in May 1967, Harold Wilson's government applied to join:

We mean business. And I am going to say why we mean business... 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 and history and interest and sentiment alike demand that we play our part in forging it, and in working it.

Though Harold Wilson proclaimed that he would not take no for an answer, six months later President de Gaulle again vetoed entry.<sup>3</sup> So while the fifties had seen Europe courting Britain, and being rebuffed, the sixties saw Britain courting Europe, and being rebuffed in her turn.

It was only at the very end of that decade, after President de Gaulle's resignation in April 1969 and the Hague Conference in December 1969, that the situation appeared to open up again: the new French President, Georges Pompidou, pledged that France would not veto British entry, but Britain would have to prove that she really was determined to turn towards Europe. As in 1961 and 1967, so in 1970 Denmark, Ireland and Norway also wanted to join. The Six invited the candidates to open negotiations — and these began formally on June 30, 1970, the

<sup>2</sup> For accounts of the first attempt by Britain to enter the Communities see Miriam Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955–1963* (Oxford, 1964), and Uwe Kitzinger, *The Challenge of the Common Market*, 4th ed. (Blackwell, 1962), or *The Politics and Economics of European Integration* (Praeger, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> See Kitzinger, *The Second Try* (Pergamon, 1968).

new government of Edward Heath taking up the invitation accepted by the Labour government. After another year and a half of diplomatic effort, the negotiations were successfully concluded with the signature of the Brussels Treaty of Accession on January 22, 1972.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Idea of a Referendum*

The Brussels Treaty fixed the conditions of accession and the adjustments to the other basic treaties required by the Communities' enlargement. In accordance with Article 237 of the EEC Treaty (and the corresponding articles of the two other treaties) under which it was made, the Brussels Treaty was submitted for ratification by all the contracting states in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. In four cases referenda were held: France, Ireland and Denmark voted for ratification, but the Norwegian electors unexpectedly repudiated the treaty and so Norway remained outside the Community.

In the case of the five original member states that did not hold a referendum, ratification of the Brussels Treaty took the form of a parliamentary vote. In Britain, strictly speaking, it is not Parliament but the Crown which ratifies international treaties: but where treaties are of major importance of course Parliament is, directly or indirectly, asked to express its opinion. There was a dramatic vote on the question of principle on October 28, 1971, after a mammoth five-day debate in which 180 MPs spoke. 356 MPs voted Aye, 244 No. This majority of 112 depended upon the pro-Market votes of 69 Labour MPs and the abstention of a further 20. There was also the passage into law of the European Communities Bill to give legal validity within the United Kingdom to all the domestic implications of Community laws. Though in the committee stage the majority on some amendments had been in single figures, the bill was passed at the third reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 301 to 284 on July 13, 1972.<sup>5</sup>

But the European Communities Act did not deal only with the secondary legislation already promulgated by the Communities. It also introduced a constitutional innovation. The

<sup>4</sup> See S. Z. Young *Terms of Entry* (Heinemann, 1973) and Uwe Kitzinger *Diplomacy and Persuasion* (Thames and Hudson 1973) Part One.

<sup>5</sup> See *Diplomacy & Persuasion*, Part Two, and Douglas Evans, *While Britain Slept — The Selling of the Common Market* (Gollancz, 1975).

Labour government's White Paper on the *Legal and Constitutional Implications of United Kingdom's Membership of the European Communities* had already spelled out the problem in 1967:

The constitutional innovation would lie in the acceptance in advance as part of the law of the United Kingdom of provisions to be made in the future by instruments issued by the Community institutions — a situation for which there is no precedent in this country. However, these instruments, like ordinary delegated legislation, would derive their force under the law of the United Kingdom from the original enactment passed by Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

Many of those who opposed the measure argued that it was passed into law without any mandate from the people for such a change in the British constitution; indeed since the leaders of both major parties (and the Liberal Party to boot) were agreed that membership of the Communities necessarily implied such a delegation of law-making to Brussels, and since they were also agreed on the principle of British membership, the people had been denied any choice in the matter at the 1970 election. There was a widely-voiced feeling that the whole process had been profoundly undemocratic, indeed unconstitutional.

Ever since the early sixties, voices from different sections of the political spectrum had been heard to argue that the constitutional innovation implied by British membership of the Communities was so major that it could be sanctioned only by the people itself; and if that could not be done in an election — or, some argued, even if it could — it would have to be done by a referendum.

The referendum was not an entirely new idea in British politics. In fact it was far less 'un-British' than some of its opponents liked to pretend.<sup>7</sup> (Many of its most vociferous opponents were in any case pro-Marketeters, for whom 'un-British' should not necessarily have been a pejorative term.) The concept had come into discussion first in the early 1890s when

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd 3301 is reprinted in full in *The Second Try*.

<sup>7</sup> See Philip Goodhart, *Referendum* (Stacey, 1971), on which the present passage draws heavily, and from which the various quotations are taken. See also S. Alderson, *Yea and Nay? Referenda in the United Kingdom* (Cassell, 1975), and J. Grimond and B. Neve, *The Referendum* (Rex Collings, 1975).

it attracted the opponents of Irish Home Rule. A. V. Dicey, the leading constitutional authority of the day, wrote of the year 1890: 'the nature and the very name of the referendum were then unknown to English statesmen. Four years have wrought a vast change.' Dicey called it 'the People's Veto; the nation is sovereign and may well decree that the constitution shall not be changed without the direct sanction of the nation'.

But it was not until 1910 that the matter became one of practical politics. During the second election on the reform of the House of Lords, Arthur Balfour devoted half his main speech in the Albert Hall on November 29, 1910 to the advantage of a referendum over a general election to settle a clear and precise issue declaring, 'I have not the least objection to submit the principle of Tariff Reform to Referendum'.<sup>8</sup> In their election address in December 1910 a third of the Unionist candidates urged the use of the referendum to solve constitutional deadlocks. In March 1911 a Bill was presented to the Lords to enable the electorate to be polled directly either if a measure passed by the Commons was rejected by the Lords, or if 200 members of the Commons signed a petition to have such a poll on a measure which both Houses had adopted. In May 1911 this was followed by a new clause presented by the official Conservative opposition to amend the Parliament Bill; this clause was designed to stop constitutional changes from coming into effect unless approved by a poll of electors. Among those who supported the concept of a referendum were Arthur Balfour, Austen Chamberlain, Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin.

Two decades later, it was Stanley Baldwin who came back to the idea of a referendum on tariff reform:

A General Election is a party fight, and a treaty would become part of a party programme. If such a matter were treated as a shuttlecock in party politics, it might damage Imperial relations, perhaps for generations. But if a referendum in fact took the people into partnership on the issue, the people can give their decision on its merits, for they know it does not involve a General Election... and the people of this country will never have to pay food taxes unless they decide it themselves.

<sup>8</sup> N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Macmillan, 1972) p. 177.

The proposal was approved next day by *The Times* in its leader: 'It must be a national decision; it must therefore be taken by referendum; and, what is no less important to an impartial result, the fate of the government of the day must not be regarded as being at stake.'

Among those who were apparently delighted with the concept in early 1930 was Winston Churchill (who had twenty years before suggested a referendum to decide the issue of votes for women). In 1945 he returned to the idea. He wanted the wartime coalition extended until Japan surrendered, and, if the Labour Party would agree, suggested: 'Let us discuss means of taking the nation's opinion, for example a referendum, on the issue whether in these conditions the life of this Parliament should be further prolonged.' Attlee however rejected the notion as 'alien to all our traditions' and having 'only too often been the instrument of Nazism and Fascism'. By counting local referenda (instituted in Wales by Mr Macmillan's and in Northern Ireland by Mr Heath's government) one could claim that of the last nine Conservative prime ministers six had advocated or voted for a referendum.

In July 1967 Harold Gurden introduced a bill for referenda to be held concurrently with general elections – he primarily had in mind issues such as capital punishment and abortion. But on December 10, 1969, Bruce Campbell, a New Zealander who had won the Oldham West by-election in 1968, moved that the electors should have the right 'to decide by way of referendum whether Great Britain should enter the European Economic Community'. This time it was not so much constitutional or foreign policy arguments that were uppermost, nor the fact that a general election was normally fought on a mixed bag of issues: since the EEC issue cut right across party boundaries, the normal model of parliamentary democracy no longer seemed to function. As Bruce Campbell argued bluntly:

The three major political parties have all declared themselves to be in favour of this country joining the Common Market. It therefore follows that this question will never be an election issue and the people will have absolutely no chance of ever being able to express their views on it through the ballot box at a General Election.

Among the fifty-five members who voted in favour were Jo

Grimond, Robin Turton, Sir Derek Walker-Smith, Douglas Jay, and Emanuel Shinwell. (The four last were by this time leaders of the anti-Marketees on the Conservative and the Labour benches.) The two ideas, the referendum and British membership of the Common Market, were now conjoined.

During the 1970 election there was some discussion of the device. All three leaders of the major parties were asked about it on the BBC's *Election Forum*, and all three rejected it. Edward Heath declared that the parliamentary system was quite capable of making the final decision to join; it was the oldest parliamentary system in the world, still the envy of every other country, and should be relied upon. Jeremy Thorpe insisted that 'one of the principles of democracy – and people may not like it, they may not like democracy – is that you elect members of Parliament to use their own judgement.' The Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, was also vehemently opposed to any such suggestion. He insisted that it was Parliament that must take the decision, and when he was further asked if he might not at the last minute allow a referendum he replied:

The answer to that is 'No'. I have given my answer many times, and I don't change it because polls go either up or down. Heavens, when the polls have been 28 points against me it hasn't made any difference to going on with policies I knew to be unpopular. I'm not going to trim to win votes on a question like that. The answer is I shall not change my attitude on that.<sup>9</sup>

Immediately after the election, the referendum issue was canvassed again, notably by Douglas Jay. Mr Jay had remained unconvinced of the virtue of the application to the EEC made in 1967 by the government in which he was President of the Board of Trade. In 1970 by no means all the anti-Marketees were on his side in favour of a referendum. Richard Crossman, another ex-minister opposed to EEC membership (and at the time Editor of the *New Statesman*), argued that it would be far simpler to convert the Labour Party to the anti-Market cause – and this would also ease the party's return to power at the next election. On the other hand Douglas Jay received support

<sup>9</sup> For the passages on Europe in the two main parties' election manifestos of 1970 see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, pp. 151 and 293, or *The Times House of Commons 1970*.

from one pro-Market source. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, who reiterated that he was personally in favour of joining the Community, on November 14, 1970 wrote a 4,500 word letter to his constituents in Bristol South-East in which he implicitly rejected the doctrines of his eighteenth-century predecessor, Edmund Burke, on the duty of an MP to exercise his judgement on behalf of his constituents. Instead he stressed the more modern theme of participation, which had hit the headlines in the wake of the events of May 1968 in France:

If people are not to participate in this decision, no one will ever take participation seriously again . . . It would be a very curious thing to try to take Britain into a new political unity with a huge potential for the future by a process that implied that the British public were unfit to see its historic importance for themselves.

To the Labour leadership whose followers were very much divided on the issue, a referendum might have seemed at the time a useful way out of some of its difficulties. Yet when Anthony Wedgwood Benn put the idea to the National Executive at the end of 1970, he could not even find a seconder, though Jim Callaghan presciently called it 'a rubber life-raft into which the whole party may one day have to climb'. In late December the Executive remitted a Transport and General Workers' Union resolution calling for a referendum, and decided there should be a Special Party Conference before the vote in Parliament. At the special conference in July 1971 the motion from the floor called for an election, not for a referendum. And in October 1971 the Executive's resolution put before the Labour Party Conference called on the Prime Minister (Mr Heath) 'to submit to the democratic judgment of a general election'. Bryan Stanley of the Post Office Engineers proposed an amendment to add 'and in the event of the Government refusing a General Election the Party should campaign for a Referendum before a final decision is taken.' But this amendment was not seriously discussed, and was defeated by 4,161,000 votes to 2,005,000. It is interesting to recall that at the same 1971 Party Conference, the Labour Party might well have come out against entry in principle: but the resolution that called for withdrawal of the application to join failed to get a majority mainly because Jack Jones — unlike

Hugh Scanlon — refused to cast the 1 million votes of the Transport and General Workers Union in its favour. The resolution was defeated by 1,077,000 votes.

In the meantime a number of anti-Market organisations decided on their own tests of public opinion in selected constituencies, and so did a few Conservative MPs, notably Philip Goodhart in Beckenham. These were unofficial (usually postal) mini-referenda. In Beckenham, a prosperous middle-class southern commuter suburb, and about as close as one could get in any constituency to the archetypal pro-Market section of the population, the result was a draw; in every other case these referenda resulted in something like 2:1 majorities against joining.<sup>10</sup>

#### *The Terms and the Idea of Re-negotiation*

The Labour party's policy in late 1971 and early 1972 rejected a referendum on the principle of joining; it put its emphasis instead on a renegotiation of the terms. Of course for both the Conservatives and the Labour leaderships from the very beginning of Britain's first application there were two questions involved: the principle, and the terms. One could even go back further to the Rome Treaties themselves, which talked in Article 237 EEC (205 Euratom) of 'the conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaty necessitated thereby' which 'shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State'. At least since 1967 both party leaderships had been pledged to the principle of accession, but until 1971 neither party had ever felt the conditions to have been sufficiently clearly spelled out to be able unconditionally to say they were right. Until the Treaty of Accession had been ratified, the terms were thus a natural part of debate.

The application by the Macmillan government had been made, not to join, but to open negotiations 'with a view to joining the Community if satisfactory arrangements can be made to meet the special needs of the United Kingdom, of the Commonwealth, and of the European Free Trade Association'. In January 1963, when President de Gaulle's veto forced these negotiations to be broken off, although very substantial progress had been made, no one claimed that terms satisfactory to both sides had yet been agreed.

<sup>10</sup> For a tabulation of the results, see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, p. 249.

The Labour opposition, in the 1962–3 period, set out the criteria it would apply in judging the outcome of the negotiations. Of the five conditions for entry laid down by Hugh Gaitskell, two coincided with the government's preoccupations, while the other three spelt out a Labour interpretation of the 'special needs of the United Kingdom':

While deliberately refraining from hobbling the Brussels negotiations by laying down in advance a series of rigid and detailed terms, the Labour Party clearly stated the five broad conditions that would be required:

1. Strong and binding safeguards for the trade and other interests of our friends and partners in the Commonwealth.
2. Freedom as at present to pursue our own foreign policy.
3. Fulfilment of the Government's pledge to our associates in the European Free Trade Area.
4. The right to plan our own economy.
5. Guarantees to safeguard the position of British agriculture.<sup>11</sup>

Concern over the terms was thus common to all parties. Indeed it could be argued that the more concern there was within the United Kingdom over the terms, the better the terms would be if the Six really wanted Britain in; for the Six could form their own appreciation of British domestic politics and of a British government's freedom of manoeuvre. There was also the notion that the economic terms were a critical test of the Community's political philosophy. The way Commonwealth sugar would be treated would test the 'inward' or 'outward' look of the Community; the kind of rights it would safeguard for member states to plan their economies would test its *laissez-faire* or socially conscious attitudes; and the more it met other British concerns the more weight was it likely to accord to Britain in its future decisions.

But in addition to these concerns over the terms for their own sake, as ways of changing the Community, and as ways of testing its nature, there were several other reasons why the terms assumed such significance, particularly – though not exclusively – within the Labour Party. Firstly, concentration on

<sup>11</sup> Statement by the National Executive Committee, Sep 29, 1962 (reprinted in Kitzinger, *The European Common Market and Community*, pp. 168–76).

the terms of entry allowed judgement to be postponed. If the principle was agreed, it could be made purely platonic; thus Hugh Gaitskell could say in May 1962, 'To go in on good terms would, I believe, be the best solution to this difficult problem,' although in October of the same year he talked about the dangers of Britain being reduced to the status of Texas or California if there were majority decisions on political issues.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, postponement of the issue of principle might also with luck save the party from ever having to face it head on. If that was the calculation it proved right all the way from 1961 to 1971, and served its purpose in keeping the issue from becoming too divisive, particularly within the Labour Party. Thirdly, to concentrate on the terms was a way of maximising opposition to entry: those who were opposed on principle would oppose the terms anyway, but those who were agnostic on the principle could be mobilised under less absolutist banners (such as that of the Common Market Safeguards Campaign) much more easily than under an outright title (such as that of the Anti-Common Market League). Fourthly, to concentrate on the terms was to build a bridge for those who might otherwise have committed themselves on principle against membership to come in from the cold if 'the terms' could be presented as having changed: and it was Harold Wilson's achievement that in due course 'renegotiation' could be confined to the terms accorded to Britain, without explicit challenge to the fundamental principles of the Community.

The situation changed in the summer of 1971 when the bulk of the actual conditions of admission emerged. It is true that some of the minor details, together with the major question of fisheries policy, were not finally settled until shortly before the Accession Treaty was signed on January 22, 1972: but by July 1971 hardly anyone seems to have felt that they could still stall on the decision of principle by using the excuse: 'it all depends on the terms'. On July 17, at the special conference that the Labour party had called to discuss the issue, Harold Wilson particularly stressed two criteria – whether the Community was a rule-ridden bureaucracy, and whether its motivation was outward-looking. He also gave a foretaste of his own conclusion: 'I think the outcome of the negotiations on Commonwealth sugar and on New Zealand tell their own story.' And on

<sup>12</sup> An extract from Mr Gaitskell's Brighton speech is reprinted *ibid.*, pp. 176–80.

July 28 the National Executive of the Labour party, by 16 votes to 6, passed the resolution for which it asked the ordinary Conference's endorsement in October:

Conference, having studied the government's White Paper (Cmnd 4715) on 'The United Kingdom and the European Communities' opposes entry into the Common Market on the terms negotiated by the Conservative government . . . and . . . calls on the Prime Minister now to submit to the democratic judgement of a general election.<sup>13</sup>

The fact that the party was not against membership on principle, and the disadvantages they saw in the terms, were spelt out repeatedly in the autumn by Mr Callaghan and Mr Wilson. As early as September 8, 1971 the concept of 'renegotiation' occurs in Mr Callaghan's speech in St George's Hall, Bradford:

But Mr Heath should be under no delusion that the issue will be closed for ever at the end of a debate in October, even if he manages to secure a temporary majority for a single day. Both he and the Community should be aware that the issue will remain an open one until a General Election has decided it. Even if Mr Heath has his way about taking us in — nevertheless, when a Labour Government wins the confidence of the people, then it should be its intention to renegotiate, on a Government-to-Government basis, those terms which at the time will have been found objectionable and harmful to the interests of the British people.

But instead of going through a period of uncertainty, it would be far better if Mr Heath would agree to do this now, and our first call to him, therefore, is to renegotiate, for the price of entry is too high in the following respects.

Our proposed financial contribution to the Community's Budget is too big for the benefits we shall get; the agricultural policy is likely to put up the price of food by twice as much as the Government have stated; we shall be required to put up trade barriers against partners and kinsmen with whom we have traded advantageously and freely for a century; entry will jeopardise the future welfare of the regions, including the

countries of Wales and Scotland; and, in a particular sense, the EEC is much more favourable to those who have capital to invest abroad than to those who have only their labour to sell at home.<sup>14</sup>

Mr Wilson set on record how renegotiation would be brought about, and what alternative he envisaged, in his final speech in the House of Commons just before the crucial vote of principle on October 28, 1971:

I now wish, before coming to a conclusion, to deal with the position of a Labour Government coming into office, after accession to the Community. . . . What we should do . . . would be immediately to give notice that we could not accept the terms negotiated by the Conservatives, and, in particular, the unacceptable burdens arising out of the Common Agricultural Policy, the blows to the Commonwealth, and any threats to our essential regional policies.

If the Community then refused to negotiate, as we should have asked, or if the negotiations were to fail, we would sit down amicably and discuss the situation with them. (Laughter.) Well, neither coffee nor cognac, but British beer, at its present standards. (Hon. Members: 'Oh'). . .

We should make clear that our posture, like that of the French after 1958, would be rigidly directed towards the pursuit of British interests and that all other decisions and actions in relation to the Community would be dictated by that determination, until we had secured our terms. They might accept this, or they might decide that we should agree to part; that would depend on them. That is our position.

#### *Referendum after Renegotiation*

Until the spring of 1972, then, Labour policy was for renegotiation, but against a referendum. The change to the policy finally adopted, that of renegotiation followed by a referendum, came about abruptly and almost fortuitously. It was brought about — occasioned if not caused — by Neil Marten and Enoch Powell who, during the passage of the European Communities Bill through the House of Commons, put down an

<sup>14</sup> James Callaghan on the Common Market, (Labour Committee for Safeguards on the Common Market, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> Full text in *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, p. 308.

amendment asking for a consultative referendum before entry into the Community should take effect.

To understand why the leadership of the Labour Party so dramatically reversed its stand, one must recall the political atmosphere of those weeks. The Conservative government was going through a difficult period on quite other counts than the Common Market. A dispute in the coal industry had suddenly raised the already high figure of 900,000 unemployed even further. In Ulster thirteen people had been shot by the army on 'bloody Sunday', January 30, 1972. Labour suspected that there were moves afoot to reach a settlement with Ian Smith in Rhodesia. The Housing Finance Bill produced a protracted parliamentary struggle, and tempers on both sides were badly frayed. The European Communities Bill was proceeding through the House with majorities that twice dropped as low as 4. The Labour Party was striving to defeat the Conservative government; it scented election victory round the corner if only it could provoke an election, and it lived in constant hopes of doing so if only it could find the right issue on which to divide the House.

On March 15, 1972 Tony Benn again proposed a referendum and the shadow cabinet turned the suggestion down; Harold Wilson spoke against it and there were only 4 votes in its favour. But then referenda seemed suddenly to become fashionable. On March 16 Georges Pompidou announced that instead of asking the National Assembly to ratify the Accession Treaty, he would put the Treaty to the French electorate in a referendum. There was also talk of the Conservative government having plans for periodic plebiscites in Northern Ireland — these were in fact announced on March 24. On March 22 Mr Benn, now Chairman of the party, put the issue of the referendum to the National Executive; although Conference itself had rejected the idea in October, the National Executive (in the absence of Harold Wilson, Roy Jenkins and Jim Callaghan) reversed its previous position by 13 votes to 11. When the shadow cabinet met again on 29 March, Harold Wilson and Edward Short had changed their minds. In addition, William Ross and Denis Healey were absent (avoidably, it would seem), and had left no word with the Chairman as to how they felt. By 8 votes to 6 the shadow cabinet in its turn then reversed the position it had reasserted only a fortnight before and recommended a whipped vote of the Labour Party to follow Neil Marten and Enoch

Powell into the lobby in favour of a consultative referendum before entry.<sup>15</sup>

Before the shadow cabinet could meet again, Roy Jenkins, George Thomson and Harold Lever decided that they could not continue as members of a body which behaved in this fashion. In a long letter of resignation as Deputy Leader of the party Roy Jenkins protested against the way in which the party was being run: 'This constant shifting of the ground I cannot accept.' He warned against the way opposition to the terms seemed to be sliding into opposition to membership of the Community on principle, and focused on the dangers of a referendum to the Labour Party. He feared the effects of pro-Market and anti-Market Labour party members fighting on opposing barricades up and down the country in a referendum battle, and he worried lest a referendum should provide a precedent to be used against future Labour measures:

By this means we would have forged a more powerful continuing weapon against progressive legislation than anything we have known in this country since the curbing of the absolute powers of the old House of Lords. Apart from the obvious example of capital punishment, I would not in these circumstances fancy the chances, to take a few random but important examples, of many measures to improve race relations, or to extend public ownership, or to advance the right of individual dissent, or to introduce the planning restraints which will become increasingly necessary if our society is to avoid strangling itself.

The Parliamentary Labour Party voted to follow the shadow cabinet's new lead, and in the division on the Marten-Powell amendment on April 18, 1972, 209 Labour MPs supported the amendment, while 63 abstained. None of them voted with the government against a referendum. The amendment was defeated by 235 votes to 284.

The October 1972 Party Conference saw a hardening of the Labour Party's line on renegotiation, though not yet on a referendum. On October 4 a pro-Market motion was lost by 1,543,000 votes to 4,662,000. A resolution opposed to entry

<sup>15</sup> See James Margach 'How they lost the war of Jenkins' Ear', *Sunday Times*, Apr 16, 1972.

on any terms and calling on any future Labour government to withdraw from the Common Market on taking office was lost by only 128,000 votes – 2,958,000 in favour, 3,076,000 against. But in addition to a statement from the National Executive (to be closely echoed in the Election Manifesto) which called for the people's right after renegotiation 'to decide the issue through a general Election or a Consultative Referendum', the Conference approved by 3,335,000 to 2,867,000 votes a Composite Resolution moved by Dan McGarvey of the Boilermakers:

This Conference declares its opposition to entry to the Common Market on the terms negotiated by the Tories and calls on a future Labour Government to reverse any decision for Britain to join unless new terms have been negotiated including the abandonment of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Value Added Tax, no limitations on the freedom of a Labour Government to carry out economic plans, regional development, extension of the Public Sector, Control of Capital Movement, and the preservation of the power of the British Parliament over its legislation and taxation, and, meanwhile, to halt immediately the entry arrangements including all payments to the European Communities, and participation in their Institutions, in particular the European Parliament, until such terms have been negotiated, and the assent of the British electorate has been given.<sup>16</sup>

It was with the Labour Party officially committed to this posture that Britain completed the parliamentary process to become a Member State of the European Community. The Royal Assent was given to the European Communities Act on October 17, 1972, and the instrument of Britain's ratification of the Brussels Treaty was deposited on the following day.

<sup>16</sup> *Report of the Seventy-First Annual Party Conference of the Labour Party Blackpool 1972*, pp. 195–222.

## 2 Renegotiation

On January 1, 1973, the British flag was hoisted outside the Community's headquarters in Brussels, and in Britain there occurred a series of celebrations under the title 'Fanfare for Europe' to usher in a new era. The Fanfare was not to everyone's liking – Mr Wilson for one declined to have any truck with it – and at the great dinner in Hampton Court the retiring President of the Commission, Sicco Mansholt, also rather cut across the mood of official optimism by pointing to what he saw as serious shortcomings in the Community's structure and policies.

Britain had already taken a full part in the summit meeting held in Paris on October 19–20, 1972 at which the Nine reaffirmed their aim of Economic and Monetary Union by 1980. Britain had also been consulted on the decisions of the Council in the run-up to accession. From the beginning of January British ministers and their national civil servants took their places as of right in the Council, in the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and in the multitude of specialised committees that dealt with specific problems under Council or Commission auspices. On January 6, 1973 the new Commission took office, and the two British Commissioners secured portfolios of major interest. Sir Christopher Soames took charge of External Relations (excepting Development Aid and relations with those African, Caribbean and Pacific countries who were later to sign the Lomé Convention), and George Thomson was made the architect of Regional Policy. Over the next twelve months several hundred British citizens became new European civil servants and moved over to Brussels and Luxembourg, to take up something like a sixth of the posts in the services of the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and the Court. But British participation in the institutions remained incomplete: the Labour Party boycotted the European Parliament, which thus had only twenty-one instead of thirty-six



British members, and the trade unions boycotted the Economic and Social Committee.

The British were given a remarkably friendly welcome in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, though their arrival meant some enforced departures for continental civil servants who had served the Community for years, and some reallocation of tasks for those who remained so as to give the newcomers their fair share of responsibility. Soon Sir Christopher Soames was seen to speak for the Community in places as far afield as Washington and Delhi, and when more than forty developing countries met with the Community in Brussels in July to discuss their possible future association after the expiry of the Yaoundé Convention (which had in the past been denounced as franco-phone neo-colonialism), only two languages were spoken in that opening session: Danish (by the President of the Council) and English (by the Nigerian spokesman for the whole of Black Africa, by the Caribbean spokesman, and by the Prime Minister of Fiji). In the Parliament, a livelier form of Question Time developed a certain momentum, with the British Commissioners in particular responding Westminster fashion to supplementaries. The Conservative delegation led by Peter Kirk was seen to be active, bringing the zeal of the newcomer to European parliamentary life, and *The Times* began to give extensive coverage to the European Parliament in its parliamentary reports.<sup>1</sup>

But at home in Britain prices, particularly the price of food, continued to rise over the first nine months of 1973, and the popular association between inflation and membership of the Common Market was an easy one to make.<sup>2</sup> There were also widespread fears that the Community would needlessly interfere in national life to 'harmonise' all sorts of things and make British beer, British bread, British egg grading systems, British tractor mirrors and the rest conform to continental standards. Parliament was deeply concerned at having already had to give

<sup>1</sup>The pamphlet by Sir Christopher Soames, Peter Kirk and John Davies, *Three Views of Europe* (Conservative Political Centre, 1973), gives an impression of the three political institutions as seen by the British newcomers after the first seven or eight months of membership.

<sup>2</sup>The annual average retail price index for food (January 1962 = 100) rose 1970 - 140; 1971 - 156; 1972 - 169; 1973 - 195. For the extent to which the public held joining the EEC responsible, see R. Jowell and J. Spence *The Grudging Europeans* (Social & Community Planning Research, 1975) pp. 23-6, and B. Sarlvik *et al.*, 'British Membership of the Common Market', *European Journal of Political Research*, 4 (1976).

force of law to over forty volumes of pre-existing European secondary legislation by virtue of the European Communities Act, and discussed the problems of exercising control over ministers in respect of their actions in the Council - and especially also the problem of scrutinising the stream of legislation that emanated from Brussels.<sup>3</sup> After some study, each House decided to set up its own Committee on Secondary Legislation to draw the attention of the House as a whole to any measures that deserved debate - though Westminster did not thereby acquire any retrospective veto on what the Community, normally with the consent of the British government, had enacted as Community law.

Yet all in all what hit the British public was not any sudden change imposed by the Community, but the fact that Community or no Community, Fanfare or no Fanfare, most of British life went on much as it always had done in the past. Britain remained prosperous-looking, wages were rising to unprecedented heights and unemployment fell to below half a million. In fact the rate of growth of the British economy (which had been 1.7% in 1971 and 2.5% in 1972) jumped to 6.8% in 1973, and gross domestic capital formation rose twice as fast as in the previous few years - though this was no doubt due to the Conservative government's domestic economic policies more than to industry's expectations from the wider market.

Disaster did not begin to loom until late in the year. In October 1973 the Arab oil producers, to mark their disapproval of Dutch moral support for Israel in the Middle East conflict, imposed an embargo on oil shipments to Holland, and the price of oil rose drastically. The effect of this dramatic turn of events on the issue of Common Market membership was double-edged. Just how disastrous would be the effect on the British balance of payments - and how limited and transitory on the balance of payments of the other members of the Community - was not to become clear until later. But what was immediately apparent was the lack of Community solidarity in the face of the Arab challenge to Holland. It is fair to argue that total solidarity would only have forced the Middle East oil producers

<sup>3</sup>See House of Commons Select Committee on European Community Secondary Legislation: First Report, HC 143 (1973), Second Report, HC 463 (1973); and House of Lords Select Committee on Procedures for Scrutiny of Proposals for European Instruments: First Report, HL 67 (1973), Second Report, HL 194 (1973).

into escalating the conflict, with potentially catastrophic results for the world economy, and as things turned out the Dutch did not go much shorter of oil than the rest of the Community for more than a few weeks. But the Community in effect left the multinational oil companies to cope discreetly with the situation while both France and Britain each rushed off on their own to steal a march over their Community partners and make national bilateral deals for their own future oil supplies – with the result that the Community seemed to lack courage and cohesion in the face of real trouble. The unilateral way in which nation states operated in this emergency may have reassured some of the Community's opponents, but it did even more to dishearten its champions. There was a badly prepared, ill-tempered and in many ways inconclusive summit meeting at Copenhagen on December 14 and 15, 1973, after which the Germans refused to raise their figure for the first three years of the regional fund from 600 million units of account (the Commission had suggested 2,250 million) and the British in retaliation blocked the next minor steps towards monetary union and a common energy policy – a tactic which a German minister felt was like a wife asking to be paid to stay faithful. On the energy issue, Britain seemed to fall into line again early in 1974; but the provocatively anti-American stand taken by the French Foreign Minister at the Washington Conference in February marked a nadir both in the solidarity of the enlarged Community and in its efforts to improve its relations with the United States.

It was at this same point, however, that British domestic politics came to an unexpected turning point. The dramatic rise in the oil price had simultaneously forced the government to turn its attention to the already deteriorating balance of payments, and also boosted the coal miners' bargaining power. It was when the coal miners challenged the government outside Parliament on its statutory incomes policy that Mr Heath reluctantly decided that an election had to be held.<sup>4</sup> And out of that election there emerged a Parliament without a majority (see Table 1).

In the election campaign both the Conservatives and the Liberals upheld British membership of the Community and called for Britain to develop the Community from within: they

<sup>4</sup>See D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of February 1974*, pp. 27–44.

Table 1. *Votes and Seats at the 1974 General Elections*

	Feb 1974		Oct 1974	
	Votes (million)	Seats	Votes (million)	Seats
Conservative	11.9 (37.8%)	297	10.5 (35.8%)	277
Labour	11.6 (37.1%)	301	11.5 (39.2%)	319
Liberal	6.1 (19.3%)	14	5.3 (18.3%)	13
Welsh and Scottish Nationalist	0.8 (2.6%)	9	1.0 (3.5%)	14
Others (mainly Northern Ireland)	1.0 (3.2%)	14	0.9 (3.2%)	12
TOTAL	31.3 (100%)	635	29.2 (100%)	635
Electorate (Turnout)	39.8 (78.7%)		40.0 (72.8%)	
Overall Labour majority		–33		+3

may have been somewhat muted on the subject and possibly even felt embarrassed by some of the deadlines set by the 1972 Paris summit, but the election certainly provided no evidence of popular revolt against membership. Between them, the Conservatives and the Liberals secured 18 million votes against Labour's 11½ million. But just as the issue did not play any very large part in the election, it also played no part in the three days of inter-party discussions that followed. It was Mr Wilson, whose party had polled 200,000 fewer votes than the Conservatives but won four more seats, who replaced Mr Heath as Prime Minister on March 4. The Community was thus faced for the first time in its history by a government in one of its member states which seriously appeared to question whether it ought to be a member of the Community at all – a rather more radical set of doubts than even President de Gaulle's in the crisis of the empty chair in 1965–6, when France undermined the majority voting provisions of the Treaties.

Since the passage of the European Communities Act and British accession, the bulk of the Labour Party had continued in its hostility to membership. A sizeable proportion objected on principle, and many more felt unable to accept the terms agreed or the fact that Britain joined by a purely parliamentary process without recourse to any popular consultation. The 1973 Labour Party Conference had not greatly added to or modified the stand taken up by the 1972 Conference. No pro-Market motion was put to the vote, and a composite motion calling for opposition on principle was defeated by 2,800,000 votes to

3,316,000 – only half the margin of the year before.<sup>5</sup> The election manifesto for the unexpected February election, while it did not follow the lines of the McGarvey motion (see p. 20), was based on the 1972 statement by the National Executive: without rejecting membership in principle, it was far from positive in spirit and combined a number of tough negotiating positions.

The Labour Party's official line implicitly refused to accept the political legitimacy of British membership. It regarded the constitutional procedure by which the European Communities Bill had been passed and the Brussels Treaty ratified as so dubious as to dispense any incoming Labour Government from carrying out the international obligations undertaken on behalf of Britain as a whole by the Conservative government. (It did not however regard the partner states in the Community as being equally free to revoke the privileges granted by the Community to Britain.) Labour's February 1974 election manifesto demanded a 'fundamental renegotiation of the terms of entry'. Whether or not the substantive demands of that renegotiation involved changes in the Treaty of Accession – or, even more radically, changes also in the Treaty of Rome – was prudently left unspecified. But four points were made which singly, and certainly in combination, seemed perfidious to many on the continent. First of all, pending the British people's decision, Britain would feel free to disregard some of the rules she had bound herself by the Treaty to accept: 'The Government will be free to take decisions, subject to the authority of Parliament, in cases where decisions of the Common Market prejudice the negotiations.' Secondly, a British Labour government none the less claimed the right to interfere in the decisions of the Community which in its view the British people had not yet decided to join: 'Whilst the negotiations proceed and until the British people have voted, we shall stop further processes of integration, particularly as they affect food taxes.' Thirdly, once renegotiations had taken place, the manifesto argued, 'If renegotiations do not succeed, we shall not regard the Treaty obligations as binding upon us... We shall then put to the British people the reasons why we find the new terms unacceptable, and consult them on the advisability of negotiating our

<sup>5</sup> See *Report of the Seventy-Second Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool 1973*, pp. 281–94.

withdrawal from the Communities.' On the other hand, fourthly, 'If renegotiations are successful, it is the policy of the Labour Party that in view of the unique importance of the decision, the people should have the right to decide the issue', though after a great deal of tough discussion in the National Executive the party was careful still to leave its options open 'through a General Election or a Consultative Referendum'. But 'if these two tests are passed, a successful renegotiation and the expressed approval of the majority of the British people, then we shall be ready to play our full part in developing a new and wider Europe.'

In forming his government, Mr Wilson did not prejudice his Common Market options. Roy Jenkins, Harold Lever and Shirley Williams on one side and Michael Foot and Barbara Castle on the other were given domestic portfolios which effectively kept them out of the process of renegotiation (though the first four of these gained a certain leverage by sitting on the cabinet's European Strategy Committee).<sup>6</sup> Jim Callaghan, who declared himself to be a profound sceptic on the matter, became Foreign Secretary – a foregone conclusion.<sup>7</sup> As his Minister of State dealing with European affairs he had a long-standing active pro-Marketeer, Roy Hattersley, but he usually appeared at Council meetings flanked also by Peter Shore, the passionately anti-Market Secretary of State for Trade.<sup>8</sup> On July 22 and 23, when Mr Callaghan was absent,

<sup>6</sup> The European Strategy Committee (known as 'ES') was set up specifically to deal with the major issues of renegotiation: it met up to half a dozen times, including an all-day session on agriculture and the budget in autumn 1974, and was disbanded when the renegotiations were complete. It was neatly balanced, with the Prime Minister in the chair, and contained three avowed pro-Marketeers: Roy Jenkins, Harold Lever and Shirley Williams; four decided anti-Marketeers: Michael Foot, Peter Shore, Eric Varley, and John Silkin; and four others: Jim Callaghan, Denis Healey, Fred Peart and Ted Short. Tony Benn also attended once, and Edmund Dell and Roy Hattersley were called in on occasion to provide information. The European Questions Committee on the other hand (known as 'EQ') was a continuing body meeting more or less weekly to consider any questions on the Community's agenda that went beyond the territory of any one minister. Its membership included the majority of 'ES' and also Tony Benn, Tony Crosland, Edmund Dell, Judith Hart, Roy Hattersley, John Morris, Merlyn Rees, William Ross, and later Barbara Castle.

<sup>7</sup> Mr Callaghan was reported in March to have said that he believed British withdrawal, though it was not what he wanted, was inevitable. This report, which was supposed to have originated from the Belgian Ambassador after a London dinner held on March 26, was immediately denied by the Foreign Office (see *Washington Post*, Apr 8, 1974), but the incident may have been part of the strategy to show Europe that the Labour government did mean business and would insist on renegotiation.

<sup>8</sup> See Peter Shore, *Europe – the Way Back* (Fabian Society, 1973).



Le Point, Mar 17, 1975.

Mr Hattersley and Mr Shore — one pro-Marketeer, one anti-Marketeer — jointly represented the United Kingdom (Mr Shore causing some consternation by blocking progress on energy policy until Mr Callaghan himself lifted Britain's reserve in September). Two other ministers who were declared opponents of membership on the 1972 terms were also plunged into the Community process before the end of April. Fred Peart as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Judith Hart as Minister for Overseas Development both found the Community far more ready to agree with them than they had seemed to imagine. It was Mr Prentice's and Mr Healey's turn in early June also to find the Council a relatively congenial and even amenable body.

Mr Peart was the first minister to have to do business with the Community at an Agriculture Council meeting on March 21–3. The ministers had reached a crucial stage in their discussions of the annual price decisions, and in a package deal described by the *Economist* as 'like a children's party at which everyone was given prizes' he obtained temporary agreement from the Community for the British government to give subsidies to beef and pork producers and to allow the British consumer to buy beef at a price that could fall below the

continental support price. He returned in triumph, greatly impressed by the flexibility of the Community. Mr Shore also paid a first fact-finding visit to Brussels before the end of March, and Mr Callaghan flew to Bonn to discuss the problem of renegotiation with the German government, which held the presidency of the Council for the first half of 1974.

As so often happens, it was during the first few weeks in office that the initial decisions were taken from which much wider consequences followed thereafter. Had the anti-Marketeers — if need be by threat of resignation — persuaded the cabinet to insist on changes in the texts of the Treaties of Rome and Paris or in the Treaty of Accession (which after all embodied the terms of entry to whose renegotiation the party and government were committed), events might have taken a different turn. But Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan could point to the fact that the party was committed to renegotiation, no more, no less; to demand Treaty amendments at the outset would make renegotiation impossible, so that could not be in accordance with the party's pledge; Mr Callaghan was thus able to make it clear at a very early stage that he would try not to ask for Treaty changes (whose ratification in nine countries — even if all nine governments had agreed them — would in any case have intruded a further hurdle into the process).

Quite apart from this argument, however, the anti-Marketeers in the cabinet were in a strategically weak position. There was another election coming, and no one really wanted to rock the boat. A government in an insecure parliamentary position naturally becomes intolerant of revolt in its own ranks, and any attempt to sabotage cabinet policy was likely to prove counter-productive. Nor did the anti-Marketeers feel that they had any real chance of deliberately provoking the Community into interfering in British national policies or of contriving a showdown with the Commission to prove their point. Peter Shore played things straight on a day-to-day basis, and Judith Hart worked to improve Community policies, not merely to demonstrate their inadequacy. Michael Foot and Barbara Castle were absorbed in mastering their new departments and in keeping the party to the left on a range of issues of which the EEC was only one. The Community was of much greater immediate relevance to Tony Benn's departmental responsibilities, but he had become converted to an anti-Market stance rather more recently and though he tried to raise a number of issues, notably over

the future of the steel industry under Coal and Steel Community rules, he found his objections brushed aside by the Prime Minister, whose pre-eminence in the cabinet is after all buttressed by his control of the agenda. There were serious arguments in the cabinet, but as one pro-Marketeer was later to remark: 'We were all waiting for the great bloody row, the "we've been betrayed" speech — but it never came.' And so long as Tony Benn, Barbara Castle and Michael Foot were prepared to go along with the Foreign Secretary without public fight or threat of resignation, the left outside the cabinet had little stomach to rebel. Nor must it be forgotten that the trade union movement during this period of minority Labour government was far more interested in getting the Conservatives' Industrial Relations Act repealed than it was in taking Britain out of the Common Market. The trade unions would certainly not have countenanced any moves which, by threatening the survival of the Labour government, might jeopardize their primary domestic objective.

None the less the Community's apprehensions were more confirmed than allayed when Mr Callaghan made his first statement on Britain's demands to the Council in Luxembourg on April 1, 1974. He had the tact not actually to read out the passage from the Labour Party's election manifesto on the subject, though it was printed as an integral part of his speech.<sup>9</sup> Even so, its tone was 'blunt to the point of rudeness',<sup>10</sup> thereby delighting anti-Marketeers at home, who had feared that the party leadership, once in office, would go soft on the issue. Its content in fact retreated implicitly from some of the manifesto positions, and acknowledged that perhaps the Treaties themselves could remain unchanged, but it did not even pay lip-service to the ideals of the Community.

The reactions of the rest of the Community as expressed at the meeting were unfavourable. Several ministers reminded Mr Callaghan that the Council was not a forum for political parties, but for member states. The Luxembourg Foreign Minister complained of the purely national perspective coupled with the absence of any vision of the Community. The German Foreign Minister could not accept that Britain was such a special case that normal Community processes could not deal with her

<sup>9</sup>The text of the speech is set out in Cmnd 5593 and printed in full in *The Times*, Apr 2, 1974.

<sup>10</sup>*Financial Times*, Apr 2, 1974.

problems: Mr Callaghan really had to come clean on what he meant by 'renegotiation'. It was predictable that the sharpest reply would come from Michel Jobert, the French Foreign Minister. He pointed out that the original member states had paid a fair price to bring Britain into the Community, and he could see no reason for now paying a supplement to keep her there. Mr Wilson had accepted the Rome Treaty in 1967, and to revise the Brussels Treaty of Accession at this point was unacceptable. Treaties could not be revised every time there was a change of government in one of the nine member states. In any case it was not a matter of adapting the EEC to the customs of the member states but of adapting the latter to the Community. At the end of that meeting it was seriously doubted by many if the Labour government could, without changing its stance, obtain enough concessions from its partners to call the negotiations a success.

But in the event, the world did not stand still, and it was not only the British government that moved. As it was, Michel Jobert had spoken for a French government whose days were numbered. On the day after Mr Callaghan's speech, President Pompidou succumbed to his long illness. For two months it was not really feasible to make further progress. By the time Jim Callaghan presented the details of his case in June it was Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who was President of France and Michel Jobert had been replaced by Jean Sauvagnargues as Foreign Minister. Though Michel Jobert had played a notably helpful role in the negotiations for Britain's accession, some people in London felt that 'by getting rid of M. Jobert, President Pompidou's death got rid of quite a problem.' French policy became far less intransigent, particularly towards the United States but also perhaps towards Britain.

Moreover in early May Willy Brandt resigned the Chancellorship of the Federal Republic, to be replaced by Helmut Schmidt on May 16. Where Willy Brandt had been a fervent believer in the political dimensions of the European Community, Helmut Schmidt was, like Jim Callaghan, essentially an Atlanticist with a much cooler and more pragmatic attitude to the EEC.<sup>11</sup> This

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Helmut Schmidt's remark at a press conference in Brussels on October 23 1975: 'I can still recall the sceptical marginal comments which Giscard d'Estaing, then still Finance and Economics Minister, and I myself exchanged on the occasion of one of the last great Summit Conferences, in Paris, pontificating and proclaiming the European targets for the day after tomorrow, 1980. We both thought these European cloud-cuckooland...'

meant that he was, on the one hand, somewhat less willing to spend German taxpayer's money to keep Britain in the Community; yet at the same time he was far more in sympathy with the Labour government's approach, or at least had greater understanding of it, than his predecessor. In other countries, too, the men who had been at the 1972 Paris summit were rapidly being replaced by new faces. The Europe of those with a long-range political vision was being replaced by a Europe of an altogether more down-to-earth and pragmatic kind.

Above all, however, the two months' respite provided by these governmental changes allowed the Labour cabinet to get the feel of the Community at work. When Mr Callaghan, in Luxembourg on June 4, 1974, set out his renegotiation demands in detail, his tone was far more conciliatory, his attitude far more positive, than on April 1. In part the difference of tone may have been a tactical one preconceived from the beginning – the first speech being designed to please the Labour rank and file and shock the continental Europeans into taking Mr Wilson's problems seriously, and the second to set off a process of mutual give-and-take to bring things to a satisfactory conclusion. In part, no doubt, Mr Callaghan's further personal contacts with his continental colleagues had shown him how little of a monolith the Community was and how much of its current practice and its future plans were in any case already being questioned and challenged by the original member states themselves. At an informal April weekend at Schloss Gymnich, he also came to realise that the mutual consultations on foreign policy between the Nine might do something to offset Britain's lack of clout in the world. There can be little doubt that the analysis of the situation as presented to him by the Foreign Office and the unequivocal advice offered by it pointed in the same direction. The fact that his cabinet colleagues had accepted that the election manifesto did not necessarily imply amendments to the Treaties, and the Foreign Office belief that quite a lot could be done within those limits, helped as well. It was clear, as business was resumed in June, that Mr Callaghan was now out to win co-operation for a joint exercise rather than to maintain his adversary stance.

In April there had still been the clash over how to conduct Atlantic relations. Henry Kissinger's much-heralded 'Year of Europe' had ended in an acrimonious shouting-match across the Atlantic. In obvious reference to the various quarrels (par-

ticularly over trade, money and energy) between the United States and the Community (and within the Community, particularly between the French and the rest), Mr Callaghan had felt it necessary to assert that 'the Community in devising its procedures and its common positions must always try to work with America whenever it can.' At Schloss Gymnich agreement was reached on consultations with the United States over political co-operation. By the beginning of June President Nixon was increasingly enmeshed in the problems that were to result in his resignation in early August. The new continental leaders of the Community in any case felt less threatened by America, and on May 31 the immediate problems of compensating the United States for the trade effects of the Community's enlargement were also finally resolved. The issue of relations with the United States had thus become much less acute. And in such circumstances the discreetly expressed support of the United States for continued British membership could carry some weight not only with Jim Callaghan but also with all the other eight.

On April 1 Mr Callaghan had raised the problems of Economic and Monetary Union, demanded clarification of the goal of 'European Union by 1980', given notice of major changes to be proposed in the common agricultural policy, raised 'the question whether existing rules interfere with the powers over the British economy which we need to pursue effective regional, industrial, fiscal and counter-inflationary policies', stated that 'fundamental changes are required' in the Community budget, and 'reserved the right to propose changes in the Treaties if it should turn out that essential interests cannot be met without them'.

By June the emphasis was no longer on separate negotiations specifically to meet British needs, and conducted under the threat of Britain blocking progress until she obtained satisfaction, but much more on settling problems as part of the on-going business of the Community. Throughout April and May Labour ministers had been attending different ministerial councils, on agriculture, on development aid, on transport, on finance, and playing a not unconstructive role in dealing with the current problems of the Community – the main exception was felt to be Tony Benn. The spectres of European union and of economic and monetary union had also come to be regarded as paper projects of little immediate relevance, and on which each

member state would, in any case, retain a veto. So Mr Callaghan was able to concentrate on a relatively small number of issues in his statement on June 4. In fact there seemed to be only four concrete topics left: the budget, the agricultural policy, policy towards the developing world, and rules governing regional and industrial policies. (Singly or in conjunction, as another minister was to observe privately, these were not matters important enough to give cause for anyone to leave the Community.) Mr Callaghan's peroration kept up the new phraseology, by which it was the Community's as much as Britain's interests that were to be served, and referred not to 'if' but to 'when' these matters had been 'put right'.

For many observers that speech marked the determination of the Labour government to stay in the Community if it possibly could. But it was now June, and the continent was well aware that a second British election could not be long delayed. In July the presidency of the Council passed to France, and it became clear that President Giscard, who held a private dinner for the nine heads of government in Paris in September, was also eager to hold a formal summit meeting in Paris to take crucial decisions before the six months were out. So a timetable took shape by which key decisions might be taken at a summit in November or December to guide the negotiators to a detailed settlement in the early part of 1975 when the Council would have an Irish president.

On September 18, 1974 the election date was announced, and until October 10 Britain was in the throes of the campaign in which, once more, the issue of membership played very little part. The candidates' election addresses are one indicator; barely a quarter made their own position plain, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2. Themes in Candidates' Election Addresses, October 1974<sup>1 2</sup>

	Con. %	Lab. %	Lib. %
Support for a Referendum	—	80	2
Support for EEC Membership	27	1	33
Opposition to EEC Membership	—	15	—

<sup>1 2</sup> *The British General Election of October 1974*, p. 235.

Table 3. Issues Brought up on the Doorstep, October 1974<sup>1 3</sup>

	Con. %	Lab. %	Lib. %
The Referendum	10	44	9
Europe	16	47	15

By contrast, mortgages featured in 82 per cent of Conservative, 73 per cent of Labour and 53 per cent of Liberal election addresses. Similarly, in the issues brought up on the doorstep, according to candidates' reports in Table 3, prices, the social contract or the trade unions, housing and national unity predictably excited far more interest.<sup>1 4</sup>

In the course of the campaign, Mr Wilson talked about the Community as 'a shambles' (the literal meaning of which was regarded as somewhat offensive on the continent even when spoken from the hustings), and produced EEC figures (which proved to have been supplied by the British government) to show that British inflation was below that of the rest of the Community. Shirley Williams said that she would not remain in active politics if Britain left the Community.<sup>1 5</sup> Roy Jenkins, who said he would not stay in a cabinet which had to carry out a withdrawal, did also admit that he had been 'wrong in not realising there was substantial scope for renegotiation'.<sup>1 6</sup> The Community, for its part, continued to be flexible on beef prices and offered Britain sugar at prices substantially lower than those in world markets. And there were commentators who believed that in Brussels, a Labour victory would be welcome to get the issue of British membership settled one way or the other for good and all.<sup>1 7</sup>

Within a week of the Labour government being returned with an overall majority (though of only three seats), Mr Callaghan was asking for the renegotiations to be completed by early spring. The National Executive set up an EEC Liaison Committee to maintain a watching brief on the renegotiation. (This

<sup>1 3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>1 4</sup> For the passages in the party manifestos dealing with the EEC see *The Times House of Commons October 1974*.

<sup>1 5</sup> *The Times*, Sep 26, 1974.

<sup>1 6</sup> *The Times*, Sep 27, 1974; *Daily Telegraph*, Oct 5, 1974.

<sup>1 7</sup> *Guardian*, Oct 8, 1974.

took over from the EEC Monitoring Group set up in February 1974, which had only had two meetings: Mr Wilson forbade ministers to appear before it after a document criticising Mr Callaghan had leaked to *The Times*.)<sup>18</sup> Over the next six months, the Research Department of the party submitted various detailed papers to it, including the draft of a background paper to be presented to the Special Conference to be held before the referendum (see below p. 112).

The ordinary 1974 Labour Party Conference, delayed by the October election, met on November 27–30 in London. It was, naturally enough, used by the anti-Marketeters in the party to try to stiffen the government's stand.<sup>19</sup> An Emergency Resolution calling for enabling legislation to ensure a balanced presentation of views at a referendum 'certainly no later than October 10 1975' – the date promised by the October manifesto for a referendum or a general election on the issue – posed no problems. But there was also an Emergency Resolution from Sheffield, Brightside which demanded 'complete safeguards' on each of eight points, including:

the right of the British parliament to reject any European Economic Community legislation, directives or orders, when they are issued, or at any time after ... to control and regulate industry by financial and other means ... to restrict capital inflows and outflows ... to determine its own taxation policy ... to subsidise food and import food free of duty ... and to control labour movements into Britain.

The Resolution also demanded a special party conference 'which will determine the Party's standpoint on all issues at the referendum'.

In the debate on November 29 there was only one pro-Market speech. With Mr Callaghan in the chair, anti-Marketeters complained they had been

... fed an endless stream of superficial victories in negotiations in Brussels ... these so-called victories are, in

reality, concessions which give us back only a fraction of the right to manage our own affairs which we used to enjoy. ... There is no fundamental renegotiation possible if you accept in broad principle the Treaty of Rome and the Treaty of Accession ... We demand fundamental renegotiation, not acceptance of the Treaty of Rome and of the Treaty of Accession. We must tell them where to get off in a good and proper voice.

Joe Gormley, of the miners, reiterated his union's anti-Market stand but asked Conference to vote against the Sheffield resolution. 'What I want to see, and what I hope more and more delegates want to see, is to get this damn thing out of the way.' Then the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, Edward Short, replied to the debate and asked for the Sheffield resolution to be remitted. The 1972 Conference had already stated Labour's conditions, and 'We cannot add to or subtract from those conditions, those objectives, in the middle of our renegotiations.' None the less, the Sheffield resolution was passed by the Conference by 3,007,000 to 2,949,000 votes – a reminder to the government of the strength of feeling against the principle of entry itself.

Next day Helmut Schmidt charmed the Conference with his address as a fraternal delegate from the German Social Democrats. He quoted Shakespeare and pleaded with his British comrades, on grounds of Socialist solidarity, not to leave the Community.<sup>20</sup> He stayed the weekend for a longer meeting of minds with Harold Wilson at Chequers. This proved to be a useful occasion for Harold Wilson to go over the ground that would have to be covered in the Paris summit meeting ten days later: and it was also borne in on him that this was the moment when he had to commit himself publicly on the position he personally would adopt once the negotiations were complete. As a result he surprised the annual dinner of the London Labour Mayors' Association on December 7 with a speech somewhat irrelevant to their immediate concerns, in which he declared *urbi et orbi* that if the renegotiation was successful, he would commend the terms to the British people and recommend that Britain play her full part in the development of the Community.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 317–18.

<sup>18</sup> See *The British General Election of October 1974*, p. 31; and the NEC Reports reprinted in the 1974 Party Conference Report, p. 57, and the 1975 Party Conference Report, pp. 24, 39.

<sup>19</sup> See *Report of the Seventy-Third Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London 1974*, pp. 249–60.



In Brussels meanwhile it was increasingly the budget issue that took the limelight. At the end of October a report from the Commission — which expected Britain to remain at the bottom of the EEC 'growth league' in the future — related budget contributions to gross domestic product and concluded that, had the existing budget system applied in full in 1974, Britain would have made a gross contribution of 22.0% to the Community's budget out of only 15.9% of the Community's gross domestic product: so 'it cannot be excluded that problems could arise in the future.'<sup>21</sup>

The negotiations were taken a decisive step forward at the Paris summit duly held on December 9 and 10, 1974. While reserving Britain's position on the direct election of the European Parliament, Mr Wilson felt able to subscribe to a declaration that on economic and monetary union the heads of governments 'will has not weakened and that their objective has not changed' and that 'the time has come for the Nine to agree as soon as possible on an overall concept of European Union' — a concept on which the Belgian Prime Minister, Leo Tindemans, was invited to submit a comprehensive report by the end of 1975.<sup>22</sup> The heads of government also embarked on one institutional innovation forthwith when they 'decided to meet, accompanied by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, three times a year and whenever necessary, in the Council of the Communities and in the context of political co-operation.' They also decided to set up the long delayed Regional Fund, though on a much smaller scale than that proposed by Mr Thomson; it was to involve only 1,300 million units of account (US\$ at 1971 parity). The United Kingdom, receiving over a quarter of these funds, would after Italy be the largest beneficiary.

Lastly, the heads of government agreed on a general framework to meet the British government's preoccupation on the budget. While reaffirming the system by which the Community would raise its 'own resources' independently of member states'

<sup>21</sup> See *Financial Times*, Dec 2, 1974.

<sup>22</sup> The spirit in which Mr Wilson subscribed was spelt out in his speech to the House of Commons on April 18: 'There has been a major change in the attitude of other European governments to the practicability of achieving EMU by 1980. As a long-term objective it was restated in the Paris communique but for all practical purposes it has been tacitly abandoned . . . its realisation in the foreseeable future . . . is as likely as the ideal of general and complete disarmament which we all support and assert.'

budgets, they invited:

. . . the institutions of the Community (the Council and the Commission) to set up as soon as possible a correcting mechanism of a general application which, in the framework of the system of 'own resources' and in harmony with its normal functioning, based on objective criteria and taking into consideration in particular the suggestions made to this effect by the British Government, could prevent, during the period of convergence of the economies of the Member States, the possible development of situations unacceptable for a Member State and incompatible with the smooth working of the Community.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the period of what the British government described as the renegotiation, what in Brussels was often called 'the so-called renegotiation', and what French civil servants tended to avoid mentioning in any terms whatever, progress was being made in broadening the Community's stance towards the developing world. Most of this progress had been initiated before the February 1974 election, the bulk of it indeed even before Britain joined the Community. But British membership substantially helped this process, and in some ways here, as in other respects, the Labour government's challenge proved highly opportune to those who were trying to get the Community to move further and faster. The Community's generalised tariff preferences on manufactures from all developing countries were improved each year. The Community made a commercial co-operation agreement with India, to be followed by similar negotiations with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Food aid was being stepped up and during the period of renegotiation agreement was reached also to give financial aid to countries without any special relationship with the Community. Then, in early 1975, the Lomé Convention gave trade, aid and technical co-operation to all the independent countries of Black Africa and to the Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. By the same token the developing countries of the Commonwealth were offered access for up to 1.4 million tons of their sugar — a substantial improvement on

<sup>23</sup> For the full text of the Paris communique, see Cmnd 5830 or *The Times*, Dec 11, 1974.

the old Commonwealth sugar agreements.<sup>24</sup> It was a particular disappointment on the continent that Judith Hart, who herself described the new agreement to the House of Commons as 'historic', later decided to advocate a No in the referendum on other grounds.<sup>25</sup>

On the manifold issues of British autonomy over regional, industrial and fiscal policy the government found many of its fears allayed by its experience of how these things were handled in practice and in the end it decided that very little negotiation was required. (In March 1975 it gave notice that it might ask for a Treaty amendment on steel, but not as part of the renegotiation package.) The Commission's views on regional policy, announced in February 1975, were also thought satisfactory. On agriculture and food prices, the bottom had been knocked out of the argument for a fundamental renegotiation by the fact that world prices for grain and sugar – the two major British food imports – had at this juncture risen above EEC levels; it was no longer true – for the time being – that there was cheap food to be had outside the Community for British housewives. For the first time, the common agricultural policy was thus seen to offer the advantage of security of supply. That really left only two topics still outstanding when the European Council, set up in Paris in December, held its first meeting in Dublin on March 10 and 11, 1975: New Zealand dairy products, and the budget system.

The first meeting of the European Council was covered in detail by the world press and was played up deliberately on both sides to endow it with drama. Both sides knew that whatever the result Mr Wilson would need to return with the aura of a doughty fighter in Britain's cause. The Council had a number of rather graver subjects on its agenda – ranging from the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe via the economic crisis to energy policy and the future of the world's raw material and food supplies. But attention, at least in Britain, naturally focussed on the discussion – at times by detailed formulae complicated to the point of absurdity – of tonnages of New Zealand butter and cheese after 1977, and on

<sup>24</sup> For an account of these changes in development policy, see Uwe Kitzinger, *Europe's Wider Horizons* (Federal Trust, 1975). For the earlier history of the sugar issue see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, esp. pp. 126–36.

<sup>25</sup> See *Hansard*, Feb 3, 1975, cols 945 ff.

the refinements in the corrective mechanism proposed by the Commission to the Community budget system. Idealists did argue that the Community had missed enough political opportunities by fiddling about with renegotiation, while cynics replied that the Community would have failed to rise to these bigger challenges anyway. Garret Fitzgerald, the Irish President of the Council, called some of the renegotiation minutiae 'enormously inappropriate' for such an august forum, and the Belgian Prime Minister complained about heads of government being reduced to the level of auditors of a supermarket chain – but that was by now the tacitly accepted scenario. Certainly if Mr Wilson had been very unreasonable, things could still have gone wrong; and Mr Fitzgerald declared afterwards that there had been several moments when Mr Wilson came near to pushing his luck too far. But excluding foolhardiness, the conference was doomed to succeed. When Mr Wilson returned and announced on March 18 that his government recommended the electorate to vote for continued membership on the new terms, he was greeted with a somewhat predictable shout of 'surprise, surprise'.<sup>26</sup>

The smaller of the two issues but one long dear to Mr. Wilson's heart – he claimed forty-four relatives in New Zealand – was that of continued access for New Zealand dairy products after 1977. The details were not worked out, but quantities of butter for import in 1978–80 were broadly indicated, with provision for arrangements thereafter; prices were to be reviewed periodically; and the question of cheese imports after 1977 was left open.

The outstanding change introduced by renegotiation (though it would not be applicable for several years) was the decision to introduce a correcting mechanism into the Community budget. The manifesto had denounced 'the taxes that form the so-called "own resources"' as not 'acceptable'. But as Mr Wilson said when he reported to the House of Commons after the Dublin meeting, 'It rapidly became clear that we could best secure our objectives not by seeking to overturn the system of financing the budget from "own resources" but by correcting its unfair impact by a mechanism that would provide a refund to us.'<sup>27</sup> None the less, in contrast to all the other points up for

<sup>26</sup> *The Times*, Mar 19, 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Cmnd 5999, p. 5.

renegotiation which were largely matters of interpretation or of future intent, this was the only point on which the British government sought to alter exactly quantifiable agreements already made. But because the alteration in the rules could be made without actually touching the texts of the Treaties and the financial consequences could be kept within reasonable sums, the negotiations on this point – widely regarded in Britain as the litmus test of the whole exercise – could be declared a success. (Many would argue that some change would have had to be made in any case in some form or other, possibly a form more favourable to Britain, if it had not been raised until later in the 1970s.)

The mechanism proposed by the Commission was amended by the Council but it remained a somewhat complicated one.<sup>28</sup> The first principle concerned the conditions under which the mechanism would be triggered off. A country had simultaneously to satisfy four criteria: a gross national product per head less than 85%, and a real rate of growth less than 120%, of the Community average; it would but for the mechanisms have had to contribute to the Community's 'own resources' more than 110% of the share of the budget that corresponded to its share in Community gross national product; and it would have had to contribute more to the budget in foreign exchange than it received out of it. The second principle concerned reimbursement. The actual reimbursement would then, once the mechanism had become applicable, be calculated on a sliding scale to reach the whole of the excess contribution only if a country's total contribution went above 130% of that justified by its share in gross national product. But there was also a limit to reimbursement which was the lowest of three ceilings: either 250 million units of account (or 37% of a budget above 8,000 million, if that was more than 250 million), or the net potential liability in foreign exchange, or the size of the VAT contribution. Though it was said at the time that Harold Wilson chose a more intelligible system in preference to one which could have been marginally more favourable to Britain, the detailed working of this scheme on different assumptions as to exchange rates, inflation rates and the rest largely eluded the vast bulk of those who took part, even in the most commanding heights, in the referendum campaign, and is therefore not

<sup>28</sup> See Cmnd 6003, pp. 15–16.

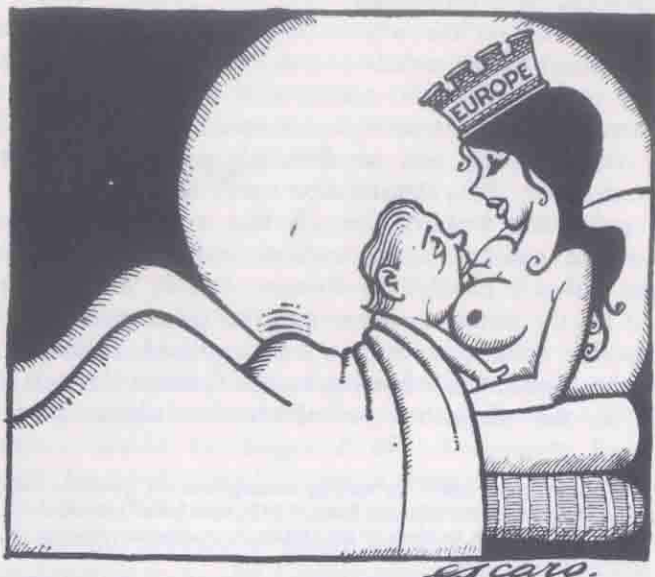
germane to the outcome.<sup>29</sup> Certainly no one pretended that the sums involved were very large.

Looking back on the negotiations as a whole, one may ask why the continental member states of the Community were prepared to exercise such considerable forbearance in order to allow the Labour government to succeed in its design.<sup>30</sup> On the budget issue, equity was on Britain's side, and the formula propounded by the Commission and adopted with modifications by the Dublin Council was a general formula to improve the equity of the system, rather than an *ad hoc* formula tailored purely for Britain; and it was in any case justified by the phrase in the minutes of the negotiations that if unacceptable situations were to arise, equitable solutions would have to be found. On other issues, the Community was already moving in the directions on which the Labour government

<sup>29</sup> For discussions of its effect on varying assumptions see Geoffrey Denton, *The Economics of Renegotiation* (Federal Trust, 1975), and John Dodsworth, 'European Community Financing: An Analysis of the Dublin Amendments', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. XIV, no. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Public opinion on the continent was however getting somewhat less patient by the time the renegotiation was reaching its climax. Thus Roland Faure wrote in *L'Aurore*, Mar 10, 1975: 'For Britain to moor herself to the continent remains desirable, essentially for the sake of political balance. But we really must strike out of our European vocabulary the word – and the basely demagogic concept – of "renegotiation". Whether or not Wales gets something out of the Regional Fund, whether New Zealand butter is sold at a higher price or in greater quantities, whether or not the Labour Party can get away from tearing itself to pieces as a result of the imprudent electoral promise of an unprecedented referendum, does not really much matter to us. But for pity's sake if only Mr Wilson would stop his procrastination. And without going so far as encouraging him to the heroic decision of actually taking part himself in such a vital public debate, let us at least ask him to get Britain's choice over and done with. Europe has too many problems to resolve on which her prosperity, security, and very life depend, to spend very much more time listening to bulletins on the state of the soul of an invertebrate Prime Minister.' Similarly, Hans-Herbert Goetz wrote from Brussels in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Mar 5, 1975, 'If only we had already got rid of the British again.' That and similar drastic views can be heard these days from the political actors around the Council of Ministers. Even people with sound political nerves are getting marked by the perpetual drama of renegotiations. Particularly when the British talk shamelessly about the "renegotiations" basically continuing even after a positive decision on their remaining in the Community. The style of the British in the Council looks provocatively arrogant; one can feel a great deal of national egotism and look in vain for understanding of the Community. The German Minister, who has had to listen for weeks now to the yammering over the allegedly intolerable budget burden which staying in the Community is supposed to mean for Britain, learns in Ghana that the British are chucking around interest-free loans like anything. And incidentally that is, of course, what they are doing for Moscow too. So the understanding for Britain's predicament is getting exhausted where a lot of people are concerned. At the moment people in Brussels talk about Britain and her role in the Community only with clenched teeth.'

## L'AMOUR A DUBLIN



— Entrez ou sortez, mon cher Wilson, mais cessez ce va-et-vient ridicule...

*Le Canard enchaîné, Mar 12, 1975.*

sought to insist or was poised to move that way once the balance of forces within it shifted as a result of British accession. At the technical level, one may cite the camaraderie of the national and European civil servants in Brussels, who worked well together across national divisions in the pursuit of common objectives of diplomatic success. There was also the still lively enthusiasm and idealism of those inspired by the European idea, who felt that without Britain Europe would forever remain incomplete and less than her proper self. But what was more important is that the Continent understood the realities of British politics, the widespread feeling in Britain as a whole that British membership had not been politically legitimised, and the intra-party constraints within which Mr Wilson had to work. It is bad for any club's image, and indeed any club's development, if one of its most prominent members

chooses to resign. More cynically some commentators summed it up in terms of *Realpolitik* by saying that the French wanted to keep Britain in to balance the Germans, the Germans wanted Britain to stay so as not to jeopardise the Atlantic Alliance, and the rest wanted Britain in to balance Franco-German predominance. Perhaps also, in the last resort, no one (certainly not President Giscard d'Estaing) wanted to incur the odium of actually kicking Britain out — particularly once Britain had reaffirmed that she did not want to alter the Treaties or Community policies to obtain exceptional treatment and had come down in her demands to minor modifications of general application on future economic substance.

Given that degree of tolerance on the part of the other members, could Britain have obtained even more? It is a difficult hypothetical question, but on the whole one may say that the wonder is how much did change in the twelve months to March 1975, not how little. None the less, compared with the Labour Party manifesto (let alone the Conference resolutions), the anti-Marketeers could rightly claim that the renegotiation had hardly been fundamental. When their supporters inside the cabinet failed in April and May 1974 to insist that the Treaties themselves needed modification, they had very largely lost their chance. And so by June 1974 there was reasonable hope that the negotiations would not be declared a failure if Mr Wilson did not wish them to be. Mr Callaghan and Mr Wilson had not always seen eye to eye on this issue, nor on some others, nor for that matter on the question of the Labour leadership. Their extremely close relations during this period, with regular private meetings once or twice a week and a good deal of travelling together, was thus a major factor making for success. And if success was what they both wanted, it was up to them, within fairly wide limits, to declare that they had been successful.

The question remains: was the renegotiation really necessary? The answer must be affirmative, not so much in terms of the ostensible purpose of fundamentally improving the terms of entry, but in terms of rather wider political functions.

For one thing, the behaviour of the other member states showed Britain that she was wanted in the Community, that the Community was prepared to make allowances for local political difficulties, and that it was flexible enough to accommodate some of the Labour government's cherished conceptions. In the budget question, Britain had persuaded the Community to think again

on some of its most hallowed orthodoxies. The process demonstrated that on some issues Britain could swing the balance of forces in the Community and thus through her membership exercise leverage in the world. Mr Callaghan was thus able to argue, with a Foreign Secretary's authority, not only that the Community was far from being 'a monolith of eight nations all massively and unitedly lined up to do down the British', but that on the contrary even in the broader aspects of foreign affairs, such as our relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, our membership had added an extra dimension to British influence in the world.

Moreover the negotiations were important not only for their content but also, almost more than that, simply because they took up a considerable space of time. And time, as it happened, was on the side of membership. The longer Britain had been a member, the more would all those who tended to favour the *status quo* feel that the *status quo* consisted in remaining, rather than in ceasing to be, a member of the Community. The delay from March 1974 to June 1975 virtually doubled the period over which Britain had actually been a member, progressively adopting Community rules and adapting her customs duties and other measures in accordance with the provisions for the transition period.

More important still, the particular period of time gained was one in which changing circumstances reinforced rather than weakened the case for membership. Spring 1974 saw the Community in disarray, notably over energy questions, and at odds with the United States, while in Britain rising prices were commonly attributed to Community membership. By the early summer of 1975 the public had registered the lessons of changed world economic circumstances with their soaring food and commodity prices; it had seen some welcome developments in the Community's own policies; and above all it had become acutely aware of Britain's own national economic predicament. The total context in which the decision had to be made in June 1975 was thus far more favourable to continued membership than the context of March 1974.

Lastly, time was of the essence to Mr Wilson's party political problem. If a cut-and-dried decision on membership had had to be taken in March 1974 Britain could scarcely have remained a member of the Community. In terms of his own party, Mr Wilson needed the passage of time to get himself off the hook of commitment to 'fundamental renegotiation' and to persuade

his rank and file to accept a supplementary financial mechanism and a few other adjustments as sufficient instead. Much the same was true for Mr Callaghan. For the cabinet, the renegotiation and indeed all the routine activity and progress in policy-making in Brussels was an essential educational exercise. It got Labour ministers used to working within the framework of the Community. Seeing was believing and to come home triumphant from some meeting in Brussels was an experience that could endear the Community as a political forum to the protagonists themselves. Some of them in any case found the Council of Ministers a congenial club of men with problems very similar to their own, and the Community far less a body of 'faceless bureaucrats' than they had imagined. As Mr Callaghan was to put it in the House of Commons to refute those who still used some of his own old arguments of 1971-4: 'An ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory.'

But the practice had perforce been confined to a relatively small number of ministers, while the theory had for many years become accepted on the left and even in the centre of the Labour Party; the principle had moreover played an important part at the constituency level just when two or three score new Members of Parliament had been adopted as prospective candidates in the early seventies. It may be that Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan overestimated the ease with which MPs (and junior ministers) who had always demonstrated the greatest personal loyalty could be persuaded to abandon their declared anti-Market positions to follow their leader in what some of them saw as the third U-turn in his attitude to the Market. The somewhat contrived 'triumph' of Dublin was thus followed within days by a situation in the government, in the Parliamentary Labour Party, and in the National Executive of the party that led the commentators into the most dire predictions as to the future of the Prime Minister, government, party and country.<sup>31</sup> It quickly became apparent that the drama was back

<sup>31</sup> See for example Anthony Shrimley, 'Has Harold the master magician pulled one trick too many?', *Daily Mail*, Mar 24, 1975: 'The party is in danger of political suicide. It will not be because Mr Wilson has exercised authority. He has precious little left to exercise.' And 'Labour is effectively now two parties.' See also Walter Terry, 'Who speaks for Europe?', *Daily Express*, Mar 24, 1975: 'The way things are going, the June referendum is in danger of turning into an anti-Europe rout... It does not matter that the old master conjuror has become a grotesque Tommy Cooper figure - someone who is still pretending that all the mismanaged tricks have been brilliantly planned. We are in one of the biggest political messes ever.'

where in truth it had always been — not between Britain and the other Eight, but between Mr Wilson and the larger part of his own party activists. While he was in opposition, Mr Wilson found it more difficult to resist the pressures from within his own party, and could also afford more easily to view the issue in terms of domestic political manoeuvre. Once he was responsible for national policy, his stands had to be 'for real' and he was also in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* his rank and file. Much the same was true for Mr Callaghan; instead of using the issue to raise doubts over the leadership as in 1971 Mr Callaghan was now on Mr Wilson's side, with all that that implied for the internal politics of the party.

On March 17 the cabinet met to discuss the Dublin outcome and the recommendation it had committed itself to making to the electorate. The same evening Mr Wilson met the eighty-odd non-cabinet members of his government, and later that evening he and Mr Callaghan faced the parliamentary party. The cabinet met again next day, and took its vote. Guesses as to the probable outcome varied from 14–9 to 18–5 in favour of staying in. There had been doubts over the attitude of the Deputy Leader, Mr Short, but these proved unfounded. Two old anti-Marketeers, Mr Peart and Mr Prentice, had witnessed such improvements in the Community's practice in the respective fields of agriculture and Third World policy that they had come down in favour of continued membership. So did Bob Mellish, the Chief Whip who, on October 29, 1971 had had the traumatic experience of failing to persuade 89 Labour MPs (out of 287) to vote against the principle of entering. Mr Wilson obtained the support of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn-Jones. John Morris, who was closely associated with Mr Callaghan in Wales, also voted in favour; so did Mr Healey, who had already had two greatly publicised conversions on the subject in the past. No one doubted that Mr Foot, Mr Shore and Mrs Castle, long-standing anti-Marketeers, would be joined by the former pro-Marketeer Mr Benn, and also by John Silkin, a declared anti (although he had had the distinction of being Chief Whip on May 10, 1967 when there was the most overwhelming vote in the House in favour of the application for membership: 488 to 62, with 260 Labour MPs voting in favour and only 45 voting against). But there had been some speculation that Eric Varley might be persuaded by his old association with Harold Wilson to vote with the cabinet majority

and William Ross by his dislike for the Left. But in the light of the licence for cabinet ministers to differ on this issue, already announced by Harold Wilson in January, neither felt under any particular obligation to change his anti-Market stance. The vote in the cabinet on March 18, accordingly, was 16 to 7. So far, from Mr Wilson's point of view, so good.

But at this point the Labour MPs opposed to the government line struck swiftly, and on several fronts. In the House of Commons, an Early Day Motion opposing the government's recommendation was organised by Joe Ashton, Tony Benn's PPS; by March 19 it had already attracted 132 signatures including nearly two dozen ministers (it is very rare for ministers to sign such Early Day Motions). The total rose to 140 before the collection of signatures was abandoned for tactical reasons. On the same day Mr Mikardo tabled a resolution for the National Executive of the Labour Party which condemned the renegotiation results as falling 'very far short of the renegotiation objectives which have been party policy for more than ten years and were embodied in our last two election manifestos', and called for 'our people to regain the essential rights' which the Common Market would deny them. It therefore recommended to the special conference a party campaign for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Common Market. The resolution would thus in effect have pledged the Labour party to campaign against the Labour government. It was signed by eighteen of the twenty-nine members of the Executive.

On Saturday, March 22 the Scottish Labour Party Conference voted by 346,000 to 280,000 against staying in the Community (though this was a smaller majority than the anti-Marketeers had hoped to obtain). Mr Mikardo and other MPs were making speeches that week-end which bordered on personal abuse of leading members of their own party. On Sunday March 23 five of the seven dissident cabinet ministers — Mr Benn, Mrs Castle, Mr Foot, Mr Shore and Mr Silkin, together with a non-cabinet minister, Mrs Hart — proceeded to issue their own statement in opposition to the government's recommendation. They stated that the agricultural policy would still 'ensure dear food for our people when it is cheaper elsewhere', that the budget remained 'intrinsically unfair', and that Britain had an 'appalling trade deficit with the countries of the Common Market'. But the gravamen of their case lay in the

'threat to democracy': 'Democracy in Britain is thus tethered and will remain so as long as we stay in the Common Market. Twenty-five years ago Britain dismantled a vast Empire in the belief that no country has the right, or wisdom, to govern another. Now we demand for ourselves what we freely conceded to the 32 members of the Commonwealth, the right to democratic self-government.' And on Monday, March 24 Mr Shore caused further consternation by using a parliamentary question to support the opposite of the government's official case from the front bench itself.

Matters had clearly got out of control and order had to be restored. Mr Wilson was lucky that, in some ways, his opponents had overplayed their hand, and Mr Mikardo was accused of disingenuousness in the way in which he had collected signatures both for the Early Day Motion and for that proposed to the National Executive.<sup>32</sup> A certain sense of loyalty to the party leadership reasserted itself, and Jack Jones seems to have played a role quietly helpful to Mr Wilson. When the National Executive met, it had before it also a memorandum by Ron Hayward, the party's General Secretary, on how the party should conduct itself in the campaign: 'Individuals and individual parties could not be called upon, less still instructed, to campaign for a point of view contrary to their own individual conviction.' Fred Mulley, as Chairman, contrived so to run the meeting that the Mikardo motion was never put to the vote. After hours of discussion Hayward's memorandum in effect neutralising the party machine was approved instead. The anti-Market NEC was thus in effect extending to all levels and organs of the party that same right to differ which the pro-Market majority had given to the anti-Market minority in the cabinet.

Mr Wilson had in fact already on January 23 recognised that as far as the cabinet was concerned, the normal rules of collective responsibility would have to be modified:

The circumstances of this referendum are unique, and the issue to be decided is one on which strong views have long been held which cross party lines. The Cabinet has therefore decided that if, when the time comes, there are members of

<sup>32</sup> *The Economist*, Mar 29, 1975.

Copyright Daily Mail, London, May 12, 1975.



'Isn't that great? We don't have to do as we're told till June 6th'

the Government (including members of the Cabinet) who do not feel able to accept and support the Government's recommendation, whatever it may be, they will, once the recommendation has been announced, be free to support and speak in favour of a different conclusion in the referendum campaign.

On April 7 he elaborated the guidelines:

This freedom does not extend to parliamentary proceedings and official business. Ministers responsible for European aspects of Government business who themselves differ from the Government's recommendation on membership of the European Community will state the Government's position and will not be drawn into making points against the Government recommendation. Wherever necessary Questions (that is, in Parliament) will be transferred to other ministers. I have asked all ministers to make their contributions to the public campaign in terms of issues, to avoid personalizing or trivializing the argument, and not to allow themselves to appear in direct confrontation, on the same platform or programme, with another minister who takes a different view on the Government recommendation.

*Table 4. The Vote in the Commons April 9, 1975*

	For	Against	Did not vote	Total
<b>Labour</b>				
Cabinet Ministers	14	7	0	21
Junior ministers	31	31	9	71
Backbench MPs	92	107	24	223
All Labour MPs	137	145	33	315
Conservatives	249	8	18	275
Liberals	12	0	1	13
Nationalists	0	13	1	14
UUU	0	6	4	10
Others	0	0	2	2
	398	172	59	629

Note: These figures include tellers.

The agreement to differ, which had its only precedent in the licence given to Liberal ministers over Free Trade in 1931–2, was to work more smoothly than many expected, and indeed we shall see (on p. 164) that even the ban on direct confrontations was to be relaxed in the last few days of the campaign. Although the normal rules of collective responsibility were suspended in relation to this one issue, the general running of government was carried on in the normal way and there were remarkably few leaks about cabinet affairs or lapses into public ministerial infighting; some anti-Market ministers noted that they were insulated from the mainstream of government decision making during the campaign – but to some extent the whole business of government was suspended during that period.

Immediately after the Easter recess, the House of Commons held a three-day debate on the government's recommendation to continue Britain's membership of the Community (April 6–9, 1975). Margaret Thatcher who had been elected to lead the Conservative party on February 11 supported the government; she gave as three of her principal reasons peace and security, secure sources of food supplies, and a future world role for Britain. Mr Heath, in his first House of Commons speech since his leadership defeat, also went back to first principles. Even at that stage the details of the terms as renegotiated played only a subordinate part. The debate was to some extent overshadowed in the public view by the decision of Eric Heffer, the Minister of State for Industry, to flout the guidelines for ministers and speak against his government in the House itself. He had been warned by Mr Wilson that he would be dismissed if he did so and his dismissal came within the hour. None the less more than half the government failed to support the cabinet majority. Thirty-eight ministers voted against the government and another nine abstained, while only forty-five ministers voted in favour of the government's own recommendation, as Table 4 shows. The House of Commons had thus once again approved membership, this time by a massive majority of 226 votes – 396 in favour, 170 against. The House of Lords approved continued membership on April 22 by 261 to 20. There could be no doubt in the minds of the informed electorate how the Prime Minister, the cabinet and Parliament all wanted them to vote in the referendum.



### 3 Legislation

Those who advocated a referendum had done no significant research on the administrative problems it would involve. In October 1974, when Patrick Nairne, Second Permanent Secretary in the Cabinet Office, was asked to consider the practical implications, he had no British precedents and no published writings to work on. However, with colleagues from other departments, he produced in two months a long report which covered almost all the points that later arose and served as a basis for Mr Wilson's initial statement to Parliament on January 23, 1975, for the full White Paper on February 26 (Cmnd 5925), and for the Referendum Bill published on March 26.

Practical questions about the rules for the referendum first came before the cabinet in January. It was only then that it was finally decided that there should in fact be a referendum (some doubts seem to have been voiced to the last). It would of course have been possible to proceed with standby legislation for a referendum even before renegotiations were complete – but since the legislation itself would bring out divisions in the Labour party, no one wanted to act before it was necessary.

As we have seen, the general principles of the agreement to differ were endorsed in mid-January. It was then that the outlines of the White Paper were sketched out to the Cabinet. On January 27 a special Referendum Unit was set up in the Cabinet Office under Mr Nairne's supervision but headed by Richard Jameson, an under-secretary seconded from the Department of Education and answerable to the Lord President. Since it had to work fast, this unit decided to dispense with the usual interdepartmental committee structure and merely to have informal liaison arrangements with the departments affected – the Home Office,<sup>1</sup> the Foreign Office, the Scottish, Welsh

<sup>1</sup> The referendum did not cover the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. The Home Office consulted them informally – but since Parliament could not legislate for them they obviously could not be included in the UK operation, and they decided against simultaneous referenda of their own.

and Northern Ireland Offices, the COI, the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence.

Early in February the Lord President and members of the Referendum Unit consulted extensively with the umbrella organisations and the political parties. But essentially the officials had to prepare the White Paper with such guidance as they could get from the cabinet as a whole. They saw their problems concentrated in five major areas: the counting of the votes, the broadcasting arrangements, the control of expenditure, the wording of the question, and the government's information policy.

The counting of the votes was to prove the most vexatious of these issues. The cabinet was inclined to a national count and early in February discussed a Home Office paper on its feasibility; it was plain that political rather than technical considerations were paramount. The majority argued that a national decision should be made on a nationwide basis and pointed to the hazards of Scotland and Wales giving a different answer to England (which at this stage almost everyone agreed to be probable). Others referred to the difficulties that constituency counts could involve for MPs who differed from their voters. On the whole the pro-EEC ministers favoured a national count<sup>2</sup> and the antis a regional count. Only Mr Benn appears to have wanted a constituency count.

It was much more readily agreed that broadcasting arrangements should broadly follow the general election pattern (see p. 195) and that campaign expenditure should not be limited, although the sponsoring organisations might be required to publish their accounts.

The wording on the ballot paper presented difficulties and the Prime Minister himself took a close interest in it. Should there be a preamble explaining the government recommendation? How should the question be phrased to avoid all the subtle biases that could creep in? The matter was left open for the time being.

On the last issue, information, it was readily agreed that there should be a nationwide distribution of leaflets giving the

<sup>2</sup> However, the embryo BIE was by the beginning of March arguing strongly against a national count. Sir Con O'Neill, an Ulsterman, argued that it could make some hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland vote against Europe out of simple exasperation.

government's position and the pro and anti cases. But it took longer to decide how the two sides should be presented and how far the government should use official machinery in support of its recommendations. (For the work of the Information Unit set up during March, see p. 163.)

Thus the White Paper which went in draft to the Lord President in mid-February had a lot of 'green edges' and when Mr Short put it to the cabinet he drew attention to the areas where there might be controversy. Should there be any condition about the minimum turnout or the minimum majority to give validity to the referendum? Should the franchise be any different from parliamentary elections (apart from giving a vote to peers)? Should there be a limit to expenditure or a requirement for the publication of accounts? Which out of three suggested ballot paper wordings should be preferred? Which out of four suggested levels of government information activity should be authorised?

The issues which actually exercised the cabinet when they discussed the draft were mainly the wording on the ballot paper and the level of government information activity, though the new questions of votes for servicemen and holiday-makers and of subsidy for the umbrella organisations also took some time. It was agreed that the White Paper should leave a number of these matters open.

The White Paper, an eighteen-page document, dealing with all the administrative problems of the referendum and including a full appendix on referenda in ten other countries, was well publicised and on the whole well received. It had a full day's debate in the House of Commons on March 11 when the Conservatives made their main challenge to the principle of the referendum. In a rousing maiden speech as Leader of the Opposition Mrs Thatcher dwelt at length on the constitutional difficulties of a referendum: would the government resign if the British people rejected their advice? The debate ranged widely from detailed suggestions on procedure to this larger theme and many party cross currents were revealed. The division, 314 to 262, found only one Labour member, John Mackintosh, voting against the referendum and only five Conservatives voting for. The Liberals divided 7 to 3 against. The Scottish Nationalists supported the referendum but Plaid Cymru opposed it.

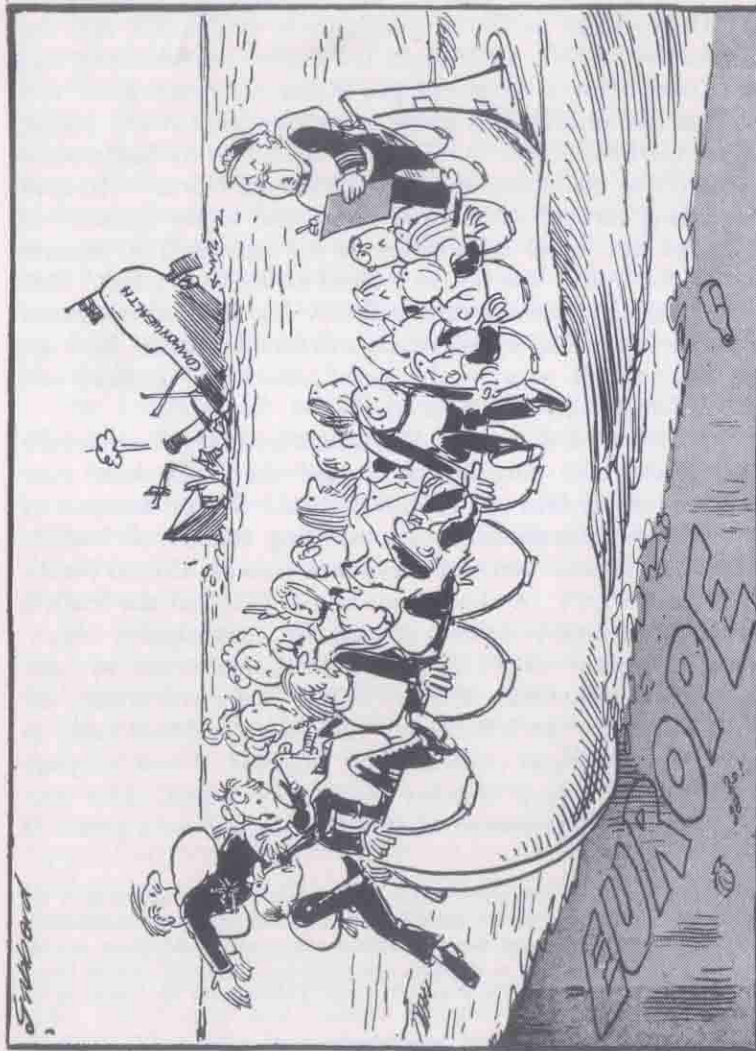
Ministerial responsibility was confused. Normally the Home Office would deal with anything electoral but Mr Jenkins was

Home Secretary and Lord Harris was his Minister of State specially charged with such matters – and both were conspicuously committed to the pro-Market side. Moreover in the early stages the affair was seen more as a Foreign Office than a Home Office matter. In practice the Referendum Unit in the Cabinet Office dealt with the preparation of the Bill and the Lord President steered it through the Commons. Mr Short was very far from being a vehement pro-Marketeer and tribute was paid to his fair mindedness both in private and in the public debate on the Bill.<sup>3</sup> Once the Bill became an Act its implementation was left to the Home, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices, acting through local authorities, and to the Ministry of Defence and the local authorities as his agents. The administration of the count was left to a Chief Counting Officer.<sup>4</sup> But the Lord President retained responsibility for the distribution of grants to the umbrella organisations and indeed for the final act in the referendum story – the publication of accounts on October 7 (Cmnd 6251) (See p. 85–6).

The problems of financing the campaigns attracted oddly little attention. The government argued that they were contributing the equivalent of £750,000 to £1 million to each of the umbrella organisations by distributing their rival leaflets nationwide (but they were not responsive to Sir Con O'Neill's suggestion on March 18 that they should abandon the leaflets and divide the money saved between the campaigning organisations). The grant of £125,000 to each side seems to have been arrived at somewhat arbitrarily. The figure was within the range suggested by the NRC when they met Mr Short early in February. It was almost equivalent to the cost of one full page advertisement in every Sunday and daily paper. The pro-Marketeers were determined that there should be a grant, if

<sup>3</sup> One parliamentary nicety was settled after due consultation. The sponsors of the Bill were the Prime Minister (on the precedent of the 1972 European Communities Bill), the Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, Mr Short and Mr Peart (a recent convert), as well as Mr Benn (the godfather of the Bill) and Mr Shore (one of the most committed of the anti-Europeans). The name of Mr Fowler as Mr Short's deputy was also added.

<sup>4</sup> The Referendum Bill provided for the appointment of a National (later Chief) Counting Officer, and Sir Philip Allen, a recently retired permanent under-secretary of state of the Home Office, was appointed to start work early in April. Operating from a small office in Mayfair and helped by an assistant secretary from the Home Office, Graham Angel, and a small staff, he assumed responsibility for the planning for polling day and its sequel. For Sir Philip Allen's own account of his stewardship see *The Times*, June 23, 1975.



"But first, all passengers will vote on whether we step ashore or continue our luxury cruise . . ."

*Guardian*, Feb 27, 1975.

only to deprive the anti-Marketeers of a grievance. No one pressed seriously for a higher figure against the Treasury's insistence on economy or suggested that the NRC would fare better in ostentatiously unsubsidised poverty. It seems probable that determined demands could easily have led to a doubling of the grant.<sup>5</sup>

Sir Con was also unsuccessful in his efforts to modify the condition of the grant that all receipts and expenditures should be fully accounted for publicly. He argued that publicity would involve a breach of faith with some donors. Mr Whitelaw and other leading figures in BIE pressed these points on Mr Short at a meeting in April, but his only concessions were the extension from one month to two of the time for the preparation of the accounts and the exclusion of the names of donors of less than £100. Since the condition only applied to all transactions after March 26 quite a lot of activity (especially on the BIE side) fell outside its compass (see p. 84-6).

In his statement on January 23 the Prime Minister had envisaged late June as the time for the referendum. But even before the Dublin summit he was pressing for something earlier than June 19, 23 or 26, dates which were proposed by the Referendum Unit after allowing for the likely timetable on the Referendum Bill and the administrative preparations for the count.<sup>6</sup> By late March, optimism about getting the Bill through swiftly had grown and June 5 emerged as a possibility. The

<sup>5</sup> The final cost of the referendum to the taxpayer cannot be fully established. But it is possible to list the approximate expenditure under the main heads:

Returning Officers' expenses	£5,000,000
Cabinet Office activities — mainly the distribution of the three leaflets to every home	£4,000,000
Distribution of poll cards and arrangements for postal votes	£1,900,000
Grants to BIE and NRC	£250,000
COI advertising of postal votes and availability of pamphlets and of the need to vote	£250,000
Ministry of Defence expenditure on Service voting	£15,000
Total	£11,415,000

<sup>6</sup> When it was thought that there would be a central count lasting several days, a Monday poll offered the chance of completing the whole process within a week. But even before the central count had been abandoned, all planning had switched back to the traditional Thursday, since Friday to Sunday would be easier for the recruitment of staff.

main snags concerned the availability of Empress Hall for the central count (it was booked for an antique dealers' fair) and the preparedness of the Scottish local authorities (which would only come into being on May 16) to make all necessary arrangements. Although June 5 was announced as the likely date on April 10 it took another week or so finally to sort out the Scottish difficulties.

The wording of the question had been the subject of poll investigation. NOP at the beginning of February tried out various formulations which produced a wide range of answers, as Table 1 shows. In fact most pollsters believed that although phrasing could make a great difference in a hypothetical situation, at the end of a fully publicised campaign where the issue was clear the actual question wording would matter little. None the less the cabinet had vehement arguments on the

Table 1. Findings on Alternative Ballot Questions

	Majority 'Yes' over 'No' among intending voters %
Do you accept the Government's recommendation that the United Kingdom should come out of the Common Market? YES/NO	+0.2
Should the United Kingdom come out of the Common Market? YES/NO	+4.6
IN OUT	+10.8
Should the United Kingdom stay in the Common Market? YES/NO	+13.2
Do you accept the Government's recommendations that the United Kingdom should stay in the Common Market? YES/NO	+18.2
The Government recommends the acceptance of the renegotiated terms of British membership of the Common Market. Should the United Kingdom stay in the Common Market? YES/NO	+11.2
Her Majesty's Government believes that the nation's best interests would be served by accepting the favourably renegotiated terms of our continued membership of the Common Market. Should the United Kingdom stay in the Common Market? YES/NO	+16.2

Source: NOP, Feb 1975.

wording: the Foreign Office wanted a long preamble to the question, explaining the government's position, and the anti-Marketeers pressed for the words 'Common Market' rather than European Community. The question finally adopted in the Bill was the one originally included in the White Paper, except that at the end the government agreed to add the words '(The Common Market)' after 'European Community'.<sup>7</sup>

The Government have announced the results of the renegotiation of the United Kingdom's terms of membership of the European Community.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD STAY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (THE COMMON MARKET)?

YES

NO

Although ministers had agreed that the referendum should be conducted as far as possible by normal parliamentary electoral practices, strong pressures developed in the cabinet to make special arrangements to enfranchise servicemen and their families as well as Britons living overseas and holiday-makers. These suggestions (spurred by strong representations from highly articulate expatriates in Brussels and elsewhere) met with initial resistance both because of technical difficulties and because they might delay the Bill and therefore the referendum. However, some pro-Market ministers led by Roy Jenkins argued that it would be wrong to deny the franchise to British people working abroad whose interests and prospects were very much

<sup>7</sup>This led to some administrative consternation when it was found that the printers had set '(Common Market)?' separately on a new line.

bound up with the United Kingdom. Mr Short pressed his colleagues very hard to reject both this proposition and postal votes for holiday makers and in mid-March he carried the day. However it was agreed that special arrangements should, if possible, be made for servicemen. This led to considerable argument. Just before the Bill was introduced the cabinet decided by a majority of one in favour of a simple scheme to allow servicemen and their wives to vote in their units.<sup>8</sup> There was a larger majority against votes for overseas citizens and for holiday makers. Several pro-Market ministers, including Shirley Williams, sided with the anti-Market ministers and Mr Short against 'votes for lotus-eaters'.<sup>9</sup>

After the Second Reading Roderick McFarquhar and forty other pro-EEC Labour backbenchers told the Chief Whip that they would vote against the government in committee if overseas voting was not allowed. The cabinet a week later considered arrangements by which defined categories of British citizens could vote at consulates and embassies. A majority, led by Mr Callaghan speaking for his hard-pressed officials overseas, decided against any overseas civilian voting.<sup>10</sup> The cabinet also finally agreed on the exclusion of holiday-makers who might be on the ordinary register in order to avoid setting any awkward precedents for future general elections. And they were supported in the House of Commons on April 22 by slightly cross-party votes of 251 to 211<sup>11</sup> on overseas voters and 250 to 201 on holiday voters after a powerful speech in which Enoch Powell argued 'the privilege of voting in the referendum must be the same as that at which we have arrived after a long process and is embodied in our electoral law... we cannot without

<sup>8</sup> Despite the Representation of the People Act of 1969, which had tried to improve voting arrangements for servicemen, only about one-quarter of the armed services appear to have been on the ordinary 1975 electoral register. One objection to the new arrangements was that to avoid double voting, the minority of servicemen on the ordinary register who had appointed proxies had these disallowed, which meant that a few, who could not vote with their units, were actually disfranchised.

<sup>9</sup> Conservative Central Office were ambivalent about votes for holiday-makers. They recognized that more of their supporters might be affected but they did not like the idea of factories with masses of proxy votes being handled by shop stewards in a Wakes Week.

<sup>10</sup> 'The Foreign Office doesn't believe in elections,' he is alleged to have said. But another argument was that if the result was clear, the overseas and holiday vote would not matter; if it was close it would be resented as 'a fix for the middle classes'.

<sup>11</sup> Nine Labour MPs were in the minority and four Conservatives in the majority.

confusion or disgrace change it here and now in this context.<sup>12</sup> It had been a close call on votes for those overseas, despite the majority of 40. Ten Labour MPs were committed to voting against the Whip and fifteen to abstaining; but the Conservatives failed to turn out in full strength apparently because the division was called an hour earlier than expected. At the report stage on April 24 a more limited proposal to enfranchise public servants overseas was defeated by 231 to 142 (with a number of Conservatives being oddly absent from the House). When the House of Lords on May 5 voted 61 to 38 against postal votes for holiday-makers a number of sympathetic Conservative peers were plainly persuaded to abstain so as not to delay the passage of the bill.

From the start the proposal for the central counting of votes had been much criticised both on administrative and political grounds; and at the Second Reading on April 10 the Lord President said that there would be a free vote on the government side on this issue in committee. But he still argued for a central count and a single declaration of the outcome, although he indicated that a count by counties would be possible. In cabinet Roy Jenkins argued strongly against local counts on the ground that a few 'no' votes in the early returns on the Friday could have a disastrous effect on sterling, though later (with the 'pro' tide running strongly) he did not object to the results of a central count being published piecemeal on a county basis.

On April 23, a Liberal amendment for counting by constituencies was defeated by 264 to 131, with Mr Benn as the only dissenting cabinet minister. Mr McFarquhar, who had government encouragement to put up a properly drafted alternative for counting by counties, carried his amendment by 272 to 155 (including tellers). He had 128 Labour MPs, 117 Conservatives, 12 Liberals and 15 nationalists on his side. The minority contained 112 Labour Members and 43 Conservatives. The majority included, together with all but one of the anti-Market Ministers, Mrs Williams and Mr Lever. The minority included only four Cabinet Ministers — Mr Callaghan, Mr Mellish, Mr Peart and Mr Short.

Mr Short's first reaction was that the county votes might still be counted at Earls Court for administrative reasons, but he backed down the following day when the Chief Whip doubted if

<sup>12</sup> *Hansard*, Apr 22, 1975, col. 1542.

he could stop an amendment at the report stage to prevent this and when county officials had confirmed their ability to manage things locally. In retrospect it seems that the government could have carried the day for an Earl's Court count with county figures announced separately, since a lot of Conservatives were absent unpaired on April 24; but a message to Mr Short from Mr Boynton, Chairman of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, saying that on balance they would prefer this solution, arrived too late to affect the decision.<sup>13</sup>

Those who had made plans for a central count were rather wistful at their frustration. They were sure that 10,000 civil servants, working in two shifts (at £40 or £45 per head), could have completed the task efficiently in three days (even though the anxieties about security and transport were never fully allayed) and they were sorry not to see their plans tested.

Many of the fears about the debate on the Referendum Bill were belied by events. In January sources close to Mr Heath had indicated that there would be all out opposition to it – but gradually the pro-Marketters came to realise that that would be counter-productive. The polls began to indicate that they were going to win and win handsomely and the desire both to arouse anti-referendum feeling and to quibble about the detailed rules of the game evaporated.

The Second Reading of the Bill had been carried by 312 to 248 on April 10 in a debate that substantially repeated the discussion of the White Paper on March 11. The committee stage, since it was a major constitutional measure, was taken on the floor of the House. It was thought ambitious of Mr Short to plan to get it through in three days – but in fact with late sittings the committee only took two and the report stage and Third Reading only one. The chair was fairly ruthless in selecting amendments for debate but no major points were omitted, even though a procedural muddle meant that the issue of a conditional majority was only dealt with at the report stage.<sup>14</sup> Some of the 150 or so amendments, moreover, were

<sup>13</sup> Earlier a letter to *The Times* from Mr Boynton (April 7) had influenced the planning by a powerful administrative argument for initial local checking of ballot papers, even if there was to be a central count. He argued it would save a lot of London manpower and, more questionably, that if the checking were done scrutineers' reporting of ballot trends would be avoided.

<sup>14</sup> There was, in fact, little argument over the question of whether a simple majority of those who bothered to vote would be adequate for a decision. When, citing the

scarcely designed to be called; one, for example, wanted to substitute 'Holy Roman Empire' for European Communities in the Bill's title. In fact the Conservative tactics were to make clear their opposition to the principle of a referendum by voting against the White Paper on March 11 and against the Second and Third Readings of the Bill, but otherwise to do what they could to speed its passage. Only on a central count did a majority of MPs go against Mr Short's advice. There was a lot of Conservative absenteeism and perhaps some deliberately lax whipping; some MPs got irritable at the alternation between free and whipped votes, complaining at being summoned by division bells on issues where they were not required to vote and did not want to. The opposition virtuously resisted the temptation to consume by obstruction three or four extra days of government time in an overloaded session and the Conservative Whips had worked on some of their more determined MPs, though they did not prevent Mr Emery of Honiton from exasperating MPs with his frequent interventions in the small hours of the morning.

The Bill passed rapidly through the House of Lords on April 29 and May 5–6. Only two amendments were pressed to a division – one on votes for holiday-makers (see p. 62 above) and one by Lord Wigg asking for counts on a constituency basis (which was defeated by 102 votes to 5). The government's promised amendments on the national count were passed and accepted by the House of Commons on May 7. The Royal Assent came on May 8.

The Referendum Act was fleshed out by an Order in Council signed on May 14. But this Order had been published in draft

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Danish precedent, Peter Emery finally moved that only a 60% majority on a two-thirds turnout should be a mandate for leaving the Market his amendment was negated without a division. Mr Wilson's reiteration of the White Paper assertion that a one-vote margin would be enough for him 'a simple majority – without qualifications or conditions of any kind' (see Cmnd 5925, para 3) was not really challenged. The question of what would be the precondition for a recount was discussed extensively. After Sir Philip Allen had consulted the President of the Royal Statistical Society, he announced on June 3 that anything less than a 150,000 majority would have to be checked – though it was publicly stated that this was to err ludicrously on the safe side, since an error a tenth as big was virtually inconceivable. Even so, Clause 4 of the Bill included a precautionary ban on any challenge to the result of the referendum in the courts, lest there should be any frivolous challenge or delay to the country's decision. (Any complaints could still, of course, have been pursued in Parliament.)

on April 7 (Cmnd 6004) and had been in the mind of all concerned throughout the parliamentary debates.

This Order in Council should have been presented by the Home Secretary since his department was administratively responsible but because Mr Jenkins was now in so ostentatiously partisan a position, it was decided at the last moment that it should be put forward by the Lord President. It specified the parts of parliamentary electoral law<sup>15</sup> and regulations that were to apply to the referendum and provided for the date and hours of polling and for the appointment of scrutineers by the umbrella organisations.

Political considerations may explain why the Referendum Bill had in the end such an easy passage, while the one-sided nature of the battle and the clear outcome may have contributed to the absence of complaint about the way in which its provisions operated. But it does also stand out as an administrative triumph for a small group of civil servants who were charged with devising clear and acceptable rules to cope with a situation that had no precedent. It was noted that the fourteen or so people in the Referendum Unit were under thirty-five in average age and that nearly half of them were women 'whose toughness never wholly concealed their charm'. When on May 8 a note was sent on their behalf to the parliamentary draftsmen to thank them for their labours on the Bill, the reply came back:

Such praise from such a source is more  
Than any draftsman bargains for  
When playing his accustomed part  
His is a craft and not an art.

It is beyond his humble skill  
To influence the voter's will  
Or so to draft his little Act  
That fiction turns thereby to fact

But as the Bill now reaches port  
We can agree that it was Short.

But the real reason for the unexpectedly easy passage of the Bill was political: pro-Marketeters were in an overwhelming

<sup>15</sup> Forty-two clauses out of the 175 in the Representation of the People Act of 1949 were involved.

majority in the House of Commons and they had belatedly realised that the referendum would go their way.

Sending the Bill on its way to the Royal Assent on May 7, Mr Peyton, the Shadow Leader of the House, remarked

I must remind the Government of how much they are indebted to the Opposition for the exceedingly reasonable, restrained and sensible way in which they received a Bill which was based on a rather unwelcome dodge and device adopted by the Prime Minister in a moment of difficulty for himself.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Hansard, May 7, 1975, col. 1579.

## 4 Pro-Marketeers

The referendum presented a new challenge to British politicians. Since the advent of a mass franchise, election campaigns had been fought between established political parties following familiar routines. As a referendum became probable, it gradually dawned on people both nationally and locally that new organisations would have to be invented to co-ordinate activities. As one cynic noted, 'You can't run meetings without political organisations. It is because politicians live by public meetings that they need political organisations.' The 'umbrellas' that took command on the pro and anti side – Britain in Europe and the National Referendum Campaign – were in fact entirely self-appointed federations of activists. (It was a relief to some anxious planners that no one challenged the claims of these bodies to represent the two sides.) Most of those involved had long histories of involvement in the issue, but behind the emergence of their organisations, there lay a lot of manoeuvring.

The pro-Marketeers drew substantially on the experience of 1971–2, when a massive effort had been made to 'sell' the Common Market both to politicians and to the British public.<sup>1</sup> This time they faced a different set of problems but the leading figures were much the same, and working relationships – and personal rivalries – that had been built up in the pro-Market camp during the battle over entry now played a major part in the preparations for the referendum campaign.

The European Movement was, publicly, the leading body on the pro-Market side. It dated back to 1948 and the names on its letterhead were a memorial roll to a quarter of a century of struggle to get Britain into Europe. 'That was its trouble. It had too many people whose contribution lay in the past.' None the less it had considerable resources. Lord Harlech was its Chair-

<sup>1</sup> See *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, Chapter 7.

man and it had an energetic Director in Ernest Wistrich. In 1974 it had some twenty-five full-time employees at its headquarters, Europe House (on the ground floor of the National Liberal Club). Nationwide it had about 1,500 subscribing members and nominally at least twenty-five local branches. The annual accounts for 1973–4 showed a turnover of £250,000 and in April 1974 there was a reserve of £550,000 left over from the 1971–2 period.

But the European Movement was suspect. It was thought to be too committed to federalism to appeal to a sceptical British public and its contempt for the whole process of renegotiation was regarded as too blatant for some tastes. A few of its activities three years earlier had left scars, especially within the Labour movement. And Ernest Wistrich was a controversial figure. Immensely busy and dedicated, he had annoyed a number of people and there were fears about letting him take the leading public role in the campaign, both because of the slightly foreign image he presented and because of doubts about his political judgement and administrative efficiency. Yet in the event the campaign developed in many ways along the lines he had suggested.

In March 1974 he put up a paper to the Executive Committee of the European Movement outlining the strategic challenge. The committee sent a delegation to consult with Roy Hattersley, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, on April 22. Ernest Wistrich amplified his views in further papers in April, and from May 14 onwards a European Movement Campaign Committee met weekly. In his May paper he was already advocating a new 'umbrella organisation'<sup>2</sup> transcending the European Movement; referring to local organisation he wrote, '... There is a case for setting up a new national organisation, representing all these diverse groups under whose umbrella ... local committees could be set up.'

The European Movement began extensive preparations. It agreed to spend an extra £150,000 by the end of the year to prepare for the referendum. It set about finding at least fifteen regional organisers and it distributed 6½ million leaflets, *Out of Europe – Out of Work*, with tear-off attachments which drew in the names of 7,000 volunteers. It greatly expanded its

<sup>2</sup> But for an earlier use of the term see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, p. 232.



information and publicity activities. Ernest Wistrich looked carefully at what had happened in the EEC referendums in Denmark and Ireland and above all in Norway.<sup>3</sup>

After British entry on January 1, 1973, the efforts to foster publicity about the Community had declined. The Conservative government quickly wound down the semi-official liaison machinery which had been used so effectively to co-ordinate public relations activities in 1971–2. Although the Central Office of Information made increased grants for conferences and visits to Brussels and Strasbourg,<sup>4</sup> there was, many people felt, a quite inadequate effort to put to the electorate the continuing benefits of involvement in the Community. The Labour party's increasing hostility to the Market and its commitment to a referendum worried a few leading politicians and, under the cover of the European League for Economic Co-operation (ELEC), they began to plan action.

ELEC's origins go back at least as far as the European Movement. It too was a British branch of a wider organisation. But it had been – and remained – a much less conspicuous body. It was originally intended as a forum for the discussion of European monetary questions and it had also developed into 'an employer-union get together in a European context'. It was essentially a club that elected its members (about 100 by 1970). With a little money from the City it held public and private meetings and issued pamphlets. It was not explicitly in favour of British entry into the EEC – Sir Roy Harrod, one of the most articulate and distinguished of anti-Marketeters, figured among its members. But Geoffrey Rippon who had been in charge of the negotiations for Britain's entry decided in 1972 to give ELEC new life because it might do things which the European Movement could not or would not do. He persuaded Graham Dowson, then Chief Executive of the Rank Organisation, to become Chairman. Although Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, a stalwart Labour pro-Marketeter, was joint President with Geoffrey Rippon, ELEC still had a slightly Conservative and City image. To counter this, the all-party nature of ELEC was emphasised in

<sup>3</sup>E. Wistrich, 'The Irish, Norwegian and Danish Referenda: the Lessons for Britain', *New Europe* (Winter 1974–5).

<sup>4</sup>The COI disbursed £226,000 in 1973–4 and £218,000 in 1974–5. The major recipients were the European Youth Foundation (£107,000 over the two years), the European Movement (£45,000), the National Council of Social Service (£42,000), ELEC (£37,000) and the European Educational Research Trust (£40,000).

June 1972 when the influential Labour MPs, Harold Lever, George Thomson and Tom Bradley, were elected to membership together with Gwyn Morgan from Transport House.<sup>5</sup> Later two key appointments were made. In December 1972, Geoffrey Tucker, who had managed Conservative publicity in the 1970 election and, with his breakfast meetings, was an important figure in the 1971–2 arrangements, joined the ELEC executive and in July John Harris, who had been the Labour party's head of publicity before the 1964 election, and who was very close to Roy Jenkins, was made its paid Director part-time. (He had been elected a member of ELEC in June 1972.) Soon afterwards Dickson Mabon, John Roper and David Marquand, three of the most active of pro-Market Labour backbenchers, were co-opted. Thus ELEC contained a large proportion of those who were to be at the centre of the Britain in Europe operation.

Yet ELEC as a body was hardly involved. It provided a cover under which, on a cross-party basis, the key people could meet. As 1974 advanced Graham Dowson supplied a home at the Rank headquarters in South Street, Mayfair for occasional gatherings, often over breakfast or dinner, of an elite group colloquially known as 'the principals'.<sup>6</sup> The whole affair was very secret and no word seems to have leaked out. But at these meetings the finance, the personnel and the strategy of what was to become the Britain in Europe umbrella organisation were sorted out.

No minutes were kept of these meetings until late in the summer of 1974 and it would be difficult to trace the exact sequence of events or even who joined the inner group at what date. One of those co-opted as the summer advanced expressed amazement at the absence of a chairman or of any minutes at these gatherings of 'the principals'. As a result after July 1974 John Harris (who had now become Lord Harris of Greenwich and Minister of State at the Home Office) took the chair and Douglas Hurd (who had recently moved from Mr Heath's private office into Parliament) kept a brief record of decisions. The main 'principals' seem to have been John Harris, Douglas

<sup>5</sup>Sir Harry Nicholas, formerly General Secretary of the Labour party, organised ELEC-sponsored visits to the Continent for trade unionists and between June 1973 and May 1975 there were nineteen expeditions usually of ten to twelve members each from a single union.

<sup>6</sup>The group met regularly for breakfast at the Dorchester under the aegis of Alistair McAlpine, ELEC's Treasurer.

Hurd, Geoffrey Rippon, Sir Anthony Royle, John Roper and Geoffrey Tucker, with Bill Rodgers, David Steel, John Sainsbury (who was Treasurer of the European Movement) and Lord Harlech coming in later. Through John Roper they were kept aware of what the European Movement was doing; but the traffic in information was one-way – not until mid-1974 did Ernest Wistrich or Lord Harlech become aware of the existence of this group which was eventually to take over control of the European forces.

In the early stages some of 'the principals' thought that the European Movement might be made more politically effective. It was suggested that Lord Harlech might resign from the Chairmanship and be replaced jointly by Lord Carrington and Lord Houghton to symbolise the Movement's bipartisanship. But this proposal was quickly scotched by Labour pro-Market-eers who saw Lord Carrington, the Conservative Chairman in the February 1974 election, as too divisive a figure. But then a consensus emerged that a new body would have to be created and the title Britain in Europe was born.<sup>7</sup>

In September 1974 Lord Harris put up a paper suggesting an organisational outline for what was to become BIE, and Bill Rodgers, Minister of State for Defence and a leading pro-Market figure in 1972, was sounded out to see if he would take over its running. At the same time the European Movement approached Sir Alan Bullock to chair 'an all-party working party'. It is not clear how much confusion underlay their moves but, in any case, Sir Alan turned the idea down flatly while Mr Rodgers indicated doubt on whether he would be available.

The re-election of the Labour government on October 10 transformed the atmosphere. The Labour manifesto had promised a referendum within twelve months of the election and, even before the December 1974 summit, it was plain that the renegotiations were destined for an early and 'successful' conclusion. The need to prepare for the campaign was now much more widely recognised and activity was stepped up to a much

<sup>7</sup>In 1969 a group called Britain in Europe had merged with the European Movement. The idea of reviving the name Britain in Europe had been canvassed within the European Movement in May 1974. When the Co-ordinating Committee started in December 1974 the title Britain in Europe was quickly accepted, and by February was being used on their stationery. The phrase met the criteria of brevity, freshness and an emphasis on the *status quo* nature of the campaign, 'Britain was "In". It was the "Outs" who were trying to upset things.'

higher level. But it is important to remember that for some months more there was no certainty as to when the referendum would come – until after the new year there were many who believed that the arrangements could not be made before October. Indeed given the state of public opinion as revealed by the polls, it was generally thought that delay would favour the pro-Market-eers. But about the time when Mr Wilson was indicating a summer date, 'inside' opinion had also switched to the desirability of having the vote as soon as possible. The polls were showing that opinion was at last moving strongly towards a 'yes' and it seemed good sense to catch this favourable tide, especially with the economic storms looming.

The early planning emphasised three phases to the campaign. The first would run till the government completed the renegotiation; the second would cover the passage of the Referendum Act; the third phase would cover the final weeks of active campaigning.

From November 1974 onwards 'the principals' were greatly exercised about their organisational structure. Who should head it? Who should run it? Various names were mentioned either for President or for Director (and there was some confusion about the two roles). There was a lot of blackballing after a month in which, often without their knowledge, names such as Lord Feather, Baroness Sharp, Asa Briggs, Sir Fred Catherwood and Sir Henry Plumb were bandied about, and Bill Rodgers was once more sounded out. The Labour side suggested that Sir Con O'Neill (about whom they had earlier expressed reservations) should be asked to get the organisation going. The final structure could be decided later. Sir Con had retired from the Foreign Office in 1972. He had experience as a wartime propagandist and he was a veteran of the Brussels negotiations but he had hitherto been uninvolved in domestic politics. In December he was appointed (at £1,000 per month) full-time Chairman of the Steering Group of what was still formally an unnamed organisation. The Steering Group had its first meeting on January 8.

Sir Con opened an office in Chelsea on January 2, 1975 and early in February moved into headquarters at 149 Old Park Lane – a large deserted building supplied by the Treasurer of ELEC, Alistair McAlpine. In the early weeks Sir Con had only a personal assistant (Tom Spencer), a secretary, and a general administrator (Cecil Dawson, recently retired from overseeing

local government at Conservative Central Office). Gradually staff was recruited so that by May there were 140 people on the payroll, about forty of them at Old Park Lane, where planning, research and publicity were concentrated, and most of the rest at Europe House where the European Movement was responsible for most of the other activities of the campaign.

In December the European Movement agreed to put its own campaign committee into abeyance and to place all its resources at the disposal of BIE. It had a substantial staff and a national organisation. But for reasons both of space and of policy BIE did not want to work out of Europe House: the new organisation was to be clearly above and separate from the federalist and controversial European Movement. Partly for misguided reasons of economy the whole combined operation was not brought under one roof, although suitable premises were available. Since the European Movement was expected to distribute the literature and organise activities in the country, the division between Europe House and Old Park Lane had serious consequences. Objections were raised to Ernest Wistrich being made sole Deputy Director of BIE ('If anything happened to Con, we couldn't have Ernest taking over') and after that, Ernest Wistrich was not prepared to leave his own base with the European Movement. Between February and April Old Park Lane and the BIE Committee became irritated about the use of European Movement stationery for BIE communications, about over-optimistic reports of organisation in the country, and about the supply arrangements for leaflets. Europe House, for its part, resented the brash and arbitrary behaviour of the newcomers in Old Park Lane. At one point serious, though quite unrealistic, plans were made to displace Ernest Wistrich completely. The takeover from the European Movement – and the pressures against Ernest Wistrich personally – provoked some bitterness. But that, perhaps, was inevitable. 'Of course the political heavyweights moved in when the real battle loomed. You can't leave so important a thing to amateurs. It had got to be in safe hands.'

At the start the pro-Marketeers were gravely handicapped by not being able to declare themselves. In October 1974 the European Movement was expecting BIE to be publicly launched on January 1975. But it had always been a central, self-denying tenet of the Conservative and Liberal 'principals' that everything must be designed to make life easy for the Labour

pro-Marketeers: if the referendum was to be lost it would be through the alienation of the Labour vote – and premature publicity leading to intra-party disputes would certainly not help. BIE was given a Labour publicity director (Harold Hutchinson), a Labour research director (Peter Stephenson), and a Labour press officer (Norman Haseldine). After some very private discussion it was agreed that it should have a Labour President, Roy Jenkins. Willie Whitelaw was only one among several Vice-Presidents, although after February he acted *de facto* as Deputy President. Because of Roy Jenkins's position it was thought impolitic for BIE to 'go public' until after the cabinet had declared its view. This meant that from the beginning of January until late March the organisation was in a limbo which impeded the recruiting of staff and members and the exploitation of opportunities for publicity. 'Much too much of our time in those months was spent debating just when and how to "go public"'. But everyone agreed that in the last resort it was up to the Labour people to decide when to put their heads above the parapet.<sup>8</sup> In retrospect some still argued that, despite the difficulties, Roy Jenkins should have come into the open earlier so that they could all have got on with the job; despite the disadvantages of the cabinet's most committed pro-European declaring himself before the renegotiations were complete. It was recalled that Sir Con O'Neill appeared as the pro-European spokesman in *Panorama* and other TV programmes in early March: BIE had more charismatic spokesmen but, publicly, BIE did not yet exist.

The Conservative party, under Mr Heath, was fully committed to Europe but the level of enthusiasm varied within the organisation and there was some reluctance to engage the party in activities which might prove gratuitously divisive. Although Mr Heath had obviously been kept informed of the ELEC and European Movement planning, it was not till after the October election that Mr Whitelaw as Party Chairman had asked Lord Fraser, the Deputy Chairman, who had been deeply involved in the politics of the entry negotiations in 1961–2 and in 1970–72, to supervise the party's European activities. Lord Fraser thereafter held meetings on the subject every Monday

<sup>8</sup> However, Scotland in Europe, uninhibited by any leading ministers in its ranks, had declared itself on February 10 and opened an office in Edinburgh.

and became involved in the setting up of BIE. Miles Hudson, who had been in the Conservative Research Department and had worked with Sir Alec Douglas-Home at the Foreign Office, was made Director of the Conservative Group for Europe in December. Discreet soundings made in the constituencies at this time showed that in only thirty associations was even one of the three key figures – Chairman, agent or candidate – explicitly anti-Market.

The first main activity of the Conservatives was the organisation of a series of twelve one-day seminars, one in each of the party's areas, spread from January to March. They were designed to brief party activists and get publicity for the party's involvement. Each was addressed by Sir Christopher Soames (who also addressed several Liberal seminars). At a time of great difficulty and uncertainty in the party, first with Mr Heath's leadership under fire and then the extent of Mrs Thatcher's commitment to Europe unclear, Sir Christopher loudly and bluntly reminded the party that entry into Europe was a Conservative achievement and that Europe was their cause. In successive speeches suited to different areas he set out the main lines of the pro-Market case in a systematic way. The meetings were well attended and regarded as a success, though, in Yorkshire on January 25, Sir Christopher made one of the few obvious slips of the campaign when, under questioning about Communism in France and Italy, he said 'I believe going into Europe is based essentially on the capitalist system'; it would show people the wisdom of having 'a government which believes in free enterprise and the capitalist system'.

The Conservative activities were, of course, complicated by the struggle over the party leadership. Mr Heath had submitted himself for re-election on February 4, 1975. After Mrs Thatcher led by 130 votes to 119 he withdrew, and in a second ballot on February 11 Mrs Thatcher decisively defeated a new candidate, Mr Whitelaw. Mrs Thatcher had been in the cabinet that took Britain into the EEC and she was unequivocally in favour of British membership, but she had none of Mr Heath's involvement in the issue; moreover as she sought to establish herself in office, she could not ignore the awkward presence of Mr Heath and of those, mainly strong pro-Europeans, who had been associated with him, or forget that the few anti-Market MPs and the much larger number who were lukewarm must almost all have been among her supporters. One consequence of the

change was that Geoffrey Rippon, one of the most dedicated pro-marketeers, was replaced as Shadow Foreign Secretary by the less active Reginald Maudling, and that Mr Whitelaw, though becoming Deputy Leader of the Party, was replaced as Chairman by Lord Thorneycroft (who was then, however, prevented by illness from taking any great part in events). Mr Heath had refused to serve in the Shadow Cabinet and the part he would be assigned in the campaign was the subject of speculation, but Mrs Thatcher readily agreed to ask Mr Whitelaw to lead the Conservatives' pro-Market efforts. Mrs Thatcher (like Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan) eschewed direct involvement in BIE activities, partly because of her status as a party leader, partly because she was so involved in other matters and partly because, in a delicate situation, she did not want to seem to steal Mr Heath's thunder nor did she realise how popular a cause it was to become.

These arrangements led to some troubles. For example, when BIE was publicly launched at a press conference on March 26, it was at first planned that each party should have three representatives on the platform. But when only two suitable Labour spokesmen were available the Conservatives were cut down to two – Mr Whitelaw and Mr Maudling. The exclusion of Mr Heath, who had agreed to appear, was attributed, quite unfairly, to Mrs Thatcher. On one or two occasions, her support was invoked in internal BIE politics. When on a private invitation she visited Europe House, hasty arrangements had to be made for her to make a balancing call at Old Park Lane. But her general role was in fact constructive and she wrote a strong letter to Conservative MPs in early May urging their active support for Europe. It was unfortunate that her most positive pro-European appearance, when she shared a platform with Mr Heath at a Conservative rally on April 23, was reported as a Ted–Margaret reconciliation rather than as a clarion call for a 'Yes' vote. In the eyes of the public, there is no doubt that Ted Heath, indefatigably stumping the country, was still the leading Conservative pro-Marketeer.<sup>9</sup>

The Conservative campaign was threatened not only by the lack of enthusiasm for Europe on the part of a few activists, but

<sup>9</sup> *Mrs Thatcher*: Is the Prime Minister aware that all of us on this side of the House, and many on that side would wish to give the campaign honours to [Mr Heath]?... *Mr Wilson*: ... I shall obviously not comment on her fraternal or sororal comments on [Mr Heath] but I was very touched that she felt able to say that ... I should like to go along with it and endorse it. (*Hansard*, June 9, 1975, col. 31).

also by a wider reluctance to 'pull Harold's chestnuts out of the fire for him'. On March 30 Peregrine Worsthorpe had argued in the *Sunday Telegraph* that whatever they thought on Europe, Conservatives should vote No because that would bring the downfall of Harold Wilson and his government. Fears that this idea might take root were for a while expressed in Conservative headquarters. However, the party established its line without difficulty. On April 9 only eight Conservatives voted against Market membership and in the end only two Conservative associations (both in hopeless seats) adopted a clear anti-Market position.

There was some slowness in realising that the Conservatives had the only effective machinery for putting on a nationwide campaign. Moreover those Conservatives who understood the situation went cautiously because they did not want to damage the tripartite approach of BIE or embarrass the Labour pro-Marketeters. It was also said that in one particular quarter in Central Office there was 'an almost impenetrable blanket of non-cooperation'. It was only on April 28 that all the area agents were summoned to London for a briefing, which included really firm encouragement from Mrs Thatcher to use the constituency organisations to arrange meetings and distribute literature. Thereafter the zest for the cause shown by Conservative officials at headquarters and around the country varied considerably but there was no evidence of serious party strains and centrally the Conservative party took over several functions as agent for BIE, particularly in the preparation and distribution of literature<sup>10</sup> and in the monitoring of broadcasts. The party offered an expertise which no other organisation could offer and both in advice and in execution won appreciable respect from the non-Conservatives involved in BIE.

The Labour pro-Marketeters had, of course, been in a difficult position ever since 1971 when the party turned against membership on Conservative terms. The sixty-nine MPs who had defied the Whips on October 28, 1971 and voted for British entry had, together with the twenty who had abstained, retained a certain *esprit de corps*. The Labour Committee for Europe continued its work with Alan Lee Williams, an ex-MP, and then, from

<sup>10</sup> Conservative Central Office could claim that combining what they did for BIE with their own efforts they had distributed more literature than in a general election.

May 1, 1972, Jim Cattermole, a veteran Labour Regional Organiser, as its full-time Director.<sup>11</sup> It was largely financed by the European Movement. John Roper and Bill Rodgers were among the most active MPs. Certainly the Committee was important in preserving morale and maintaining contact with sympathisers in the regional offices and constituency parties. It gave some, like Reg Prentice or Tony Crosland, who had been anti-Market or inactive in 1971 an explicit place in the pro-European ranks. But it was not until 1975 that it began significantly to expand its activities. Some of those involved blamed themselves for the fact that the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party came out as anti-Marketeters in March 1975, but there was wide disagreement over whether there were five or fifty 'souls who could have been saved' by lobbying as skilled as that done by Bill Rodgers in 1971; most felt that the failure lay more with Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan who, if they had had the time, might have caressed quite a number of hesitant MPs into feeling that they should declare themselves for membership on the renegotiated terms.

On April 8, a Labour Campaign for Britain in Europe was launched with Shirley Williams as President and Dickson Mabon as Chairman. It had eighty-eight MPs, twenty-one peers and twenty-five union officials among its sponsors. Among its main goals the neutralisation of local Labour parties loomed rather larger than their conversion. It had over 200 requests for speakers to go to constituency meetings or debates. Besides Jim Cattermole it employed a Deputy Organiser, two meetings organisers, and, to run a Commonwealth in Europe Committee, Mr Rana Ashraf. It got almost all its money from Britain in Europe. The Labour Campaign worked closely with the entirely voluntary Trade Union Alliance for Europe presided over by Vic Feather and run by David Warburton of the General and Municipal Workers. The Trade Union Alliance worked out of the headquarters of APEX, the staff union presided over by Roy Grantham, and was largely manned by APEX staff. It did a lot to get pro-European literature out to sympathetic branches: 1.3 million leaflets were distributed and fifteen major public meetings were held.

During the campaign an important function of the Labour

<sup>11</sup> See *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, pp. 223-31.

**HAROLD WILSON**  
Says . . .

"I have made it clear that on these terms as renegotiated, while we have not got all we wanted, the outcome is . . .

**GOOD for Britain**  
**GOOD for Europe**  
**GOOD for the Commonwealth**  
**GOOD for the developing world**  
**GOOD for the whole world"**

Say **YES** to Europe  
**TODAY**

Labour Campaign for Britain in Europe,  
Africa House, Whitehall Place, London, S.W.1



Campaign and the Trade Union Alliance was to provide platforms for Labour ministers to speak in places where appearances under the auspices of BIE were deemed impolitic because of the local Labour party situation.<sup>12</sup> Five of Roy Jenkins' speeches and seven of Shirley Williams' were under Labour Campaign auspices. Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan shunned the Labour Campaign, though Harold Wilson did appear three times under the banner of the Trade Union Alliance and Jim Callaghan once.

<sup>12</sup> There were also those who did not mind cross-party campaigning but simply disliked the BIE atmosphere. One minister who had extensive dealing with them said, 'The whole feel was too upper class and professional.' The Catholic comment about the Vatican was cited - 'If you're liable to be sick at sea don't go near the engine room' - with the implication that BIE was the engine room.

The Liberal party had long been unequivocally pro-Market,<sup>13</sup> though Emlyn Hooson, the MP for Montgomery, was a late convert. Lord Banks as Chairman of the Liberal European Action Group in 1971 continued to be the party's representative and in the autumn of 1974 joined in the preparatory discussions about setting up BIE, but in fact the main role fell to David Steel, the Chief Whip, who from late 1974 regularly attended the meetings of the embryo BIE. In September Aza Pinney was appointed as the full-time Director of the Liberal European Action Group. David Steel recruited three well-regarded Liberals to positions in BIE: Lady Avebury to head women's activities (which were on a considerable scale), Chris Green who handled the press, and Archie Kirkwood for the thankless task of shepherding the youth movements.

There was some complaint that the Liberals did not play altogether fair. Their pro-Europe propaganda was seen as pro-Liberal propaganda. David Steel was called upon to rebuke those who had issued Liberal-slanted leaflets with BIE approval, and those who made difficulties about inter-party co-operation. Finance also caused invidious local comparisons because, while BIE grants to the Conservative and Labour forces were largely spent centrally, the Liberals distributed theirs to constituency organisations.

BIE planned its campaign around rallies held in a different major city every night from May 10 onwards; each rally was addressed by a team representing all three parties. It also planned broad-based press conferences, which, as in a general election, should set the tone for each day's campaign news. A lot of hard politics and organisation went into the selection of spokesmen for both types of gathering; careful allowance had to be made for intra-party sensibilities and to ensure adequate appearances for women and trade union figures.

Looking back on BIE's activities, people gave great weight to the appointment of Roger Boaden on March 10 as meetings officer. Mr Boaden, who had organised Mr Heath's meetings in 1974, was lent by Conservative Central Office to prepare for the tripartite rallies designed to show the flag in all the main

<sup>13</sup> A single headline was seized in April by Roy Douglas, long an active Liberal, as he launched a 'Liberals say "No"' movement but it appears that this organisation drew little significant support. A few Liberal candidates, including one ex-MP, were thought to be anti-Market but they refrained from embarrassing the party.

provincial centres. Roger Boaden and a small staff had to select halls that could be filled and to arrange for suitable publicity and press and television arrangements. It was not an easy task, for many of the local BIE groups were quite inexperienced in such matters. 'The Conservatives are much better than we are at administering and stewarding these things' said one Labour helper and Roger Boaden won golden opinions. Even so the arrangements did break down on one or two occasions – though not so badly as at some of the meetings arranged by the Labour Campaign for Europe acting on its own.

BIE tried to keep itself fully in touch with public opinion; Humphrey Taylor was co-opted on to the Steering Group and started polling for them in February (see p. 257). But he did not confine himself to reporting on public opinion. He also produced papers on strategy and gave repeated warnings against too sophisticated an approach to a mass audience; he joined with others in reminding his colleagues that headlines were made with good planning, by the use of simple messages and by surprise. 'If it is not reported it hasn't happened . . . We have to make the media report us . . . [do not] overlook the power of laughter . . . [One cartoon] can be more effective than any statement.'

BIE tried to present itself as all-embracing. It devoted much effort to preparing a balanced list of Vice-Presidents; in May it publicised a broad-based Council of 37 celebrities including every living ex-Prime Minister and every ex-Foreign Secretary (except Mr Speaker Lloyd, condemned to neutrality by his office) as well as figures ranging from Sir Lew Grade and Willie John McBride to Graham Greene and Archbishop Ramsey. Fearing that it might seem too glossy and London-centred, BIE sought to draw in every conceivable group of supporters, with special appeals, often specifically localised, to sportsmen, to women, to trade unions, to youth and to immigrants: it had mixed feelings when proffered the support of a few quite genuine Communist party members in a Communists for Europe group but it willingly tolerated a rather troublesome assemblage of youth movements, despite fears that their federalist zeal might alienate hesitant voters.

A particularly notable effort to appeal through the churches was managed independently by John Selwyn Gummer, a young ex-MP, who claimed to have secured the explicit support of over one-quarter of all the clergy of all denominations – including

almost every single Anglican bishop.<sup>14</sup> There seems to have been no significant protest against this involvement of religion in politics. Prayers for Europe were said in perhaps half the Anglican churches and favourable items were placed in parish magazines. There was also a pro-Market vote at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and official statements by the Methodist Church, the British Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Institute of International Relations. On the eve of the referendum publicity was achieved with a special commemoration at Crediton of the feast of St Boniface, a native son who had converted the Germans 1,300 years earlier. The church campaign was thought important, partly because it might draw those whose idealism might not be attracted by the usual material arguments, and partly because it could forestall any anti-Rome feeling of the sort that had been important in the Norwegian referendum – in the event only a very few extreme Protestants voiced this attitude, though in Belfast the Rev. Ian Paisley urged people to vote against ecumenism and the Pope.

The Confederation of British Industry was eager to take an active part in the campaign. There was no doubt about where their members stood. For many years repeated CBI surveys had shown an overwhelming majority of member companies – large and small and in all parts of the country – to be in favour of British membership; and this was independently confirmed on April 9 when *The Times* published a survey of chairmen of major companies which found 415 out of 419 saying that Britain should stay in the Community. The CBI mounted its own operation under John Whitehorn, a deputy director-general, and he also served on the BIE Executive. The objective was to stimulate and help member companies to discuss the issue with their own employees – not to tell them how to vote, but to relate the issue to the fortunes of their companies and to the job security and prosperity of their employees. To this end the CBI set up a European Operations Room as a point of reference and produced a wide range of literature ranging from in-depth studies down to posters and leaflets. They distributed a million documents of these varying kinds, on request and mostly to the 'Mr Europes' – senior executives appointed by some 800 companies to direct their own activities. This method of seeking to communicate through its member companies with

<sup>14</sup> On the churches' attitudes in 1970–2 see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, pp. 252–9.

the CBI's natural constituency of those working in industry was a new experiment for the CBI — an experiment possibly to be used again in other contexts. *Ex post facto* research showed that the campaign was warmly appreciated by CBI members, and also gave some colour to the belief that it was of considerable influence among the industrial work-force. Certainly much less shop-floor or trade union opposition was encountered than had been feared. Attempts by Mr Benn and others to use the employment issue as an argument for a No vote never took hold.<sup>15</sup>

Finance was at first a problem for BIE. They did not know how much could be raised. A general goal of £1½–2 million was agreed in February (the figure seems to have been based on a rough estimate of the main parties' overall expenditure in a general election). In February Lord Drogheda, Chairman of the *Financial Times*, helped primarily by John Sainsbury, Treasurer of the European Movement, and also by Alistair McAlpine, Treasurer of the ELEC, and a Committee of Industrialists and City people, quickly gathered some large promises. Early in March Jock Bruce-Gardyne, an ex-MP journalist, was recruited to help in raising money; in April it was plain that the target would be broadly met, although it was not until the second half of May that there was complete confidence that revenue would exceed expenditure.

Two questions from potential donors raised difficulties. Would their contributions be taxable? And would they be public? Gifts to the European Movement had been regarded as legitimate business expenses but, under vigorous questioning by anti-Marketeters, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made plain that the tax authorities could give no guarantee that contributions to a campaign for votes would be tax exempt — it lay with individual tax inspectors in individual cases and it could ultimately be a matter for the courts. Initially businesses were shy about public giving and the Lord President's announcement on March 26 that the umbrella organisations would have to publish all receipts from then on came abruptly, to the embarrassment of a few potential donors.

<sup>15</sup>The total cost of the CBI's campaign was £70,000. They raised £35,000 from member firms, whose contributions were limited to £100 each so as not to cut into industry's support for BIE; and in return BIE contributed £30,000 to the CBI's campaign. The balance of £5,000 came from sales of publications.

The official accounts in Command Paper 6251 provide a roll of donors to BIE that, at first sight, contains surprising omissions. In fact big companies were encouraged to give first in order that their example might encourage the others. Mr Sainsbury got his own company to give a lead with £25,000 and the major joint-stock banks which do not appear on the list seem to have contributed before March 26. Indeed in addition to the forty-three companies listed publicly as making a five-figure contribution, more than twenty were as generous before the deadline. Over £400,000 was collected between January and March 26. Generosity may be an inappropriate word. There is no doubt of the strong conviction that staying in Europe made good business sense, but when the money was being raised it

*Published Donations to BIE of £10,000 and Over*

£25,000	£10,000
Guest Keen & Nettlefold	Baring Bros & Co. Ltd
ICI	Bass Charrington
Marks & Spencer	British Oxygen
Shell	Cadbury Schweppes
Vickers	Eagle Star Group
	Dickinson Robinson Group
£20,000	Grindlays
Ford Motor Co.	Guardian Royal Exchange
IBM, Portsmouth	Guinness
Rank Organisation	Hill Samuel
Reed International	Johnson Matthey
	Kleinwort Benson
£19,000	Lazard Bros & Co. Ltd
Cavenham Foods	Lucas Industries
	J. Lyons
£15,000	Metal Box Co. Ltd
Legal & General Assurance	Norwich Union
Reckitt & Colman	Phoenix Assurance
Royal Insurance Co.	Rolls Royce (1971) Ltd
Sun Alliance	Rowntree Mackintosh Ltd
Unilever	Rugby Portland Cement
	Standard Telephones
	Trafalgar House Investments
	Turner & Newall
	Unigate Ltd
	United Molasses
	S. G. Warburg
	Whitbread & Co. Ltd



was evident that some of the big companies were quite as much concerned with the appearance of behaving correctly in relation to other companies of similar status as with the impact of their contribution on the campaign. There was a strong sense of emulation in the size of contributions as the list above suggests. In deciding to give and in determining the amount, the idea 'there's safety in numbers' often seems important. On the other hand some companies were very much more lavish than others. Shellabear Price, with a market capitalisation of well under £1 million, gave £1,000, while Babcock and Wilcox, capitalised at £50 million, appear to have given only £100.

The official returns account for £1.5 million of BIE's expenditure and the contrast with their rivals is striking:

	BIE	NRC
Printing	265,360	40,192
Advertising & PR	587,507	64,698
Room Hire	31,850	2,533
Travel & Administration	157,393	496
Wages	136,000	2,928
Office expenses	86,492	2,271
Grants to other bodies	166,309	10,000
Miscellaneous	50,672	8,236
Surplus		2,276
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,481,583</b>	<b>£133,630</b>

When the White Paper giving these figures was published on October 7, Sir Con O'Neill explained that BIE had a surplus of about £100,000 (this was after paying the European Movement about £350,000 for expenditure on the referendum before BIE came into existence and for money advanced to cover BIE expenditure up to about the end of March). Thus it seems that BIE raised about £1,950,000 in all (including the £125,000 government grant) and, together with the European Movement, spent about £1,850,000.

Formally power in BIE lay with the Steering Group (which became the BIE Executive Committee at the end of March). Its membership (see p. 88) was impressive. One of its members wrote:

The Steering Group was one of the best committees I have ever attended. It worked fast and well and there was no dead

weight. It genuinely provided collective leadership. It would be hard to name one of a dozen people who contributed more in ideas and judgment. Hard things were occasionally said. Tempers became frayed. But these were minor occurrences. The Conservatives recognised that the eventual success of the campaign depended on what happened to the Labour voter. They were willing to defer to those who might know best how he could be won . . . Perhaps we were all on our best behaviour. Perhaps there was an unusually high proportion of professionals who knew how to fight elections and just got on with it. Whatever the case, an hour and a half on Wednesday morning was time well spent – and even time to be looked forward to.

Another commented, 'Considering that people who didn't know each other well, indeed had been opponents, were required to work together in an entirely novel enterprise the cheerful impetus of the thing was much more remarkable than the rivalries.'

In March and April the Steering Group devoted a lot of time to the Referendum Bill, arguing over the appropriate stance on overseas voting and the central count and other detailed provisions and over the parliamentary tactics to be encouraged. But in practice the main committee devolved a good deal of responsibility to its sub-committees – notably the Budget Committee under John Sainsbury and the Final Stages Group under Bill Rodgers. During the campaign itself some major decisions were taken by the Final Stages Group, which was responsible for arranging speakers and press conferences and deciding on immediate themes and tactics. A Publicity Group met at 8.00 a.m. on press conference days at the Waldorf to discuss the day's issues and the spokesmen for the following day's press conference, and it was followed at 9.30 a.m. by a sort of executive committee, attended by those who happened to be available.

From the end of March overall political control lay with Roy Jenkins and Willie Whitelaw (with John Harris and Geoffrey Tucker acting as their permanent secretaries). The latter two were, at times, accused of taking their masters' names without due authority and of not keeping even Sir Con O'Neill informed of what they were doing. But they undoubtedly had a sense of urgency and much of their arbitrariness could be excused by

*Britain In Europe*

*President:* Roy Jenkins, *Vice-Presidents:* Ld Feather, Jo Grimond, Edward Heath, Cledwyn Hughes, Reginald Maudling, Sir Henry Plumb, William Whitelaw, Shirley Williams; *Executive Committee:* Lady Avebury, Ld Banks, Graham Dowson, Earl of Drogheda, Ld Fraser, Ld Harlech, Ld Harris, Sir Fred Hayday, Ld Houghton, Douglas Hurd, Dickson Mabon, Alistair McAlpine, Geoffrey Rippon, William Rodgers, John Roper, Sir Anthony Royle, John Sainsbury, Anthony Speaight, David Steel, Humphrey Taylor, Peter Thring (Deputy Director), Geoffrey Tucker, John Whitehorn, Ernest Wistrich, Sir Con O'Neill (Director), Cecil Dawson (Secretary).

*BIE Budget Committee:* John Sainsbury (Chairman), Ld Banks, Earl of Drogheda, Ld Fraser, Ld Harris, Douglas Hurd, Harold Hutchinson, Alistair McAlpine, Sir Con O'Neill, John Roper, David Rowe, David Steel, Peter Thring, Ernest Wistrich, Cecil Dawson (Secretary).

*BIE Final Stages Group:* W. Rodgers (Chairman), Ld Fraser, Ld Harris, Douglas Hurd, Sir Con O'Neill, David Steel, Peter Stephenson, Humphrey Taylor, Peter Thring, Ernest Wistrich.

*Conservative Group for Europe:* Edward Heath (President), Sir Gilbert Longden (Chairman), Derek Prag (Deputy Chairman), Ld Selsdon (Treasurer), Miles Hudson (Director).

*Labour Campaign for Europe:* Shirley Williams (President), Dickson Mabon (President), Jim Cattermole (Director), Peggy Crane (Assistant Director), Roy Grantham, Norman Hart, David Marquand, William Rodgers, John Roper, Peter Stephenson, Alan Lee Williams.

*Liberal European Action Group:* Ld Banks (President), Richard Moore (Chairman), Aza Pinney (Director), David Steel.

*Trade Union Alliance:* Ld Feather (President), David Warburton (Chairman), Roy Grantham (Organising Secretary).

their fear that all the action needed within a few short weeks might get bogged down in committees. One detached insider's tribute to John Harris may be cited to balance the widely voiced criticisms:

From October onwards he was a leading figure and I cannot fault his contribution. He was energetic and ingenious. He played his own part and did not interfere unreasonably elsewhere. His judgment was almost always good. In the thrust of the Campaign he was the most important figure. Roy came in later . . .

The most notable action of Lord Harris and Mr Tucker was to enlist an American television consultant, Charles Guggenheim. In February they flew over to America to talk to him and brought him back to show some of his films to Roy Jenkins and other 'principals'. But because of the delicacy of the operation they did not consult widely and the matter was never discussed in the full Steering Committee. After Mr Guggenheim had been engaged some senior officials and some members of BIE's over-large publicity committee felt a grievance. Although some of the peripheral American campaign ideas, such as mass telephoning, were abandoned after some limited experiments, the basic decision to rely on the Guggenheim approach to BIE's four television programmes was not challenged until it was too late to reverse it; and, with hindsight, most of those involved were quite pleased with the outcome. Some voiced misgivings about whether a technique designed to sell personalities in America was quite so appropriate to sell ideas in Britain. Others were dismayed at the expense; wild rumours circulated about the huge sum devoted to the four ten-minute programmes.<sup>16</sup>

One insider's reply to the criticism of arbitrary action in this field is worth quoting:

There was no need to have a discussion on the Executive: political clearance had been given . . . The BIE Executive was not similar to, say, the Labour Party NEC. It was created by us to present the national leaders of the campaign and it was not a political force in its own right . . . Except on a few occasions it did not take the important decisions. The entire advertising campaign was shown to Roy and Willie (and a few others) and never discussed in the Executive.

John Harris and Geoffrey Tucker dominated the publicity side of BIE, serving as joint chairmen of the Media Policy Group, the Publicity Committee, the Advertising Group, the Radio Group and the TV Group, but neither of them had an office in BIE headquarters and a large amount of the work was carried on by telephone and with outside contractors. Harold Hutchinson,

<sup>16</sup> The fee for Corpro Ltd of £105,228 was entirely for the preparation of the programmes. A figure of £132,000 had been approved by the Budget Committee. For a detailed assessment of the programmes see pp. 198-200.

who was nominally Director of Publicity, focused mainly on the preparation of leaflets. John Doff, an advertising man, was appointed as unpaid Deputy Director of Publicity but since his own company, Corpro, was employed to do the bulk of the Guggenheim filming, he had to resign his BIE post in April after doubts over the conflict of interest involved.

Advertising was to be managed through a consortium of three advertising companies, one with a Conservative, one with a Labour and one with a Liberal bias. In the event the copy was largely prepared under John Nicholls of Tucker, Nicholls and Robinson and placed in newspapers and on hoardings through Bridge Advertising run by the Liberal Bill Pearson. The fact that Geoffrey Tucker's own company was being used excited some adverse comment within BIE. But it could be contended that in a situation where speedy decisions were needed, there was a case for working with small firms, known well to those principally concerned. It is certainly arguable that BIE saved money by working through its *ad hoc* consortium rather than using a large agency. None the less in the rush of the early months, the ways in which contracts, with their routine commissions, were distributed provoked great anxiety in some quarters.

In all BIE spent £600,000 on advertising and public relations. Over £400,000 of this went on advertising — one-third on posters and two-thirds on the press. Some of the latter was local but the main thrust was in the national papers. In the course of the final five weeks, they used a carefully thought out series of seventeen advertisements starting on the high road and getting simpler and tougher as polling day approached:

- (1) '40 million people died in two world wars . . . Vote Yes to keep the peace.'
- (2) The anniversary of VE Day. Vote Yes for Peace.
- (3) and (4) The Commonwealth wants us in.
- (5) Being in the EEC helps trade.
- (6) We get more benefits from being in the EEC.
- (7) (8) and (9) Staying in is right for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales.
- (10) (11) and (12) Staying in will safeguard food supplies.
- (13) Children will be fed in the Market.
- (14) and (15) Jobs will be safe in the Market.
- (16) Famous sportsmen are for Europe.
- (17) For your children's future vote yes.

The Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand all want us to stay in the Common Market.  
If we turn our backs on Europe who is there to turn to?

Vote Yes to keep Britain in.



The Common Market has large funds to create new jobs and help industry.  
In two years we have had over £250 million.  
Pull us out of the Common Market and you could be pulling men out of jobs.



Thirty years ago today, the war in Europe ended.  
We called that day - VE Day.  
Millions had suffered and died in the most terrible war Europe had ever seen.  
On VE Day, we celebrated the beginnings of peace.  
Vote Yes to make sure we keep it.



Britain sold £5,094 millions worth of goods to the Common Market last year.  
If the Common Market stops buying, a lot of men will stop working.  
Vote Yes to keep Britain in business.



In Kingston Jamaica, last week, the leaders of 33 Commonwealth countries said they wanted us to stay in the Common Market.  
If we leave now, who is there to turn to?

Vote Yes to Keep Britain In.



If you'd like to know how the Common Market has helped us so far, here are some examples:  
£1.27 million towards a new food market in Birmingham.  
£313,500 to retrain steelworkers in Scunthorpe and Sheffield.  
£374,000 for farm improvements in North Argyll.  
The more facts you know, the more sense the Common Market makes.



If you'd like to know how the Common Market has helped Northern Ireland so far, there's a fund of information.  
£1.8 million from the Agricultural Fund.  
£571,619 from the Fisheries Fund.  
£13.2 million from the Social Fund.

The more facts you know, the more sense the Common Market makes.



If you'd like to know how the Common Market has helped Scotland so far, here are some examples.  
For a new power station at Peterhead, a loan of £10.4 million.  
To develop British Steel's Ravenscraig plant a loan of £14.8 million.  
For off-shore oil and gas installations in Lewis a loan of £4 million.

The more facts you know, the more sense the Common Market makes.



If you'd like to know how the Common Market has helped Wales so far, here are some examples.  
To help build new plants for British Steel at Port Talbot and Llanwern, loans of £22.7 million.  
To modernize the Betws Colliery, a loan of £2.4 million.  
To build a dairy produce factory at Maelor, a grant of £517,200.

The more facts you know, the more sense the Common Market makes.



There were also three main posters prepared for the hoardings with the themes Jobs for the Boys (happy children with good employment prospects), Say Yes to the Future (a√ over happy children), and Stay in Business, Stay in Europe.

In March and April the preparations for the campaign may have suffered because Sir Con O'Neill, though a respected and skilful diplomat, totally in command of the pro-European arguments, was not by nature either an administrator or an office politician. A civil servant, accustomed to order and efficiency, he had to endure not just the chaos normal to party electioneering but a multiple of it as three parties tried to co-operate in a quite new situation. He had originally been appointed not to manage a campaign but to co-ordinate the activities of others. However as time went on more and more administration fell onto BIE itself as other bodies failed to cope. Sir Con had to deal not only with the inevitable confusions of an *ad hoc* organisation, but also with the free-lance impetuosity of those who were running the publicity side, not to mention the continuing strain with Europe House.<sup>17</sup> In mid-April it was obvious that firm action was needed. Peter Thring, Government Affairs Adviser of ICI, was brought in as Deputy Director. It was too late to do much about basic planning or the gaps in the organisation in the country. 'What we needed from the beginning was a really tough national agent and we didn't have one.' But Peter Thring, with the aid of a few specialists whom he arranged to have seconded from the business world, brought a measure of order to the distribution of literature<sup>18</sup> and to many of the arbitrary contractual arrangements that had been made in the name of BIE. He produced a quick report on the financial arrangements which led, on April 23, to the most dramatic meeting of the BIE executive. John Sainsbury, the Treasurer, confronted his colleagues with a catalogue of instances of lax control over spending and unsatisfactory agreements that had been made particularly on the publicity side. Attempts to defend what had been done did not help. Some commissions were repaid and it was agreed in general that the

<sup>17</sup> It was notable that amid the administrative and political complaints that the BIE organisation sometimes evoked, no one ever faulted Sir Con O'Neill's integrity and charm. 'He had an impossible job specification and things did go wrong. But if you ask me to name someone who would have been better in the job, all-in-all, I can't,' was not an untypical verdict.

<sup>18</sup> BIE claimed to have circulated over 40m. leaflets.

publicity contracts should be on a cost plus rather than a commission basis (it was estimated later that this produced a saving of £15,000).

One small achievement of the early days was the preparation of a symbol or 'logo' for BIE to use in all their publicity from stationery to car-stickers: the firm of Stadden Hughes produced a dove in flight coloured like a Union Jack. The idea was, among other things, to prevent the antis from monopolising the



patriotic symbol. The BIE committee argued over whether the bird should be made to look more cheerful and whether it should have an olive branch in its mouth. An estimate of £500 turned into a bill for £1,700 and was widely cited by insiders, annoyed by the way in which the publicity side of BIE was being handled. However after the logo had gone into circulation most people declared themselves pleased with it. 'It was the best value for money BIE ever got', said one normally sceptical official.

BIE kept in close touch with Brussels, directly through Sir Christopher Soames and George Thomson, the two British Commissioners, and at a more detailed level through their cabinets. Much of the effort was designed to prevent embarrassing things being done or said within the Community (and this was matched by more official Foreign Office activity). Well-intentioned Europeans were dissuaded from coming over to

campaign and encouraged to do what they could for the cause without giving the British anti-Marketeers grounds for complaint.<sup>19</sup> BIE was able to make use of a large amount of information published by the Community and thus ensure that there were no exploitable lapses from accuracy.<sup>20</sup> Shirley Williams demanded the pulping of 500,000 copies of a leaflet because it included an outdated quotation from her on food prices; despite protests at her 'pedantry', she got her way and felt vindicated when Enoch Powell said on *Panorama*, 'You were absolutely fair on food prices.'

During April a good deal of time was taken up over the official pro-Market leaflet. There was some ineffective bargaining on whether to have a leaflet, on how long it might be, and on the printer's deadline on which the government was insisting. After extended discussion in the executive Peter Stephenson produced a draft of the allotted 2000 words which inevitably drew much criticism. In the end Roy Jenkins himself drastically rewrote the whole document.<sup>21</sup>

BIE was flexible enough to provide an umbrella for almost all pro-Market activity. Those who disliked its cross-party atmosphere could operate within one of the many party and non-party groups which enjoyed its blessing and financial support. But the most important people of all found that they had excluded themselves. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary did not want to be seen under the BIE umbrella. There were historical reasons — as well as considerations of current Labour party politics — why the two most heavyweight figures in the government should eschew involvement with BIE. But there was also a tactical argument: it was contended that the public was clearly divided into three roughly equal parts: the convinced pro-Marketeers, the convinced antis, and the hesitant. But the hesitant could best be won not by partisans, but by other hesitants; late and reluctant converts like Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan should therefore keep clear of the zealots, and say, with all their sweet reasonableness, that after

<sup>19</sup> About twenty carefully selected young Europeans were invited over and operated discreetly in various parts of the country in the last fortnight.

<sup>20</sup> One particularly useful source was the flood of detailed answers to written parliamentary questions put to the Commission by Lord O'Hagan, an independent pro-Market member of the European Parliament, clearly very much with the referendum in mind.

<sup>21</sup> For the text of the leaflet see pp. 291–4.

long argument and much hard work they had become convinced that a 'yes' vote would, on balance, really be in Britain's best interest. Mr Callaghan publicly argued that there were three sides to the argument — the pro-Marketeers, the anti-Marketeers and 'the truth', which he represented. This third side had its say in the government leaflet — twice as long as the other two — delivered to every door together with the pro- and anti-Market leaflets. But there was no obvious place for this third side in the balanced series of pro- and anti-Market broadcasts. And there was no independent organisation providing platforms from which Mr Wilson and ministers who felt like him could speak.

As the situation belatedly dawned on those around Downing Street action was taken. A private poll was sponsored, quite independent of BIE's, and a daily 'Referendum Steering Group' began to meet daily at 9.30 a.m., chaired by Mr Callaghan or some other minister and usually attended by Shirley Williams and Roy Hattersley and by a few political advisers (notably Bernard Donoughue from No. 10, Tom McNally from the Foreign Office and John Lyttle who worked for Shirley Williams) and a few officials. They discussed the poll reports and the news from the campaigning organisations. Shirley Williams was the only person who was fully conversant with BIE, the Labour Campaign and this group. Some people in BIE only belatedly became aware of its existence and its poll findings were kept from them. (No. 10 on the other hand had its own channels of contact.) There was not very much the 'Referendum Steering Group' could do, though suitable replies to some of the utterances of anti-Market ministers were discussed and plans were made to get some recalcitrant colleagues onto the hustings. Because the Labour Party organisation would do nothing to help its leader, it was not easy to find suitable occasions for Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan to be involved in the argument. In the end Mr Wilson made eight campaign speeches, often to hurriedly arranged meetings, and Mr Callaghan five speeches. But the message of the Prime Minister and of the Foreign Secretary received less prominence than might ordinarily have been expected, although Mr Callaghan's belated role in the final BIE broadcast was significant (see p. 199–200).

The pro-Market campaign will long be an object of major interest. It spent more on the referendum than any political party has spent centrally on any general election and it managed

to co-ordinate in a totally new way the talents of a wide range of people. Its efforts were to be crowned with the most overwhelming of electoral successes and the élite who set it up and managed it had cause to feel delighted with their efforts. It is always difficult to establish any certain links between campaign activities and electoral outcomes; what can at least be said is that, despite the minor strains chronicled here and in Chapter 6, BIE did nothing to throw away the victory that circumstances were thrusting on it.

## 5 Anti-Marketeers

The National Referendum Campaign had to provide an even broader umbrella than Britain, in Europe. It had to cater for organisations from the whole spectrum of politics, with the extremes as much in evidence as the centre. Many of those who were most active had been campaigning against the Market under one label or another for a dozen years and more; some were highly professional, but the central direction of NRC contained more amateurs than that of BIE.

The main elements in NRC were the Common Market Safeguards Campaign and Get Britain Out. There was also the Anti-Common Market League (which had been much more important in 1962), the British League of Rights, the Yorkshire-based British Business for World Markets and, joining later after some discussion, the National Council of Anti-Common Market Associations (which was linked to Air Vice-Marshal Bennett and suspected of being embarrassingly right-wing). Apart from these, there were the three committed parties (the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru and the United Ulster Unionists) and the anti-Market groups within the major parties (the important Labour Safeguards Committee, the less weighty Conservatives against the Treaty of Rome, CATOR, and the rather nominal 'Liberal "No" to the Common Market Campaign'). The Labour ministers who in March 1975 declared themselves against the Market formed a somewhat separate group, though partly working under the same umbrella.

The Common Market Safeguards Campaign had been established in 1970 with Douglas Jay as Chairman. Douglas Jay had been involved since 1967 with the Labour Committee for Safeguards but it was only in late 1969, when General de Gaulle's veto seemed to have been lifted, that he could persuade his colleagues to contemplate cross-party activities. Throughout the 1970-2 period it had a full-time Director, Ron Leighton, and it had organised much of the anti-Market activity of that period.

Get Britain Out was the direct successor of Keep Britain Out,<sup>1</sup> a body that had been founded in 1962 by S. W. Alexander of the *City Press* and Oliver Smedley<sup>2</sup> and that had been given new life from 1966 onwards by a flamboyant London solicitor, Christopher Frere-Smith. Backed by a small central group that included Sir Ian Mactaggart, a wealthy businessman, as well as two MPs Donald Stewart (SNP) and Richard Body (Conservative), it had succeeded in attracting some publicity to itself in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

There was considerable hostility between these two bodies; following the failure of either the Anti-Common Market League or Safeguards to fulfil an alleged promise to contribute to the cost of a bookstall at Blackpool for the Conservative Conference in 1973, Christopher Frere-Smith and Richard Body had withdrawn from Safeguards. In January 1974 KBO launched a Get Britain Out Campaign and Ron Leighton was recruited as full-time Director bringing with him all his Safeguards experience and contacts. Christopher Frere-Smith was described as 'a genius at organising meetings'. In the February election GBO provided a platform for Enoch Powell's two major speeches. It was worried that by doing so it would alienate its trade union — and indeed some of its Conservative — supporters, and in the summer it arranged some meetings at which Enoch Powell shared the platform with Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers Union and Lord Wigg as well as with some Conservative MPs. In October GBO again provided a platform for Enoch Powell (though his Ulster involvements left them with some problems). Once Labour had been re-elected, GBO expanded its activities with strong backing from Jack Jones, Clive Jenkins of ASTMS and other trade union figures.

The National Referendum Campaign<sup>3</sup> grew out of a meeting at the Reform Club in September 1974 between Mr Frere-Smith

and Mr Body for GBO and Mr Marten and Mr Jay for Safeguards. The past had left both sides with deep suspicions of each other but they agreed to talk further and at the end of October there was a wider meeting at the *Spectator* offices. It took some time before agreement could be reached about the role of NRC and it was not till January 7 that a press conference could be called to announce its existence.

A National Referendum Campaign has been formed on an all-Party basis to ensure closer working together . . . between the Anti-Common Market League, British Business for World Markets, the Common Market Safeguards Campaign, Get Britain Out Referendum Campaign and other organisations with similar objectives . . .

The basic aims which all of the above groups share in common are:

1. To restore to the British Parliament the exclusive right to pass laws and impose taxation binding on citizens of the U.K.
2. To re-establish the power of the U.K. to trade freely, particularly in the case of food, with any country in the world . . .

The Committee is designed to co-ordinate and not supersede member organisations . . . The aim will be to support but not normally organise local meetings.

The NRC was necessarily an uneasy coalition and since most groups on the extreme right and extreme left were anti-Market, there was great anxiety, both about guilt by association with fringe bodies that might give the campaign a bad name, and about local takeovers by small cliques. The application of the National Front for recognition was unanimously rejected — and so were those of Women Against the Common Market, the New Politics Movement and others on the ground that they were too small. The only political parties which were acknowledged were those represented in parliament — which provided a way of shunning formal association with the Communists and the various smaller Marxist parties.

It was obvious that the pro-Marketeers were pre-empting the middle ground of politics. The active anti-Marketeers who could be presented as symbols of reasonable moderation or of

<sup>1</sup> For the background of these organisations and their role in 1971–2 see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, Chapter 8.

<sup>2</sup> In 1975 Oliver Smedley was involved in his own Anti-Dear Food Campaign (founded in March 1973) but its activities were mainly confined to East Anglia. He also worked as East Anglian Treasurer of Get Britain Out.

<sup>3</sup> The title National Referendum Campaign was an admittedly clumsy title. Its neutral sound, free from association with right or left or with any existing organisation, had obvious advantages for internal harmony — but it did not indicate where its members stood on the issue at stake. The name was adopted only just before the National Referendum Campaign was publicly launched on January 7 and seems to have been a compromise suggested by Jack Jones.

'establishment' respectability were very few in number.<sup>4</sup> At the time the NRC was launched the anti-Market ministers could not show their hand or give the movement the weight that it so patently lacked. The leading anti-Market Labour MP outside the government, Douglas Jay, had no special pull even among his own colleagues and the need to have a spokesman of status was acutely felt. Lord Wigg's name was suggested but proved unacceptable. No Liberal MPs or peers were available. The Conservative anti-Market forces were much depleted: forty-one MPs had stood out against their party in 1971 but in 1975 only eight were to do so – and only two or three of them were either weighty or eloquent.<sup>5</sup> Lord Tranmire (formerly Sir Robin Turton) was the only Conservative peer to take a vigorous role in the campaign; Ronald Bell was seen as an extremist; Teddy Taylor naturally had a Scottish focus; Edward du Cann refrained from declaring himself until the very end.<sup>6</sup>

Neil Marten was accepted as Chairman partly because he was an agreeable, respected person and partly because he was the only available non-Labour figure. He had been an MP since 1959 and had served as a junior minister during 1962–4. He had refused office in 1970 because of his anti-Market convictions – linked mainly to the issue of sovereignty. He was not a high flyer among parliamentarians but he had a certain influence as a straightforward and moderate person. If his talents had been different, he might through the chairmanship of NRC have projected himself to a central position on the national stage. But he deliberately played his role in an unspectacular way; he won golden opinions from colleagues far removed on the political spectrum for his good-natured common sense, though he never said anything very arresting in

<sup>4</sup> See p. 256 for evidence on the public standing of the leading anti-Market figures.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Derek Walker-Smith, who in 1962 and 1972 had been a leader among Conservative anti-Market MPs, found himself on the pro-Market side by the logic of his former position. Having throughout emphasised the sanctity of treaties, he could not now advocate repudiating membership of the EEC, however much he had deplored joining it (see *Hansard*, 9 Apr 1975, col. 1309–16).

<sup>6</sup> The NRC could not even call on very many eminent figures from outside politics or trade union affairs. The best 'names' at their disposal were, perhaps, Sir Arthur Bryant the historian, Lord Woolley formerly President of the NFU, Lord Willis the script-writer, Paul Johnson the journalist, Sir John Winnifrith an ex-permanent secretary, Leolin Price, QC, and Patrick Neill, QC, Lord Kaldor and Robert Neild, economists, and Harry H. Corbett and Ken Tynan from the entertainment world. There were stories of some substantial business figures being prevented from declaring themselves by heavy pressures from associates.



“Say NO to the YES-men!”



public. On June 9 Mr Wilson paid tribute to him: 'I am sure I express the view of the whole House when I say that the Honourable Member for Banbury conducted his campaign with great dignity.'

Thanks to financial pump-priming by the TGWU, the NRC was able to take possession of two smallish rooms on a fourth floor off the Strand early in February. Mary-Louise Marten, the Chairman's daughter, was installed in them and set about building up a headquarters. These premises contrasted oddly with the space available to BIE at Old Park Lane and Europe House. Seven people crowded into them and the phone rang madly all day on every kind of administrative and policy matter. NRC never had more than three people on its payroll – a press officer and two secretaries – although it had several nearly full-time volunteers and several people on loan from trade unions. The most notable of these was Bob Harrison, Head of the TGW Research Department, who was lent by Jack Jones to act as Director of NRC from mid-April onwards. Clive Jenkins lent Barry Sherman (the head of ASTMS Research Department), Sally Kellner and Hilary Benn to GBO to work with others as a research team, using the *Spectator* offices; they were later joined by Sean Stewart, a retired Department of Trade official. Inevitably, since the *Spectator* was in Gower Street, there were difficulties in co-ordination between the people working there and those in the NRC office more than a mile away, not to mention the GBO offices at 55 Park Lane and in Upper Berkeley Street. In March a Camden Councillor, John Mills, was co-opted into almost full-time work as organiser of meetings and literature distribution and Ron Leighton acted as Press and Publicity Officer until the press side was taken over, early in May, by John Allen (see p. 108).

These were the people who had to co-ordinate and administer a nationwide campaign. There was no lack of dedication and good sense but one observer likened the contrast between BIE and NRC to a racing car and a bicycle, while a pro-Marketeer stumbled out of the NRC office saying that it was like taking candy from a baby.

NRC was in theory only a co-ordinating body. It had to leave the campaign in the field to its various affiliated bodies and to the unions. The Safeguards Campaign's list of addresses had early in 1974 become available to GBO, and at the end of 1974 GBO could claim to have twelve regional organisers and 350

local branches – but many of these existed only on paper or were Safeguards people. The headquarters of CMSC in Fulham High Street and of GBO in Upper Berkeley Street met a steady stream of demands for literature and for speakers.

Friction arose about the limits to NRC's role. As early as February 27 Mr Frere-Smith was writing to Mr Marten:

I do think that we are in serious danger of misunderstandings arising again if NRC tries to take on an executive role. The purpose of NRC is, of course, to ensure closer working together of the anti-market organisations. When it comes to organisation, I believe quite firmly that organisation of events must be left to the bodies which are represented on NRC. I appreciate that there are various sensitivities and loyalties involved here, but I think there must be a recognition of the fact that GBO has over the past twelve months, been endeavouring, with some success, to organise the campaign in the regions . . . I would like to see an agreement in principle that our meetings organiser, Mary Walker, be recognised as the appropriate channel for arranging speakers for meetings and that those from associated bodies who have speakers' panels should pool their panels with ours . . . I do not think it a good idea that NRC should deal direct with regional organisers in the country because I am certain that this could only confuse an already confused situation.

There was little doubt that GBO had the largest field organisation though no one had hard evidence on how many of the local GBO, Safeguards and other groups had a genuine existence as effective campaigning forces. As the campaign peaked GBO had 14 people working full time at the centre, while Safeguards never had more than two. But *Resistance News*, the monthly broadsheet of Safeguards, was widely distributed and played an important role in linking anti-Marketeers around the country.

There were plainly missed opportunities. The Executive of NRC tended to get bogged down in administrative matters at the expense of strategic thinking. It became clear that the main reason for this was the sheer size of the Executive, comprising representatives of so many different organisations each with their own administrative problems. Conscious of this the Executive delegated strategic matters to an O-Group who were empowered to take any necessary decisions. By this time the

*National Referendum Campaign*

Those present for at least one NRC Executive meeting.

MPs	Others		
N. Marten (Con.) (Chairman)	C. Frere-Smith (GBO) (Vice-Chairman)	S. Stewart (Research)	
R. Bell (Con.)	Sir R. Williams (CMSC)	J. Mills (Meetings)	
R. Body (Con.)	R. Leighton (GBO)	R. Kitzinger (Treasurer)	
D. Jay (Lab.) (Vice-Chairman)	J. Towler (BBWM)	P. Clarke (Secretary)	
Mrs B. Castle (Lab.)	D. Martin (Br. League of Rights)	M-L. Marten (Secretary)	
M. Foot (Lab.)	D. Bennett (NCAMA)		
P. Shore (Lab.)	H. Simmonds (CATOR)		
M. English (Lab.)	R. Douglas (Liberal 'No')		
D. Stewart (SNP)	H. Creighton ( <i>Spectator</i> )		
D. Henderson (SNP)	P. Cosgrave ( <i>Spectator</i> )		
J. Molyneaux (UUU)	G. Gale		
E. Powell (UUU)	C. Gordon Tether		
D. Thomas (PC)	Sir I. Mactaggart (GBO)		
	Sir J. Winnifrith		

## O-Group

N. Marten	C. Frere-Smith	J. Mills	(S. Stewart)
D. Jay	R. Leighton	R. Harrison	(J. Allen)

*Affiliated Organisations*

Anti-Common Market League	Plaid Cymru
Anti-Deer Food Campaign	Scottish National Party
British Business for World Markets	United Ulster Unionists
British League of Rights	Conservatives against the Treaty of Rome
Common Market Safeguards Committee	Liberal 'No' to the Common Market
Get Britain Out	
National Council of Anti-Common Market Associations	

administration had largely been set up and there was little need for regular meetings of the Executive. Each organisation was to get on with the job 'in the field'. Ministers had a standing invitation to meetings of the Executive and the O-Group, but due to departmental duties they hardly ever attended.

It was agreed at the first meeting of the Executive after

government finance had been announced that the lion's share should go to advertising in the press. There was no dissent from this decision although after the referendum was over its wisdom was questioned by some.

It is easy to dwell on the disagreements and the mistakes of the anti forces. But it is even more important to stress their achievements. Most of them testified to the cross-party camaraderie that developed; some orthodox Conservatives expressed a new respect for trade union leaders and even for some extreme left-wingers and a reciprocal appreciation was evoked by the right-wing and moderate anti-Marketeers among their ancient enemies. They were a far more disparate army than the pro-Marketeers and they were sadly lacking in money, facilities and, in many respects, professionalism. Yet at short notice they put together an agreed central executive, prepared leaflets, broadcasts and press conferences and carried on a national campaign without disaster. As the opinion polls were to show, over the final two months they held their own against vastly superior resources.

One important focus of anti-Market activity was supplied by *Tribune*. The paper had given information and encouragement to anti-Market enthusiasts in local Labour parties during the period up to the Special Conference of April 26 and it organised a considerable number of major rallies: but the task presented problems. *Tribune* had only limited staff and they had to spend time persuading the faithful, eager for Michael Foot or Ian Mikardo, to be satisfied with lesser names such as Frank Allaun or Norman Atkinson. After a while *Tribune* had to pass many of the requests for speakers over to John Mills at NRC. Audrey Wise was deputed to organise the speaking engagements of her fellow MPs and Mary Walker at GBO arranged many meetings. Co-ordination inevitably broke down at times: Newcastle was left without a major speaker and a middle-class Conservative audience in Hampstead had to listen to a Trade Union leader talking about 'the cesspool of capitalism'. But since so many of the rank-and-file political activists in the country were enlisted in the anti-Market cause, there was remarkably little difficulty in setting up or stewarding the gatherings, at least in the major centres of population.

The NRC met fortnightly in a House of Commons committee room until mid-March and then weekly until May 9. But as the numbers grew the meetings, some felt, became less satisfactory.

# Let us free ourselves to do what's best for Britain.

FREE to buy food where it's cheapest.

FREE to get rid of the huge trade deficit which the Common Market has forced on us.

FREE to secure our jobs.

FREE to run our own country.

**Vote No to the Common Market.**  NO

NATIONAL REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, 418 THE STRAND, LONDON WC2.

The O-Group, established as a compact Steering Committee in March, consisted of Neil Marten, Douglas Jay, Christopher Frere-Smith, Ron Leighton, Bob Harrison and John Mills. It met frequently though Mr Frere-Smith was rather erratic in his attendance and there were mutterings about GBO's tendency to go it alone. GBO had in fact decided that some fields were being neglected by NRC and Mr Frere-Smith devoted himself to these fields, notably by holding provincial press conferences to offset the London-based image of NRC.

## Vote NO today.

Our last chance to stop these Common Market prices coming to Britain.

ITALY	GERMANY	GERMANY	FRANCE
1lb BUTTER	1 LOAF	1 PINT MILK	1lb RUMP STEAK
<b>83p</b>	<b>50p</b>	<b>11p</b>	<b>£1-62</b>

**Tomorrow will be too late.**  NO

NATIONAL REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, 418 THE STRAND, LONDON WC2.

Officially the trade union movement was anti-Market. The TUC Annual Conference like the Labour Party had from 1971 onwards developed an increasingly hostile position.<sup>7</sup> But the pro-Market unions were far from negligible and included GMW, USDAW, UPW, NUR and APEX. Substantial elements in the NUM and AUEW were also pro-Market. The TGW, ASTMS and the printing unions stood out as unequivocally anti-Market, and the anti-Marketeers had majority support in most of the other substantial unions. The TUC resolution of September 1974 provided a mandate for advising a No vote. On April 23 1975 the General Council endorsed a statement from its International Committee saying that 'Not enough has been achieved [in the renegotiations] to justify a change in the policy of the Congress which is opposition to British membership.' But it also endorsed the right of unions to disagree. During the campaign Len Murray, as General Secretary of the TUC, dutifully spelt out his position on a number of platforms. Union branches or sometimes trades councils formed the nucleus of anti-Market activity in many localities.

But as a whole the unions' hearts hardly seemed to be in the struggle. The NRC accounts show only one union as having contributed £100 or more after March 26 — the TGW gave £1,377. Indeed few unions had given significant sums to GBO or CMSC over the previous years.<sup>8</sup> Of course, other unions contributed to the cause through local propaganda and through lending the services of regional officers. The miners in South Yorkshire, the engineers in the Midlands and the shipworkers on the Clyde were notably active. General secretaries made themselves available as speakers (notably Lord Briginshaw, Ray Buckton, Clive Jenkins and Alan Sapper). Union journals carried a lot of anti-Market material. Yet there were some at the centre who expressed disappointment at the overall contribution of the unions and the reluctance of branch officers to turn aside from their ordinary industrial work. There was disappointment also at the performance of the Scottish Nationalists, Plaid Cymru and the Ulster Unionists (see below pp. 147–156).

The anti-Marketeers from the outset felt beleaguered by the virtually unanimous hostility of the press. Among the dailies

<sup>7</sup> See *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>8</sup> The main contributors were TGW and ASTMS together with ASLEF, NATSOPA, SOGAT, AUEW and ACTT, but the only four-figure sums came from the first four.

and Sundays only the Communist *Morning Star*, the newly-formed co-operative *Scottish Daily News*, and one or two other Scottish papers took an anti-Market line.<sup>9</sup> The editorial stance of Fleet Street promised to affect very substantially the content of the news columns. Douglas Jay, Neil Marten and others tried various pre-emptive strikes, talking to editors and preparing publicly to monitor their output. But they did not feel that they met with much sympathy in these approaches. And the analysis of the coverage of the campaign in Chapter 9 shows what the final outcome was.

They were handicapped by their limited resources. Ron Leighton acted as Press Officer until May – but he was not a specialist and he was not supplied with very much material. While the press was complaining about the absence of NRC handouts, the NRC also, erroneously believing that BIE would have its press conferences at the Dorchester, planned to receive the press in premises nearby in Park Lane, offered by Sir Ian Mactaggart. But journalists would not travel so far and on May 27 NRC belatedly switched its press conferences to the Waldorf, just off the end of Fleet Street, where BIE was already operating.<sup>10</sup>

The NRC received a lot of help from some experienced journalists – notably Patrick Cosgrave and George Gale – but it had great difficulty in finding a full-time press officer and there were several false starts before John Allen was appointed to the job in early May. Mr Allen had been employed around Transport House and 10 Downing Street and had a wide acquaintance among the press. He did arrange the switch of press conferences and was involved in much politicking over broadcast appearances. But he had come too late into an impossible job and he was regarded with suspicion, particularly by some of the anti-Market ministers.

The anti-Marketees recognised that their main hope lay with radio and television. The ingrained traditions of balance in broadcasting were reinforced by the suggestions of the February White Paper. Neil Marten and his colleagues made represent-

<sup>9</sup>The national organ that was important to the anti-Marketees was the *Spectator*. Harry Creighton in his last months as proprietor lent not only his premises but also his columns to the cause.

<sup>10</sup>GBO ran a more or less independent press operation, headed by Peter Clarke, and from January onwards tried to get out a statement almost daily and to hold a press conference somewhere in the country at least once a week.

ations in March to the BBC and IBA about what they expected in terms of fair play and were, on the whole, reassured by the reactions. On April 23 NRC set up a TV and radio sub-committee under Bob Harrison.<sup>11</sup> Its activities were inevitably very London-focused and there were some complaints from and about the provincial TV companies.

The anti-Marketees fell into two main camps – those like Douglas Jay or Barbara Castle who focused mainly on food prices, unemployment and all other practical disadvantages of Community membership, and those like Enoch Powell, Neil Marten and Michael Foot whose main concern was with national independence and parliamentary sovereignty. But the opinion polls showed<sup>12</sup> that shop prices had much more appeal than sovereignty. So to the surprise and relief of some of their opponents ‘they did not wrap themselves up in the Union Jack.’

But in so far as they focused on the economic argument they had to face an unresolved dilemma. What would happen if Britain left the Market? Was their alternative to the EEC a policy of ‘fortress Britain’ or ‘free trade Britain’? Particularly on the left there was a great hankering after import controls, which Mr Shore’s stress on the trade deficit with the Community could only encourage; yet Mr Shore himself, like Enoch Powell, was advocating a Free Trade Area for the whole of Western Europe and increased access to the British market for overseas producers.

The anti-Marketees wanted votes wherever they could get them. But they had to acknowledge that the major thrust of their organisation came from the left. How far was it expedient or practicable for them to pretend otherwise? There was no doubt that the best mass communicators in their ranks were Enoch Powell and Tony Benn.<sup>13</sup> But each of them produced negative responses among large numbers of electors (see p. 256). No one in NRC had the authority, even if they had the inclination, to silence their most eloquent spokesmen on the ground that their interventions were counter-productive. (Some

<sup>11</sup>Its other members were Nicholas Faith, George Gale, Kenneth Little and Alan Sapper. This committee was successor to one set up by GBO with Alan Sapper in December 1974.

<sup>12</sup>See p. 246ff. for a discussion of public and private polls.

<sup>13</sup>It was noted that Enoch Powell attended some NRC Executive meetings but was ‘strangely silent’ while Tony Benn, alone among the four leading anti-Market ministers, never came.

argued that if these two men said nothing, the media would only invent other devil figures.) In fact, although there is no doubt that the matter was talked of privately, the NRC minutes show no trace of any serious discussion of who would be the most effective carrier of their message. There is even evidence to suggest that the question of what that message should be was evaded: it was best to let everyone plough their own furrow and argue that EEC membership meant unemployment or loss of sovereignty or high food prices or exploitation of Scotland and Wales or any or all of them together.

GBO was in some degree an anti-political movement and if Christopher Frere-Smith had had his way the campaign would have been much more bitter with a strong anti-establishment and anti-party character. But Neil Marten and Douglas Jay were loyal party politicians – and so indeed were the dissenting ministers. They knew that they would be working at Westminster after the referendum and there was some pulling of punches with thoughts for the future.

Yet NRC did go some way on the anti-party road. It largely excluded politicians from its official television broadcasts and at times it extended this attitude to a high-minded and more general anti-personality line. A television company seeking the names of anti-Market celebrities for a feature programme was firmly snubbed by an NRC spokesman.

The anti-Market forces were pitifully short of money. NRC only raised £8,610 apart from the £125,000 government grant. GBO spent £28,000 and raised £25,500. A certain amount of the unions' political funds<sup>14</sup> were also laid out on anti-Market propaganda and NRC and GBO received other help in kind.

Like BIE, NRC seems to have spent a good deal of time over the preparation of its official anti-Market leaflet (see p. 301–4). Neil Marten produced a first draft which was left at the NRC office for members of the Executive to comment on. Douglas Jay added some ideas. Enoch Powell suggested a structure within which the argument could be deployed. George Gale produced a final draft breaking the whole into sub-sections. In retrospect, the document was thought to have suffered by being

<sup>14</sup>The unions' political funds were seriously depleted by the two elections of 1974 and there was some discussion of whether it would be legal to spend general funds on the Common Market campaign. The amounts spent were so small that this was in the event an academic question (though it seems that ASTMS had a less restrictive interpretation of the law than the TGW). For NRC's expenditure see p. 86.

the work of too many hands, though it was notably well laid out.

The most important weakness in the anti-Market campaign was on the Conservative side. Two-fifths of the voters were Conservative and they were, according to the polls, overwhelmingly pro-Market. Yet the anti-Market appeal to patriotism and national sovereignty should have struck a chord with many Conservatives. The trouble lay in how to reach them. The one anti-Marketeer who might really have appealed to them was Enoch Powell, but all too many Conservatives saw him as a deserter who had betrayed his party by telling Britain to vote Labour in February 1974 and again in October, and he had also lost much of his magic with the press and the public. Since there were no other weighty anti-Market Conservatives, the campaign had to be at the grass roots. Hugh Simmonds, an officer in Ronald Bell's Beaconsfield party, launched CATOR – Conservatives Against the Treaty of Rome. He circularised all constituency associations and claimed that although only two of the 300 who replied were on the anti-side, four-fifths were divided or neutral. But CATOR could only raise £600 which went on 140,000 leaflets distributed by sympathetic Conservatives.

The most vital issue for the anti-Marketeers was the stance of the Labour party. If they could harness its organisation to their campaign, their whole situation would be transformed. They had done better than they had hoped by finding seven Cabinet ministers publicly on their side together with about thirty other ministers and a majority of backbench Labour MPs. They could count on the block vote of the trade unions ensuring a large anti-Market majority at the Labour Special Conference. But they had to face the fact that a Labour Prime Minister and two-thirds of his cabinet, together with an articulate minority from the back benches, the constituency parties and the trade unions, were committed to a 'Yes' vote. Even dedicated anti-Marketeers were reluctant to split the party too deeply.

The first battle was in the NEC. On March 26 it approved a statement on the EEC negotiations which said, 'The National Executive Committee believes that on both economic and democratic grounds, the best interests of the British people would be served by a "No" vote in the coming referendum.' But it was not clear what arguments were to be put to the party or promulgated by the party to the electorate. The Transport

House Research Department, under their firmly anti-Market head Geoff Bish, had prepared a 30,000 word statement for approval by the April 23 NEC. Both when it came before a sub-committee and when it came to the NEC Mr Callaghan described it as 'a disgrace to the name of research'. Mr Callaghan submitted 297 amendments. These were not discussed and it was agreed by 14 votes to 10 to issue the document<sup>15</sup> to all delegates to the Special Conference 'for information' without the formal endorsement of the NEC: the government statement on the renegotiations was also to be supplied, provided that the government made it available free of charge.

Everything focused on the Special Conference of the Labour party, held at Sobell Hall, Islington on Saturday, April 26. On April 23 the NEC had decided (to Mr Benn's disappointment) that Bryan Stanley (of the Post Office Engineers) and Michael Foot, respectively, should open and close the anti-Market case. Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan were allotted the opening and closing speeches on the pro side. Fred Mulley in the chair saw that all the speeches alternated between pro and anti, and there were notable moments, as when a pro-Marketeer from Croydon lamented that she was mandated to vote anti, and an anti-Marketeer from Oxford complained that he was mandated to vote pro. But the key issue arose when Bryan Stanley, in his opening speech, spoke of mobilising the full force of the Labour party in the anti direction. At lunch Shirley Williams and a number of pro-Marketeers agreed that if any of them were called they would challenge the Chairman to rule on whether the vote would relate to the actual words of the motion or to Bryan Stanley's interpretation. It fell to David Ennals to make the point and, though he said he would have done so anyway, Fred Mulley in putting the question stressed that the conference was voting on the motion and not upon any gloss put upon it during the debate.

The Conference voted by 3,724,000 to 1,986,000 to support the NEC statement opposing continued membership. There was some last minute switching by various unions and it is hard to establish how the vote went. At least 150 of the constituency parties were absent. Estimates of how the constituency parties voted varied between 380-70 and 280-140; no one seems to have been able to establish whether the 30,000 votes of the

<sup>15</sup> *The Common Market Negotiations: an appraisal* (Labour Party, Apr 1975)

Bakers Union were actually cast for or against. The *Economist* on May 3 made the following estimate:

Against	('000s)	For	('000s)
Transport workers	1,000	General and municipal	650
Engineers	980	Electricians and plumbers	350
Miners	264	Shopworkers	293
ASTMS	151	Post Office workers	183
Public employees	150	Railwaymen	164
Agricultural workers	75	Clerical workers	100
Boilermakers	71	Iron and steel trades	94
Post Office engineers	61		
Tailors	62		
Transport salaried staffs	60		
Other unions <sup>a</sup>	483	Other unions <sup>a</sup>	45
Constituency parties <sup>a</sup>	367	Constituency parties <sup>a</sup>	107
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,724</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,986</b>

<sup>a</sup>Estimated. (It seems possible that these figures exaggerate the number of constituency parties present.)

During the Conference, Ian Mikardo and other anti-Marketeers circulated a requisition for a special meeting of the NEC to be called for the following Wednesday. It appears that they were not very clear about their strategy. Some anti-Marketeers claim that they were genuinely afraid that Harold Wilson would pre-empt the decision of the Conference and insist that Transport House stay neutral during the referendum. Some pro-Marketeers were convinced that the NEC majority planned to manoeuvre the whole weight of the Labour machine onto the anti-Market side.

When the NEC assembled on Wednesday, May 1, the proceedings were an anti-climax. They lasted only twenty-eight minutes. Ron Hayward, as General Secretary, announced that the party organisation would do no more and no less than the resolution of the previous Saturday had demanded. He made it plain that the party had no money to spare on a campaign and that some pro-Market trade unions had indicated that they would take it ill if their affiliation fees were applied to anti-Market propaganda. He also indicated that a large number of constituency parties and of Transport House staff,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> They voted by 50 to 25 on April 29 to support Ron Hayward's insistence that party members should have the right to dissent.

together with most of the regional organisers, had expressed dismay at the divisive situation. As General Secretary he would do what the Conference resolution required but he would do nothing to tear the party in pieces.

It is not clear what happened between April 26 and May 1. Some of those involved spoke of heavy pressures from Downing Street (or rather from Jamaica where Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan were engaged in the Commonwealth Conference). It was suggested that some secret concordat existed between Harold Wilson and Jack Jones to limit the area of battle. Certainly Fred Mulley and Ron Hayward had some communications from the party leadership and Fred Mulley met with Tony Benn and Ian Mikardo on the evening of April 25. After the abortive NEC on April 26 everyone professed himself satisfied: each side had been reassured that the other would not over-reach itself. But the press interpreted the affair as a triumph for the pro-Market, and in retrospect many anti-Market regarded the effect of the Conference as negative. They felt that the politicking before and after it had helped to contribute to the neutralising of local Labour parties.

The dissenting ministers, as it came to the crunch, had hesitated about whether to work through the Labour party or the NRC. They were slow to realise that it would not be possible to use the party. They could probably, if it had come to the point, have forced the Special Executive on May 1 to vote for mobilising Labour's full resources for the campaign. But at the last minute they saw that it would be a pyrrhic victory. The party's resources were limited and the loyalties of its staff and its supporters were divided. Any attempt to run a No campaign like a Labour party general election campaign was doomed to failure. Furthermore it would leave deep and lasting scars after June 5 — and in any case it might prove electorally counter-productive.

The ministers therefore worked either independently or through NRC. But they faced a number of difficulties. They did not all think alike. They were all busy as departmental ministers. They were in greater or lesser degree inhibited by the fact that Harold Wilson would still be presiding over the cabinet after the referendum. They were reluctant to be accused of personal attacks or boat-rocking. In practice William Ross and Eric Varley operated quietly and on their own, making few reported speeches. The other five, together with Judith Hart, met

together regularly and issued joint statements, usually drafted by Tony Benn.<sup>17</sup> John Silkin was less active than his colleagues. Barbara Castle and Michael Foot spoke widely. But the main brunt of the campaign was borne by Peter Shore and Tony Benn. Peter Shore, the best briefed and most dedicated anti-Market, had made his reputation by his eloquent presentation of the anti-Market case over the past five years. Tony Benn, a later convert whose commitment to the referendum was much stronger than his commitment against the Common Market, inevitably gained the most prominence — or had it thrust upon him by a hostile press.

The anti-Market ministers, once they were freed by the cabinet vote on March 18, did not attempt to take over or direct NRC activities. Some of them went to meetings of the Labour Safeguards Committee and to one or two NRC gatherings, but on the whole they 'did their own thing';<sup>18</sup> when asked, they appeared at NRC press conferences and they made themselves available to speak at NRC organised rallies. But their activities were not very closely co-ordinated. Thus the central strategy of the official anti-referendum campaign, in so far as it existed, was hardly the product of its leading actors.

<sup>17</sup> Their most elaborate statement, *The Strategy of Withdrawal*, was issued on April 20 'to show how the task of withdrawal can be undertaken in an orderly way without undue difficulty' by the end of 1975.

<sup>18</sup> The anti-Market ministers worked to some extent through their political advisers. Frances Morrell and Francis Cripps from Tony Benn's office and Jack Straw from Barbara Castle's in particular worked as a secretariat for the anti-Market ministers, drafting joint ministerial statements, doing background research and arranging public meetings.

## 6 Local Campaigning

In general elections, the national campaigns dominate the public image of what is happening, but local parties are exerting themselves hard for local candidates. Similarly on both sides of the referendum fence, the chiefs in London had their Indians in the provinces, putting up a local show for their respective causes. The lack of local candidates, and the consequent need for only a single national decision might, at first blush, have made such local campaigning seem otiose. Yet not only did the national headquarters on both sides regard it as essential deliberately to foment local campaigns, but there was also a genuine upsurge of feeling by concerned citizens of all parties to lend their efforts to one or other cause.

Eight hundred or more local bodies took their part in the referendum campaign. Some of these groups had existed for years; others only came together in the weeks preceding the referendum. Some were spontaneous local initiatives; others were instigated by carpet-baggers from regional or national headquarters. Thanks to about 150 campaign reports from such groups, they can in this case be largely described in their own words.<sup>1</sup> While the two opposing groups of local bodies had, by their very nature, a good deal in common, they are best described separately; for their differences in social and ideological character and in their campaigning experiences were as significant as their similar (if opposite) political functions.

### *The Pro-Marketeers*

Britain in Europe attached particular importance to a visible welling up of local pro-Market feeling. It was a necessary

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Britain in Europe and the National Referendum Campaign for inviting their respective local groups to communicate their campaign experiences to us direct. These reports naturally reflect the activities of the more active of these groups (possible also those that had faced more problems than the average), but with that proviso they form a lively picture of voluntary civic activity at an unusual political juncture.

complement to balance any appearance of slick opulence in their central campaign. It was also vital that something as foreign as the continent should be translated into readily intelligible local terms and made to seem relevant to familiar local economic life. The elitist image had to be paralleled by identification with ordinary local citizens. Moreover, the local activities were part of the pro-Marketeers' general strategy – which went back to the early sixties – of marching separately to fight together, making their specialised appeals to sub-groups of the population and utilising sectional support for a general national purpose. It was also of enormous importance to engage the pro-Market section of the Labour Party up and down the country in public activities for which it was largely denied the normal Labour channels. Yet at the same time it was essential to show that the Community concept transcended party divisions.

For the achievement of these diverse objectives some of the pre-existing European Movement groups proved to be far from ideal: yet there was little else to build on. At the beginning of 1975 the European Movement had something under 100 local branches and university groups on its files. In fact, looking back, its organisers doubt if more than three or four dozen of these really existed except on paper.

We have seen (p. 69) how, over a year before the referendum, the European Movement envisaged the setting up of local committees all over the country, and how in the summer of 1974 it set about restocking its files with addresses of willing helpers which were sorted by locality as a first step in the recruitment process. When Britain in Europe was set up, the European Movement brought in with it the nascent local groups as one of its main assets (however much people might differ about their actual strength); and the local groups continued to be organised and serviced from Europe House through the regional organisers whose number rose to seventeen by the end of the campaign. Some were paid, others not; some were efficient, others less so (indeed several were effectively replaced before referendum day). The regional organisers in their turn had their difficulties with Europe House: one wrote, 'Unless you wish to visit me in Holloway, please review this estimated cost'; another telegraphed an ultimatum that 'This office will close permanently unless April expenses reimbursed by 5 p.m. today'; and a third entered the plea: 'Please keep us



posted . . . e.g. who is Mr Guggenheimer?' It was the job of the regional organisers to help Europe House to activate and reorganise existing branches, to split them where they covered more than one town or constituency, to give them the right cross-party image, and above all to found new Britain in Europe groups in all the towns or constituencies in which there were none. Later their chief task was to help the local efforts during the campaign, supervise the groups, and where necessary keep them in line.

The establishment of local groups was at first slow. At the beginning of March 1975 papers circulating at BIE headquarters may have mentioned a hundred new local groups but people in the field estimated that half these were only phantom platoons. The real build-up occurred during April – and when on May 3 a rally for local activists was held at the Odeon cinema, Leicester Square, it was clear that 303 groups did really exist. Their number rose to 452 by referendum day.

When the time came to integrate them into the central campaign, the pre-existing European Movement branches posed their own problems which the central organisers did not always deal with in the most tactful of ways. Avon was described by a headquarters organiser as 'the strongest branch in the country. I had to smash it to pieces.' (The debris left in the wake of that operation – thought necessary in order to make it conform to the general guidelines – needed careful local diplomacy to clear up.) In Gateshead there had been some two dozen people actively involved in the European Movement for some years who complained:

The decisions of the central campaign as they were transmitted to us made it extremely difficult to organise and correlate any campaign whatsoever. We were advised that each group in the North East had to have a Labour Chairman, we were also informed that the old nucleus of the European Movement had no right to meet and that its members had no right to be involved in collecting money. It seemed to several of us who did not belong to the Labour Party that the campaign in the North East was being run clearly for the benefit of that party.

In Wales there were the reverse complaints – that to follow headquarters' instructions and try to bring in Conservatives

would only prove counter-productive. There was a period of confusion while Britain in Europe instructions were being transmitted on European Movement notepaper to groups who had been told to put aside the intellectual, federalist, in-group image of the European Movement and to reorganise on a constituency basis with visibly all-party support. People who had witnessed to the European faith when it was heresy found themselves jostled out of their offices in favour of better-known worthies, usually local politicians. But then – though 'these johnny-come-latelies might not be able to tell the Commission from the Council, or a Decision from a Directive' – if they could deliver the local votes, that was all that mattered; in fact the more recent their conversion, the better would the uncommitted or the potential converts be able to identify with them and follow them to the polls. In Preston the European Movement simply refused to disband and fought the referendum campaign as such. But in most such cases it was the old European Movement people who deliberately initiated the new local organisation by bringing in all the parties, the churches, industry and where possible the local trades council or trade unions, and then stepped down to lead from behind.

In the new groups it was often people who had no previous connection with the European Movement who got together almost by accident to start things up and then discovered that there was a national organisation willing, and indeed eager, to help them. The Elmbridge in Europe campaign 'started spontaneously in late February before any of us had heard of Britain in Europe'. In Sussex one group

was formed over gin-and-tonic one Sunday morning in February by the three people who became the Officers of the group. The idea was born because of the extreme frustration at the total lack of any sort of activity by any political party to anticipate the need to campaign for a 'Yes' vote in the referendum.

In Huntingdon the initiative was taken by the British export manager of an American company who had joined the Conservatives in 1961, 'flirted with South Kensington Liberals in a vegetarian restaurant', and then after a period as a member of the Young European Left became an active Liberal by the time of the 1974 election. In Kensington 'we began to organise

ourselves right back in August 1974. There were approximately half a dozen of us who seemed to be interested in one way or another.' In Aberystwyth a local Liberal postgraduate, 'after waiting a week or so early in March and finding that no initiative was being taken by anyone (I would have willingly supported such initiative), called together a few people to start things up'. In some areas two such spontaneous efforts took place unbeknown to each other, and then had to be merged. In some cases — like West Dorset, North Hampshire and West Oxfordshire — the local Conservative MPs were asked to get things going, while further branches were set up very often through visits by the regional organisers of Britain in Europe as late as May, at meetings in private homes, pubs or 'in the back room of a lawyer's office'.

Then there were other constituencies, where no genuine cross-party activity got going, and the main work was then done by what were virtually party groups thinly disguised under a Britain in Europe label — with the Conservatives usually later in the field, but rather thicker on the ground, than the Liberals. As a Conservative organiser wrote from the East Midlands:

Towards the end of the campaign, where no groups existed, we persuaded the Party Organisations to reform themselves into official committees. This enabled them to obtain free literature and grants from the umbrella organisation . . . at least one county briefing meeting was attended by 20 political opponents who never realised that they were at a Tory meeting.

In Gloucester on the other hand, the Group Secretary caused consternation by initially giving the Conservative Association as his address. But whenever possible the regional organisers did what one of them called 'a stitch-up job on our groups, politically to balance the three parties'. As a result, in the last few days of May, of the 417 groups who reported to the London headquarters, 88% claimed Conservative, 76% Liberal and 23% Labour official local support.

The local groups were advised to call themselves 'Scarborough in Europe' and so forth to associate local pride with the European concept — but not to call themselves, as at least one group did, 'Fareham *for* Europe' (so as to avoid being confronted with an opposite 'Pooh Corner for *Britain*' group).

The groups usually started with half a dozen people calling a larger meeting, and then hoping that the operation would snowball publicly, which it usually did. In Weston-super-Mare the group, as a variation on the usual theme, called itself 'The West Says Yes' — a slogan also used generally in the West Country; its secretary afterwards counted 219 addresses of helpers (or helping couples) to be thanked and 'certainly at least 250 people did something active.' In fact in early May Europe House asked for the names and addresses of helpers in the hope that these would, after the battle was over, form fertile ground for strengthening the European Movement. Over 50,000 addresses came flooding in.

The work of these groups was suggested centrally and adopted — usually pared down — locally. Potters Bar in Europe not untypically decided their campaign would have to be limited to five objectives:

- (a) An informative leaflet in every door
- (b) A public meeting
- (c) The provision of an information centre
- (d) A poster campaign
- (e) A polling day vote-catching.

Other groups devoted particular attention also to letter-writing to local newspapers, attempts to use the local broadcasting station, manning telephones to reply to questions and counter-arguments, or leaflet distributions at shopping centres, while in Aldershot 'we accosted the commuters'. In Sandwell there were bi-weekly lunchtime forums organised under church auspices. In many places speakers were supplied to Rotary lunches, Townswomen's Guilds, and sixth-form debates. Bristol in Europe even made a forty-minute local film shown on Harlech Television.

At the end of May, of the 417 branches that reported to headquarters, 196 had set up a disused shop in their area (in Chipping Camden a horsebox) as an information centre. The York shop counted something like 8,000 visitors. 43% of branches claimed to have completed a house-to-house literature drop, while another 70% intended to do so in the last five days of the campaign. What 'house-to-house' actually meant was variable — in several towns '100% meant every house was leafleted twice', while Wellingborough stated categorically that 'in this

constituency 100% meant 100%', but some branches, particularly in the countryside, admitted much lower proportions. Half the groups declared that they had no intention of carrying out a canvass. Lack of manpower was the chief reason given though we shall see (p. 129–30) that there were other reasons as well.

In many groups, particular efforts went into the production of a local pamphlet (often based on the model supplied by national headquarters) to prove that 'Nuneaton and Bedworth will be better off within the EEC,' 'Rugby, the hub of the British road and rail networks communicating with Europe, is ideally placed to benefit,' 'Grimsby is at the heart of Europe but on the edge of Britain,' 'An increasing number of foreigners are coming to conferences in Brighton,' and even 'The Border area has proved to be highly suitable for the growing of vegetables especially peas. Access to the European Common Market will offer greater opportunities for the full development of this potential.' In Harborough local industrialists pointed out that 'The Community has more than 250 million pairs of feet to fit. That is why Footwear people say "Stay In".'

Local disbursements from the Community's Regional Fund, 'low interest loans for example nearly £23 million for development in Llanwern and Port Talbot', 'Fact – a local company has received a grant of £183,000 from the EEC for the construction of fishing vessels,' and 'the construction and equipping of an egg-packing station at Downton' were marshalled as concrete evidence of local benefits received.

In these local publications, the propaganda could be tailored to the area. Thus while in Colchester an EEPTU shop steward was pictured standing up for the Community as an embodiment of 'the old trade union principles of the international brotherhood of man', Pudsey in Europe claimed 'The Common Market has come to the aid of Britain's hard pressed textile workers . . . negotiating to limit the flood of cheap textiles from Pakistan, Hong Kong and Korea.' A district nurse from West Mersey argued 'national prosperity means more money for Welfare Services and hospitals, not just fatter pay packets,' and Colchester in Europe recalled that 'as a garrison town, Colchester remembers too well how a divided nationalist Europe has brought war to these shores.' The Salisbury leaflet warned that a victory for the No's 'poses the greatest threat to the Salisbury area – for without a doubt part of their policy would

be further large-scale defence cuts, many of which would involve the Plain and its military installations.'

In a large number of these pamphlets, local notables were paraded to lend respectability to the cause. In Suffolk: 'we the undersigned, who between us received every vote cast in Eye in last October's election, believe very strongly . . .' In Berwick-on-Tweed an eight-page 'Common Market Referendum Preview' published as a supplement to the *Berwick Advertiser* contained facsimiles of 120 local signatures 'from all walks of life' and such advertising as that of a local trading firm depicting a happy cows, lorries of barley, oats and wheat driving to Berwick, and boats leaving Berwick heavily laden for the continent.

These local leaflets sometimes had a 'mock newspaper format' which 'would not of course have deceived a drunken child of three into supposing it was really a newspaper,' and in contrast to the closely printed texts published by the anti-Marketeters, photos and artwork abounded: the West Dorset committee – which included a Catholic priest, the Archdeacon of Sherborne, a minister of the United Church, a GMWU member, a retired naval commander, a playwright and someone from the Hotels and Restaurant Association – featured on its cover a full-page frontal photo of Dorset's landmark, the Cerne Giant. (A resignation from the Committee was averted by covering the more prominent part of the Giant's anatomy with a diagonal strip asking, 'What does it mean to West Dorset?') These pamphlets were thus frequently the biggest items in the budgets of the local groups.

After initial anxieties, when 'we should have taken our financial courage in our hands' (Basingstoke), by May it became clear that finance would not generally prove any major problem. The national organisation primed the pump with £30 to any properly constituted constituency group, and then groups raised their own funds, though they were told to keep their fingers off a long list of Britain's biggest companies, which were to be tapped only by the central organisation. (This proved a cause for some ructions, particularly where these companies clearly had a local base outside London, and was later relaxed.) Britain in Europe held eighteen fund-raising courses in different cities, and provided an audio-visual guide (which was regarded by many as being 'too tough'). Actual fund-raising by the local groups varied in its methods and its efficacy. In Exeter a recently retired bank manager raised

£900 by personal contact and through a telephone exercise by two lady helpers, though industry gave no support, for fear of antagonising their unions or workforce. In Merton on the other hand a persuasive lady's voice coaxed over £1,200 out of local businesses over the telephone. One home counties constituency stopped its fund-raising when less than half the appeal letters had gone out, but £1,500 had already come in. Another branch, also in the wealthier parts of the South, raised well over £4,000 and finished up not only giving away £815 to other branches but another £550 to charity at the end of the day.

Oxford in Europe raised £1,581 and received £350 from BIE; it spent £1,887 (including £500 on a secretary) and ended up with £44 in the bank. In Cambridge the Treasurer having raised 'over £1,300 mainly from individuals', found himself accused of hoarding money for future use instead of blowing it all on the referendum campaign. West Dorset 'raised somewhat over £1,000, of which we spent £500 during the campaign.' North Hampshire raised £1,362 (excluding a further £1,000 the spending of which a local firm kept under its own control) and its report reflected, 'It is really rather frightening that we collected so much (about two thirds the legal entitlement for a parliamentary election in this county constituency).' Bridgwater raised £600 in donations never larger than £30 and spent £500. Chester raised £492 and overspent by £2. In Arundel 'we collected £196 and our expenses were £193.' In Grantham, at the other extreme, the local group raised only £35.

On average, expenditure probably totalled a few hundred pounds per group with a quarter of a million as a fair guess for their total spending on top of the nationally reported figures. Any precautionary surplus left over at the end was sent to the European Movement, kept for future use in case a branch of the European Movement were to be set up (Walsall), or for a charitable fund to sponsor educational trips (West Dorset), or else spent on a winding-up party at which local activists could get together to reminisce over the excitements of the campaign, talk over future common action, or else very definitely say good-bye to each other to resume their traditional antagonisms.

The judgements on the central organisation by the local groups were very varied. A Derbyshire branch thought Europe House 'terrific' and Old Park Lane 'most impressive'. Southampton in Europe on the other hand felt they both promised more than they could fulfil with the right hand never knowing

what the left hand was doing. A Gloucestershire branch 'ran its campaign almost in spite of BIE headquarters', and in Bristol it was suspected that to Europe House 'all group members are country bumpkins'.

At first, it was the experience of many groups that the supply of national literature — as in Blackpool — was 'terrible . . . we had at times not one scrap of literature to hand out, we didn't get enough for two wards, never mind 38.' In mid-April the Richmond shop got rid of all the available literature in four hours, and attempts were made to stop other information centres opening until more literature was printed. Britain in Europe did not want to let the campaign 'peak' too early and so risk apathy in the last week or two. There were doubts at headquarters on how many local groups would finally be formed and how much material they would be able to distribute. Then there were prolonged discussions as to who should print what material. By the time the financial controllers of Britain in Europe had given the go-ahead in early May, there happened to be a printer's go-slow. Suddenly almost at the end of May, things went from one extreme to the other and groups complained, like North Wiltshire, of 'floods of paper, most of it irrelevant' or, like Eastleigh, that the campaign headquarters must have had 'literature coming out of its ears'. Maidstone regarded it as 'irritating to find that so much unasked-for free material was dumped on us at the last moment. Organisation at HQ seemed to be chaotic.' In Taunton people worried over democratic fairness as it became 'increasingly apparent that expense was little or no object' and in the end all over the country material had — as in Nottinghamshire — to be 'surreptitiously got rid of via dustbins'. 'Too much and too late' was the recurring phrase; as the Aberystwyth group put it, 'if we'd had it two months earlier we could have distributed in a much more rational way and prevented the impression of paper waste that was so obvious to us — enough to make those conscious of waste and believing in re-cycling a bit sick.'

Some groups complained that they were not shown specimens of what they could order, nor told what was free and what needed paying for. (In the end the vast bulk was free.) The quality of the literature was regarded by Huntingdon as 'such a mixed bag of oddments, a few thousand of this and that, that the whole exercise was devalued.' Much of the material 'was rather inferior and appeared to provide employment for too

many HQ "cooks" who added nothing to the campaign'. Though in Bolton the 'availability of some literature in Urdu and Gujarati was much appreciated by our 8% immigrant voters,' the Leicester group felt they had to print their 'own leaflet for immigrants in two languages basically because the London leaflet for immigrants came printed on a green coloured paper which is, apparently, of tremendous religious significance and would have been regarded as insulting had they received it.' And there was widespread particular criticism of the poster 'Jobs for the Boys' (see p. 92) for its class and sex bias as much as for its slogan. In fact in Bristol 'the antis were actually exhibiting these posters on Saturdays to show how horrible the pro-people were.'

There was also, some of the groups thought, far too much 'organisational ineptitude' (Guildford), too detailed instructions and too cumbersome procedures. The Forest of Dean complained of 'very unreasonable demands upon people' and West Oxfordshire felt 'They very nearly drowned us in bumph... Many of the BIE directives we never had time to read; they came daily, book-size.' But the national headquarters were faced with the risk of chaos, unwitting infringements of the law, and activities that might have reflected adversely on the cause, and therefore chose to err on the side of nannying its supporters.

In Preston people came to feel 'Fund organisers down in London, and on the TV, seemed to assume the rest of the country also took a month off work to help the Labour government out of its self-inflicted difficulties.' A Conservative agent from Kent wrote:

The support from Old Park Lane and Whitehall Place was that of enthusiastic amateurs. They hadn't a clue on organising a campaign. They had no overall plan and cascaded organisers with mountains of paper. Literature in its thousands arrived as if there was a paid labour force standing to attention twenty-four hours a day waiting to be employed.

And from Cambridgeshire came the comment:

The over-centralisation was I think a mistake. If a smaller central organisation of the real professionals had concentrated on quality instead of quantity in producing material, if

the regions had had stronger organisations with some local autonomy to adapt some material to fit local needs (i.e. some northern critics I met did not admire the pretty-pretty material I so much admired which seemed to meet southern tastes), any administrative savings could have gone on a means-tested basis to organisations who had no significant support from either industry or unions.

It would be unfair to stress this too much, but there were also distinct signs of irritation in a number of idealistic pro-Market groups in the last week or so, as the campaign really reached its crescendo: 'In general I found the use of Madison Avenue techniques of saturation publicity distasteful. The European cause, an *idealist* cause, was demeaned by projecting it by the methods suited to the sales campaign for a new deodorant.' And from a university town came the comment, 'The last 48 hours had an air of unreality about it — as if we all realised we had just taken part in a national con trick!' Others reflected that 'the referendum campaign involved a great expenditure of time, energy and money which the parlous state of the British economy could ill afford' (Maidstone) and many concluded, on referenda in general, 'Never again'.

While many groups complained of 'apathy in Accrington' among the general public, the activists whipped themselves and each other into almost frenzied activity. Finding that East Midlands people would not display posters in their windows, 'three of us went round fly-posting — three giggling middle-aged delinquents working from a fast car with an eye out for the police.' In spite of 'the extremes of chapel-bum inflicted by the chairs of some village halls' and some awareness that 'political meetings — at least at the village hall level — have a lot in common with amateur theatricals: they are great fun for the actors, but not much for anyone else,' the groups were determined to win at least 'the feeling of having participated in an important political event (what did you do in the Great Debate, daddy? I bored the pants off them, son)'. Many had no illusions as to 'whether our antics influenced any votes, or even influenced anyone to vote; however, such activity is conventional, so we did it.' But even these hard-boiled sceptics did it — as in Basingstoke — 'most of all because of how we should have felt if our side lost, and we had done nothing. We may not

have been able to do much nobly to save, but we could easily meanly have lost, the last best hope on earth.'

Of course there were moments of weariness, and from Lancashire one organiser reports that he

came unstuck just once, in an AUEW dominated factory on a 3-day week, with very skilled Communist opponents (actually quite nice blokes) and a very weak (Liberal!) chairman. That left a miserably cold ride home 40 miles late at night on the motorcycle, all on a half of lager and a packet of crisps – I felt my 63 years of age for once.

But as the campaign progressed the pro-Marketeers became more and more conscious of the momentum of their cause, and sometimes got almost high on civic euphoria. Asked by an anti-Marketeer where they got their inspiration from, the dynamo of the pro group in a mining area proudly replied 'From each other'. Phrases like 'refreshing', 'invigorating', 'a joy' or 'certainly the most interesting exercise of my political life so far' recur. As a Labour MP put it:

It harnessed energy, enthusiasm, talent and goodwill in a quite unique way. It was marvellous to be free of the traditional restraints; the caution of agents, the touchiness of the old guard, the parsimony of treasurers, the endless cups-of-tea. It had all the improvisation of Dunkirk and much of the steadfastness of the Battle of Britain.

One local organiser found 'the whole exercise most stimulating; indeed the doctor sent me to bed a few days before the Referendum because I was suffering from overtiredness'; and another concluded that she 'felt pretty ill by the end of the campaign, finishing with a temperature of 102°. It was all so worth while.'

Indeed perhaps a special word should be said of the women who participated on both sides, finding the unstructured *ad hoc* organisation one in which they could immediately take a leading part untrammelled by conventional hierarchies. In one dormitory constituency of the South East

the first meeting was tense and I believe that it only succeeded due to a remark by a very attractive and

outspoken University lecturer's wife (the only non-political guest), who told the Conservative chairman to grow up and stop behaving like a child. We never saw him again, but the next meeting indicated a marked change of attitude. We ended up with a Steering Committee made up of two Conservative vice-chairmen and two each from the Liberals and socialists all holding office in their local associations.

In the South West an enterprising Conservative aspirant, who on a social occasion expressed a 'burning desire' to keep in touch with the stylish left-of-centre secretary of the pro-Market group, found himself harnessed to the European chariot for the duration. Many of the women were campaigning almost full-time while running their families as best they could. On the pro-Market side a mother of four pays tribute to ten and twelve year olds who 'supplied the family and visiting speakers with meals and led European enthusiasm in their respective schools' though the five year old turned the other way, proclaiming she wanted Britain out of Europe 'to stop Mummy trying to keep Britain in'. On the other side of the fence, an equally ardent Norfolk anti-Marketeer thanks her young son who 'while mum went round leafletting spent endless time sitting in the car in pouring rain with his little sister', while a London agent's wife found her hall so barricaded with bales of literature that it was almost impossible to get out of the house and put up a notice saying 'Welcome to Colditz'.

Over and over again the pro-Marketeers confess – as in Arundel, Chester and Havering – 'We all enjoyed ourselves.' And what gave the exercise such zest was both: 'the good of the cause and because we enjoy each other's company'. That was not to deny that there were serious frictions within many of the local groups – usually between those who had axes to grind that went beyond the referendum itself. The non-party members of these groups – as on Humberside – often found themselves shocked and upset by 'trouble-makers' who 'cannot restrain themselves from using whatever platform they are offered for their own ultimate gain'. Local party organisations more often than not refused to canvass either independently or in harness with other parties: on the one hand they wanted to keep things all-party, yet they also did not want to divide their own party more than necessary or stir up the anti-Marketeers; and in various places party officers refused to co-operate in a

canvass for fear that the other party might gain information from their canvass cards or prestige by canvassing some district on its own, or seem upgraded by canvassing in harness with the majority party. At one stage Liberal pro-Marketeers were actually encouraged from the centre to use the referendum very much for Liberal Party ends.<sup>2</sup> From one constituency in the South the Local group organiser reported:

Although a Liberal, I am ashamed to say that of all three parties, they did more to sabotage the all-party approach than any other factor. There was also some quite improper handling of funds allocated to individual party groups. In my opinion the Liberals put party before country.

And a prominent Conservative reflected afterwards, 'The Liberals tended to play it dirty and to see their campaign as a purely pro-Liberal exercise. David Steel did a good deal to put this right and he played it straight.' But the Liberals were not the only ones to be accused of playing party politics through their referendum effort. In Blackpool a Liberal discovered a posse of Conservative dignitaries who had promised to distribute BIE literature from door to door all putting Conservative literature out with it. 'I have a written apology from the Agent. What made me laugh was that they should do it in my ward

<sup>2</sup>The Liberal Campaign Director wrote from Whitehall Place in March 1975:

... it looks as though about 400 Constituency Associations will be engaged in the Campaign.

This is the biggest response the party has had to any of its recent national campaigns...

The Campaign's objectives are in order of importance —

- 1) To maintain a distinct and different image for the Liberal Party throughout the Campaign and beyond.
- 2) To ensure that as many people as possible know what the Liberal Party stands for, and to reinforce Liberal voters' faith in the Party.
- 3) To keep Britain in Europe.
- 4) To emphasise and exploit the divisions in other political parties.
- 5) To strengthen the Party organisation and put activists in good heart for fighting an early General Election...

*Warning:* Cooperation with others. There will be no joint campaigns with either of the other parties. You must not join a joint Conservative/Liberal campaign or a joint Labour/Liberal campaign. There is however no objection to cooperation on an all-party or non-party basis.

These objectives had to be toned down in a circular of April which placed greater emphasis on cross-party co-ordination. See p. 81.

where they were bound to be caught.' From one group after another one reads that — as in West Dorset — 'the non-party members at times had to smooth ruffled feathers where politicians believed unfair party points were being scored.'

Most of these kinds of troubles were, however, storms in a teacup, and at the local level where the parties really wanted to be involved, overall party co-operation was reasonably good. From the Nottingham area a Labour pro-Marketeer reported: 'The Conservatives were a wow at welcoming people in the foyer. Actually the Tories had all chosen to wear lilac or plum-coloured ties, instead of the usual blue, as a conciliatory gesture to the Socialists. They were MAD when they found out I never noticed.' In Avon the Conservatives' loudspeaker car announced the only local pro-Market Labour MP's presence to answer questions in a shopping centre, and in East Grinstead the Conservative MP 'had all three party colours on his vehicle' as he toured the constituency in the pro-Market cause. Indeed in Shepway Conservatives had to be stopped by their own people from putting Labour Party material through the door, while in another Southern constituency this is just what they were encouraged to do. In Leicestershire pro-Market Labour people not only did not object to joint campaigning, 'indeed they came to relish it.' Such cross-party merging of campaign identity at times led to piquant incongruity: as when a Conservative-Liberal team toured the back streets of Durham with the slogan 'Support your Labour Government — Vote Yes to Europe' or the Conservative Party loudspeaker car (no doubt with the appropriate accent) picketed the works gates of one of the most militant factories in Leigh with the cry: 'Workers of Europe unite!'

Two results of this cross-party and non-party exercise may be that new personnel has been drawn into local political life, some of them already casting about for new causes in which to organise party co-operation, and also that certain personal bridges and some greater mutual understanding was built up across party barriers. Almost every group seemed to have come to 'the realisation how easy it was, with a little effort, to find common ground on a whole range of issues', that the other side was 'human (almost)' or that — as in Sussex — they could no longer 'regard each other as people with horns and tails'. There was in places a certain cosiness about it: in one Midlands village, 'We were a well-heeled, well-spoken lot, average age 45,'

while in Bolton the group were 'working amicably and good-humouredly together in a common cause. They were all the nicest and most sensible people from all parties, naturally.' After a meeting addressed by Ted Heath and Reg Prentice, the platform party adjourned to a local hotel afterwards:

It was a merry party and at the end of it, in the usual manner, the men kissed all the women farewell. It was then that a stalwart Labour Alderman was heard to remark plaintively: 'Now I know the difference between a Conservative and a Labour meeting: at *our* meetings, nobody ever kisses anybody!'

Labour people, in particular, felt that they did learn something about fund-raising from the joint exercise, and some Conservatives appear to have learnt something about trade unionism. The Devizes Britain in Europe Committee was still urging the nation's leaders in the autumn to 'be generous enough to take a similar initiative in respect of the nation's other affairs',<sup>3</sup> and one organiser reported 'I have the offer of £10,000 to get something going.'

Nevertheless: 'The local parties may have tasted the delight of co-operation but I do not think they can get hooked on it', was a comment from the South West, while in West Oxfordshire 'Most of us found the political truce refreshing and some wish it could continue. Others were clearly relieved to get back to arguing, which we did in a fairly drunken way on the night of the result.' 'At this level it isn't dogma that divides the parties, but attitudes... the hatred most Labour activists feel for the Tories and vice versa is very real, and should never be underestimated,' reported the Secretary of a branch where the truce lasted only till the evening of referendum day itself; then her Conservative allies 'could restrain themselves no longer and began ribbing me and the other odd Socialist present about the ending of the truce - 12.00 midnight, Cinderella, and pumpkins... I smiled wearily and went home.' So for the most part this 'grand coalition' spirit evaporated and temporary friends from the heady referendum days 'have slipped back into their respective closed shells' greatly to the regret particularly of the non-party campaigners, like the one from the North West

<sup>3</sup> Letter to *The Times*, Oct 4, 1975.

who wrote: 'Now we are back to playing politics again, which seems to me an awful waste of time... we can all work together, and we have proved it.'

In many areas, the pro-Marketeers seem hardly to have come across the anti-Marketeers, except at the count, where they were well represented. In Gateshead: 'To some extent we were fighting a shadow battle with the anti-Marketeers who were difficult to identify and one had to be careful not to destroy them too much because one needed the opposition.' From the Cotswolds one pro-Marketeer commented on the other side: 'Their own main rally collected an audience of three. (I felt sorry for them that night.) The most daunting thing, for them and us alike, was public apathy.' And from Weston-super-Mare came the rhetorical question: 'Would it be true to say that, if Mr Smith-Cox had never been born, there would have been no anti activity at all?' In Arundel the pro-Market group reported,

The anti-Marketeers were conspicuous by their absence in the areas we covered and only manifested themselves at our first meeting in the form of two rather furtive ladies who crept round the hall at the start of the meeting putting anti leaflets on all the seats - including a Liberal anti Leaflet! They did not even stay to heckle.

In Bridgwater, by contrast, the anti-marketeers reported that 'The only semi-dramatic incident was when the Chairman of the pro-Marketeers took the entire stock of anti-Market literature from the table, whilst his opponent was speaking to an audience of students at the local farm institute, and hid them under the carpet.'

In general, relations between the pro and anti factions at the local level - where they ever came across each other - tended to be correct; in some cases - as in Somerset - they even 'spoke and waved to each other wherever they met'. There appears to have been occasional undercover activity on both sides: in one part the pro-Marketeers believed 'they had a spy in our camp and our minutes landed up on their Secretary's file,' while in another part of the country the pro-Marketeers reported 'we had infiltrated their committee, though we didn't gain much useful knowledge from that.' But of course there were the odd incidents - in Surrey a pro-Marketeer had his car smeared with lipstick, in Hertfordshire a 'borrowed shop was



painted with black spray from top to bottom and the locks sealed with plastic padding', and in various places posters were torn down — but nothing much more than that. In fact the pro-Marketeers could be fairly relaxed in their attitude towards their opponents.

### *The Anti-Marketeers*

The atmosphere that pervades the reports from the anti-Market groups is often a rather different one from that of the pro-Marketeers. There were many straightforward and good-humoured reports, but a significant minority reflected deep and bitter disappointment. Two Labour Party members from Cumbria wrote: 'The result has shattered our morale — indeed the depression which descended upon us still lingers.' Partly no doubt this reflected their defeat by the ballot box — and to account for a battle lost is a very different matter from recalling one which, in spite of all the muddles, ended in triumph. But in a great many cases there was more to it than that. Members of several anti-Market groups wrote explaining why they would not provide information about their activities — usually because the battle was by no means over. Thus for example:

Our image with the public would be irreparably damaged if you were to print the truth — that our campaign was a shambles from beginning to end, from top to bottom. That we were infiltrated, taken over, and made use of by the Communist Party at many levels and in many areas, and that everything possible was done to make certain that we lost the confidence not only of the uncommitted but also of the previously well disposed among all moderate and right-wing voters.

A correspondent from Aberdeen added, 'In Scotland it was even more blatant, the infiltrators hardly bothering to make any pretence, cancelling meetings not organised by them, and shouldering out from TV etc. programmes those of us who have been in the fight since 1962.'

But the main complaints from anti-Marketeers were not against their anti-Market allies but against the government, against the media, and against the wealth and influence of the pro-Market groups. Three 'Women against the Common Market'

(WACM) challenged the authors to publish their view that 'The referendum was morally rigged and probably mechanically rigged also. There was a grossly unfair money allocation to the two sides, with two YES leaflets from the Government against one NO'. In Brighton 'the deferring of the counting of the ballot papers for about eight hours (overnight) following the breaking of the ballot box seals' was seen as 'a point for suspicion', while from a Liverpool group of anti-Marketeers comes the report that some of their local activists '... still believe that they won the Referendum but that the ballot boxes were switched, except in the Shetlands where the lapse of time made exposure more probable.' Clearly that kind of suspicion was felt only by a minority, but again and again the referendum was described as 'a farce' (Salisbury) or 'a travesty of democracy' (Oxford). A retired Flight Lieutenant declared that 'we were the real grass-roots organisation who were beaten by nothing short of blackmail.' A lady from Torbay wrote, 'The "game" was dirty throughout... we didn't stand a snowball's chance in hell,' and a lady from Chichester called it 'one of the biggest con tricks in history'.

As far as grass-roots support was concerned, the constituent bodies of the National Referendum Campaign believed they started out with rather more numerous local organisations than the pro-Marketeers; however, many of them were tiny fringe groups operating under different and often changing labels: Anti-Common Market League, Common Market Safeguards Campaign, Keep Britain Out, Get Britain Out, and one or two others. In some cases — such as Devonshire — the leaders of different such groups 'behaved like tribal war chiefs' against each other. Some of the groups had come into existence in the 1970–2 period, some earlier — and there had been others that had not survived. After the February 1974 election GBO in particular made a systematic effort to form new branches, claiming some 480 in the provinces and ninety-five in London by referendum day. In the East Midlands, for example, one man reported that he was Secretary of two closely overlapping groups:

1. The East Midlands Anti-Common Market Campaign. Based mainly on the Nottingham–Derby complex. Founded 1971. I am proud to have been a founding member. Affiliated primarily to CMSC and the Anti-

Common Market League. Branches were entirely independent, with separate committees, but shortly before the Referendum campaign opened we decided to form an overall joint committee.

2. The South Derbyshire 'Get Britain Out' Campaign. Formed, in co-operation with 'Get Britain Out Referendum Campaign' initiatives in the East Midlands, specifically as a Referendum campaign group.

Some of these groups were little more than the Trades Council, the local branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union, or a local Labour Party adopting referendum warpaint (just as some local Conservative Associations took on the guise of Britain in Europe branches). In Braintree it was the local Communists who virtually turned themselves into GBO, but fortunately the Chairman of another GBO group was on the National Executive of the CP and could give orders to mitigate Communist domination in Braintree. On Merseyside the Communists were so much in evidence in the local GBO that some Labour anti-Marketeters kept out of the campaign. But for the most part the local anti-Market groups embraced a rather wider sector of the political spectrum with strong participation from the extremes of left and right. (As one pro-Marketeter put it, 'In military terms, we were fighting on "interior lines".') The Burnley group had as its chairman

... an Anarchist, as Secretary (myself) a Communist, as Treasurer ... a member of the Labour Party, plus a committee of uncommitted socialists, members of the Anarchists, Communists, and Labour Party with one solitary member of the Conservative Party, who I think felt rather out of place, but nevertheless contributed to the common cause.

We also had one or two Scottish members of the committee who no-one could tell what they were saying for most of the time. They worked very hard indeed and went canvassing nearly every night - whether anyone on the doorstep understood them is debatable.

In Woking it was essentially a '... left-wing campaign, involving a loose-knit organisation of Labour Party, Trades Council, Communist Party and Co-operative activists', and the Ipswich

group consisted of some '... Labour Party activists, a few disenchanted Conservatives and a number of members of the Communist Party. There were also some businessmen and a couple who were not quite National Front, but close.' Yet it was little use having a left-wing group in a middle-class dormitory town, or a committee of right-wingers trying to organise rallies in a Labour city. The problem was to find the right political mix for each area. The anti-Market campaign was not always successful, but some of the initial mistakes were redressed as the campaign went on.

In many places cross-party collaboration worked very well. In Bridgwater, where four Conservatives and two Labour (county or district) councillors formed the backbone of the campaign without Liberal or other party support, 'relations between members of the anti-Market Committee who were of opposite party political persuasion nationally were most friendly. The big joke was that "we 'extremists' seem to get on together just as well as the 'moderates' do.'" As in the case of the pro-Marketeters, so some anti-Marketeters learnt a good deal about their unexpected new allies. The only Conservative on one GBO committee found that the socialists were 'enthusiastic, hard-working, most likeable, but mainly apparently unable to leave out political views, and conversed privately, or publicly, as if addressing a Trade Union Conference.' She thus gained '... a knowledge of pleasant working, for the first time, with Socialists, for a common cause.' A lady from Norfolk reported, '... I have learnt one thing myself - that is that not all Trade Unionists are selfish left-wing extremists but are in many cases more patriotic than many a Tory and certainly as hard working as many employers! This is a minor revolution in my own philosophy,' and an academic wrote, 'I, for one, am more sympathetic now to the Labour Party and to organised trades unionism than I was before. Only someone as blinkered as Edward Heath could provoke into opposition people who are a good deal more loyal and patriotic than he is.' As a Communist anti-Market organiser concluded, 'It is the struggle that educates, and we in Burnley feel that we educated a good many people.' On the other hand to a lady from Twickenham all this was deeply distasteful: 'I found myself driven to consort with Communists, international socialists, left-wing Labour Party members and Maoists on this issue. Only a most passionate love of this country gave me the stomach to do so.' But the Left, too,

had its scruples. Thus an Edinburgh anti-Marketeer wrote, '... Trotskyite elements in both the Labour Party and some of the Trades Councils managed to ensure that there was no co-operation with other anti-Market organisations ... the enemies of the working-class!'; and indeed in many places, it would seem 'While the Right were perfectly happy to work with anyone on the Left, despite misgivings, the Left were more reluctant to work with the Right.' In at least one area of London, '... the National Front gave us an uncomfortable forty minutes, demanding to be allowed to join the Campaign. If any of us had any doubts before that meeting, no-one did afterwards.' In Redbridge seven Conservatives went to a meeting organised by the local Co-op and were

... a bit dismayed to find there were so many Communists at it. Later on this group merged with the Local Labour Party anti-Marketeers, headed by the two local MPs ... The Co-op group declared that no National Front members or other 'racialists' could be admitted, as they would refuse to work with them!! Those among us who thought this unfair (some of us being likewise opposed to coloured immigration) decided to hold our peace.

Thus some meetings, as at Oxford,

... degenerated into an ideological dog-fight between the Trots from the Trades Council and the rest of us who were more concerned with getting Britain out than with maintaining our purity in the class struggle ... The Communists decided to work with us, not with the Trades Council.

Indeed in Reading the tensions appear to have proved too great:

... the Labour and Communist elements were suspicious of every move, for fear that credit might go to the Conservatives who were the only people to put up any money ... finally it was decided to separate, and except for a few socialists who broke away from their group we were mainly Conservatives.

Among the anti-Marketeers, as among BIE supporters, there were some who were considered by their colleagues to be doing the right thing for the wrong reason. Of one activist we are told

that he '... saw the campaign as an opportunity to push his political ambitions, and that he was not really interested in the subject. He got his name in the papers, and made a good impression – perhaps – on the local Labour Party; he is desperately anxious to get into Parliament...' Others were, if anything, overawed by the responsibility that they had taken upon themselves:

... Here I was influencing thousands of peoples' minds – nay their very mode of living, our very existence. Such power made me apprehensive – was I really right? I searched and re-searched. I knew my subject thoroughly. I was congratulated on my speeches – MPs applauded my efforts, school children asked for my autographs – 'You are doing this for our future' they said – and I felt no nicer words have ever been spoken to me. Newspapers carried my letters and reports of our meetings and articles. Thousands of letters poured through my letter box ...

In most of England – at least in the South – the active anti-Marketeers appear to have been, and often to have felt, outnumbered. But this was by no means universally so. In Hounslow 'we were undoubtedly more active than the pro-Marketeers, who were barely in evidence.' In Leeds, once the May local elections were out of the way,

The campaign was planned to include the usual activity; meetings, house-to-house leafleting at factory gates, distribution of literature inside factories via trade union contacts, poster distribution for display in houses, fly-posting and similar activity.

We rejected the idea that we should disrupt the meetings of the pro-market organisation but when we learned that the pro-market group had (as a result of considerable finance) opened a couple of shops (one very large shop in the centre of the City) we decided to organise leafleting outside the entrance.

The organisation became centred on the home of the secretary ... and a network of contacts was developed. The City was divided into 17 areas roughly corresponding to the postal districts (but somewhat larger). Seventeen local secretaries were appointed (members of the

Labour Party, the I.L.P. and the Communist Party). Each of these secretaries had a team of workers – the total number being something in excess of 350 workers . . . It was clear from the number of leaflets distributed and the number of posters put out, as compared with the pro-market campaign, that we had far more active workers than they did . . . Apart from a few students they did not seem to have many workers.

Yet some groups complain that ‘as each meeting was called, the number of helpers coming forward diminished’ or that their sympathisers – as in Redbridge – became ‘full of excuses – no time, sick aunts, children, husbands, art lessons, even sick dogs or cats – any old thing’. In East Anglia letters to the University Students Union remained without reply until finally

. . . one of our most enthusiastic helpers, himself an ex-UEA man, went to his former seat of learning in an endeavour to recruit some active supporters. For his pains, however, he received from a student a long lecture on how the campaign should be run. It was the day before the referendum; it was three o’clock in the afternoon; and the student was still in bed.

Many English groups complain how poor was local support from the trade unions, particularly in the South. Certainly in the South West ‘. . . in spite of the giant Transport and General Workers Union being officially anti-EEC very few of their shop stewards helped in the anti-Market campaign down here.’ In parts of the North – and, as we shall see, in Scotland and Wales – it was different. Certainly in Yorkshire both Arthur Scargill and the left wing of the AUEW came out strongly against membership and campaigned hard with the result that some pro-Market Labour MPs felt it prudent to adopt a low profile. The London Co-operative Society vigorously supported the anti-Market cause. But it was a great source of disappointment to the anti-Marketeters that so many constituency Labour parties declared themselves neutral, often locking up canvass records and loudspeaking gear to deny them to both sides; as one GBO regional organiser put it, ‘The cause in the South West was lost when local Labour Parties, with only the honourable exception of Exeter, decided to remain neutral. This “neutral-

ity” was as damaging as the “non-intervention” of the Chamberlain Government in the Spanish Civil War.’

In general ‘the further North one went, the stronger we were.’ But the general rule was full of exceptions, and as on the pro-Market side so with the anti-Marketeters organisation varied largely as a result of local factors and personalities. Maidstone was described as ‘appalling’ while Folkestone was good. In Sheffield there were a thousand workers for the cause, while in the North East the demoralised state of the Labour Party (after the corruption scandals in its midst) saw the left demoralised and apathetic. Bristol was extremely strong, while the South West was weak.

Overall, there may have been up to 100,000 people who did something active in the campaign, but of course any estimate must be highly uncertain.

Sometimes it was the smallest groups who were most intense in their efforts. Their dedication extended to their holidays: one man from Sevenoaks delivered 77,000 pamphlets single-handed, including 3,000 ‘whilst on holiday at Cirencester and Northleach’; another – from Inverness – ‘spent his annual holidays in France and Belgium collecting menus etc. and photographing shop windows for price comparison’.

The Leeds group did a neat bit of counter-leafletting at a gala where they handed out thousands of balloons bearing the slogan ‘Vote No’:

On that occasion it was obvious that people did not want bombarding with literature, and being sensitive and responsible citizens we stopped leafletting and went about the Gala park inviting people to put their pro-Market leaflets into refuse bags instead of littering the park. We reckon that we collected in the refuse bins nearly 100 per cent of leaflets handed out.

In Hampshire the group tried to set up ‘Home Information Centres in every village and in every street of every town’. In Bodmin ‘we all worked till we dropped.’ and the South West Regional Organiser for Get Britain Out confesses, ‘Frankly we put up a poor show although some of us nearly ruined our health.’ But as another man put it, ‘I should have been a hypocrite to have done less.’ And the depth of feeling that welled up in some cases may be gauged by the outsize cross

against NO on a disqualified ballot paper in Norwich which was marked: 'For my mates who died'.

Almost everywhere the anti-Marketeers felt — as in Salisbury — 'hamstrung by lack of funds'. In North Cumbria the 'Get Britain Out group was about 12–16 people who over a period of a couple of weeks distributed 40,000 leaflets of various kinds. The total money raised within the group was approx. £40 spent almost wholly on literature...' The same figure is reported from Sherborne in Dorset, half of it contributed by the local TGWU branch. Chertsey and Walton operated on 'limited funds of £70 raised locally'. Woking spent about £50, Hastings and St Leonards £69, Gosport collected and spent £80, Hounslow raised about £100, the Anti-Common Market Group in St Ives spent less than £150, the Isle of Wight raised £162, North Norfolk £178, Sevenoaks £199, and Preston raised £247 and spent £227. The New South and West Wales ACML spent £300 early in the year on one rally, and in Gwent 'We raised and spent about £250 but although we received several donations from Trade Union Branches and individuals, most of our activities were financed by the Committee itself.' Leeds 'raised about £400 from the trade union, Labour Party, ILP and CP supporters'. The very impressive Bridgwater group raised and spent about £500, plus its Chairman's expenses in speaking four or five nights a week as far afield as Devon and Gloucestershire. 'The bulk of the £500 raised by the Ealing GBO Committee came out of individuals' pockets and not, as initially hoped for, from the Labour Movement's resources.' On the other hand Sheffield spent £5,000 to £6,000, and GBO estimated that the total money spent by its 575 groups may have lain the region of £50,000 to £100,000 — an average of perhaps £100 to £150 per group.

In some cases the anti-Marketeers felt threatened or harassed:

In the business world, very few were prepared to speak out in public although many hate the bureaucracy, the regulations and the need to get information from Brussels before one's rivals. It is hard to oppose the very existence of their jobs and then go to get concessions from officials the next week.

In Central Norfolk 'the party machines had "gone to work" on any of our supporters who ventured to stick their neck out,' and 'reticence to show one's colours openly contributed in no

small way to our downfall.' In Cornwall 'there was a rather silly cloak and dagger atmosphere hanging around, with people insisting that their telephone was tapped, letters intercepted . . .,' and from St Ives came more specific reports that

... intimidating and life-threatening late-night phone calls were made to some of our members from men who claimed that their organisation had numerous underground groups throughout Europe. One was a Rumanian and the other came from Potsdam and we learned later that they were helping the pro-Marketeers in our part of the country.

At least the Reading anti-Marketeers could cope with the visible interference:

Twice people rang up who threatened to do us but nothing ever developed . . . In some areas our loud-speaker van was cheered but on one occasion we were followed by a very pro-Market driver who kept cutting in and trying to edge us off the road, but fortunately he lacked a loud-speaker and our broadcaster was an airline steward used to coping with all types of people so he very gently broadcast driving instructions to the idiot driver . . . This soon shifted the fellow.

In Chertsey, too, the anti-Marketeers had fun with their loudspeaker cars:

On the second cavalcade we were fortunate when going to the assembly point in Chertsey to discover the local MP, the strongly pro-Market Geoffrey Pattie, about to advertise the local Conservative Fair by driving around in a pony and trap. Our cavalcade was able to see to it that he had suitable escorts front and rear!

Indeed the 'motorcade' seems to have been used extensively by anti-Market groups: twenty-five to thirty cars led by Air Vice-Marshal Don 'Pathfinder' Bennett descended upon Chichester and Bognor Regis; sixteen cars toured Wanstead, Woodford and Barking; in Leeds the motorcade with headlights full on 'also played music — "The Old Pound Note, Don't Buy What It Used to Buy" . . .'; Torbay opted for patriotic music on the sea front, at Burnley there was a procession with trade

union banners; and the Islington Anti-Common Market Campaign treated old age pensioners and other Saturday morning shoppers to free eggs by the half dozen.<sup>4</sup>

GBO held some 1000 meetings in 1975, some of which were extremely well attended. In Folkestone on February 1 the Town Hall, the Magistrate's Court and the Lobby were filled for Enoch Powell and Clive Jenkins, and 200 people were turned away. 'It was a huge success, in fact never since the war has there been such a meeting in the Folkestone Town Hall.' At the Brighton Corn Exchange on March 1 the same two speakers drew over 1,500 people, some of them accommodated at an overflow meeting, and hundreds of others were turned away. On the other hand a Powell meeting in West Bromwich was nearly a disaster, with less than 200 people in the Town Hall.

While some groups were able to organise enthusiastic rallies with national figures, many more seem to have found the going hard and sensed early that the tide was running against them. At Doncaster the group delivered 200 invitations to a meeting at a private house, but 'Not a soul turned up' and an open-air market stall yielded no encouragement either:

This stall was our first real encounter with the general public and the amount of hostility we met came as a considerable shock. We quite realised, of course, that there would be a fair number of pro-Market supporters, but the strength of the opposition was rather shattering.

In Norfolk similar stalls seemed indicative of a sudden decisive swing in public opinion in the week during which the three official statements were delivered to all homes:

... Stalls were hired on consecutive Saturdays in Downham Market and Swaffham. The first of these was splendidly received. Money was given generously and many hundreds of leaflets were given out and literature distributed and well received. However, before the next Saturday the three booklets had gone out. The contrast among the public was startling. It was then I knew we were defeated. Most striking was the change among working people and housewives — previously our most valuable allies. ... Quite a lot

<sup>4</sup> *Islington Gazette*, Apr 18, 1975.

of people refused to take our leaflets, some were abusive and no money was given at all.

The local groups were all deeply conscious of the weight of the national press against their cause; the local press on the other hand differed sharply from area to area. Many groups payed tribute to scrupulous impartiality: others complained of 'lost' advertisements, blocked reports of meetings, or propagandist editorials, though in Gosport the anti-Marketees had the editor of the local give-away paper on their side, who did sterling service for the cause. Local radio appears to have been impartial everywhere, though not always falling over itself to announce meetings on either side.

Some anti-Market groups made efforts to relate the issue to local conditions. In Preston '5,000 leaflets in Urdu and Gujerati were delivered in appropriate areas.' In Canterbury a leaflet argued, 'The Cathedral is crumbling, the A2 is a dangerous nightmare, who are the culprits? — Juggernaut lorries! Who are demanding 25% heavier lorries? — the insensitive Brussels Bureaucrats!' Perhaps the most impressive were the Ealing leaflets, which wanted 'factories not warehouses', declared that 'Hoovers' factory now does little more than assemble parts made in other EEC countries,' explained 'Why Guinness workers and people who drink Guinness should vote No!' and thrust home the attack on the Common Agricultural Policy with an example right on the doorstep:

The beef mountain is not a myth. IT IS A FACT — the evidence of this may be found here in Ealing at the CARLO GATTI COLD STORE in RUBASTIC ROAD, Southall. This warehouse is reputed to contain as much as 40,000 tons of beef; 89,600,000 lbs — enough to feed every man, woman and child of Ealing's 1/3 million population for the next ten years in Sunday dinners, or one and a half years every day of the week! *If these animals walked out of the cold store nose to tail, ten abreast, they would fill up the 12 miles of the Uxbridge Road from Shepherds Bush to Uxbridge.*

But on the whole the anti-marketees saw the campaign, like the issue, as a national one, and kept to national arguments. (This was true, of course with a special twist, also in Scotland

and Wales.) Nevertheless in many ways the national headquarters in London seem to have impinged less on the life of local groups than they did on the pro-Market side. Get Britain Out comes in for some praise as 'probably the most active group in supplying both guidance, advice and up-to-the-moment instruction' (Associates of Reading for the Referendum). 'The prize must go to Get Britain Out for its excellent organisation and up-to-date information for speakers etc. despatched every other day in the final run-up' (Wembley). (This information came from the research unit in the *Spectator* office, though it was sent out on GBO notepaper.) 'Special praise must go to Neil Marten who was absolutely tireless, speaking at meetings all over the country night after night... nobody could have worked harder than he did' (Ilford). But some of the same criticisms voiced by the pro-Marketeers against their headquarters are closely echoed by some of the anti-Marketeers against their own headquarters, too. A regional organiser wrote 'The London headquarters seemed unaware of the regional problems' and thought they made '... a big mistake in spending all their Government money on a *national* advertising campaign' — though with so little money available, it might have been folly to dissipate it in penny packets. Others complained that

... the Referendum Campaign did not give any real help and advice to groups who rang them for guidance and that the despatch of leaflets was appallingly mismanaged and resulted in large masses of leaflets being wasted and groups were unable to recover their money from the Referendum campaign.

The one thing we did not lack was 'literature'; we could get any amount of well-produced posters, leaflets and stickers and badges.

But there were also more fundamental criticisms of the way the campaign was run at the national level.

There were too many anti-market organisations over the years... and the campaign lacked unity: there were too many pamphlets [while] the identical car stickers of the

European Movement had a psychological advantage which our *ad hoc* set-up lacked.

Our biggest mistake was in trying to work with people of all political groups, none of whom were known to one another in the beginning and who had too short a time in which to blend together into a team...

From Plymouth came the criticism: 'The campaign looked like a Labour one — or a partial Labour one — and that being so we could not get a majority of the votes cast nationally, for even a united Labour Party has never done that.' Worse still:

There is no doubt in my mind that the crucial mistake on the part of the anti-Market campaign was lack of detailed planning and organisation. I think that this stems from a fundamental error at national level: it did tend to be assumed that once the referendum was to be held, the anti-Market side would win.

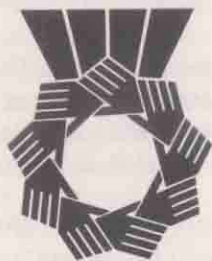
#### *Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*

The three parts of the United Kingdom where the anti-Marketeers kept up their hopes of winning almost to the end were Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As their hopes dwindled, leading anti-Marketeers were heard to express the fear that the referendum might integrate Europe at the expense of disintegrating the United Kingdom. The pro-Marketeers on the other hand hoped that all these three parts of the United Kingdom, deeply involved as they were in discussions in the devolution of power, would be specially receptive to their advocacy of dividing sovereignty between different levels of government.<sup>5</sup> Just as some functions could be devolved from Westminster to Edinburgh, Cardiff or Belfast, so surely some could most effectively be exercised in common with other states in Brussels. An Ulster pamphlet went further and declared categorically:

European unity inevitably promotes the growth of strong democratically controlled regional government... The disappearance of a military threat from our immediate Euro-

<sup>5</sup> For the role devolution had already played in the October election, see *The British General Election of October 1974*, pp. 33-4, 92-4, 131-2, 145, 240-1, 286.

pean neighbours means that it is no longer so necessary for the state to suppress regional differences and for 'direct rule' from the capital... The move to European unity, rather than merging us all in one homogeneous mass, makes it possible for these regional characteristics to develop fully.<sup>6</sup>



In Scotland at the turn of the year the pro-Marketeers were faced with an overwhelming majority against membership. They decided to take their political courage in both hands and declare themselves publicly well before the government itself did, indeed well before there was any widespread certainty as to the outcome of the negotiations. Unencumbered by the need to carry any pro-Market cabinet ministers with them, Scotland in Europe went public on February 10, 1975, the very day when a Scottish poll showed the antis in the lead by 45 to 29 per cent. Dr Dickson Mabon MP, the Labour Chairman of Scotland in Europe who was simultaneously Chairman of the Labour Committee for Europe, had a Labour ex-MP, Dick Douglas, as his Vice-Chairman. John Mackintosh was one of its star speakers and two of the 1971 pro-Market MPs who had since left the House, Willie Hannan and George Lawson, were among its chief activists. A former Conservative candidate, Donald Hardie, was recruited as BIE's regional organiser for Scotland. Scotland in Europe started with groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Greenock, and Dundee and Inverness had formed viable groups by late February: at the end of the campaign there were fifty-one groups in the seventy-one constituencies. They varied greatly in effectiveness. Glasgow was thought to have been very inadequately covered, and saw the least successful of the BIE rallies: even Harold Wilson's own meeting there did not attract

<sup>6</sup> *Ulster, the Left and the Future of Europe* (NILCE and NIYEL, 1975).

more than a hundred or so people. Inverness on the other hand provided excellent audiences.

Scotland in Europe had its own symbol, the nine linked hands (which had appeared on the 50 pence piece minted on British entry into the Community) transformed into a thistle motif. Britain in Europe gave Scotland in Europe an initial sum of £12,000 out of the government grant, and was accused by Mrs Winifred Ewing of the Scottish Nationalist Party of seeking 'to buy Scottish votes with English gold'.<sup>7</sup> It had virtual autonomy from Britain in Europe to fight the Scottish campaign as it thought best in the light of Scotland's special circumstances.

Scotland in Europe produced its own thistle posters with slogans such as 'Be involved or be ignored' and a series pointing out that (if one excluded whisky) 33 per cent of all Scottish exports went to the other EEC countries, that *Europe helps oil*: 'It is our oil, just as German coal is German, French wine is French, Dutch cheese is Dutch,' that *Europe cares for Fishermen*: '30 per cent of the Scottish Herring catch is sold to the Common Market,' that *Europe cares for Miners*: 'A Common Market loan of £18 million has provided a pool of roof supports' and a leaflet on *Norway* which cited the price of beer there as £1 per pint and asked what happened to Norway's sovereignty after voting to stay out: 'She cannot declare a unilateral 50 mile fishing limit because the EEC says no... Norway, out, is ignored.' A thirty-page pamphlet *George Thomson says*... amplified these arguments, but George Thomson himself sought to lift the debate to a higher plane: the Community, he reflected in Scottish idiom (and in counterpoint to Sir Christopher Soames — see p. 76) had been founded 'not to make capitalism more efficient. It was to make war unthinkable... I sometimes think, and I say it with shame as a Scot, that we live in a gey selfish country.'<sup>8</sup>

The Conservatives had won less than a quarter of the vote in Scotland at the October 1974 election, and it was clear that what mattered would be how the 36 per cent of Labour and the 30 per cent of SNP supporters would vote in the referendum. The deliberate highlighting of the Labour element in Scotland in Europe reflected that sense of priorities. We have already

<sup>7</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, May 26, 1975.

<sup>8</sup> *Sunday Times*, May 11, 1975.



seen that the Scottish Labour Party had voted by 346,000 to 280,000 against membership on March 22, 1975 (see page 49). The Labour Party was in fact deeply split between the left, which wanted Britain out, and the traditional Labour vote which wanted to stay loyal to the Labour government. In late March Scottish Labour Against the Market (known by the euphonious initials SLAM) was formed with the Secretary of the Scottish TGWU as its Chairman and Norman Buchan and James Sillars among its leading speakers. But if in England local Labour parties were hesitant about splitting, in Scotland Labour activists felt even less secure; they were acutely conscious of the Scottish Nationalists on their tail as the second biggest party in thirty-six out of the forty-one Labour-held seats. The Labour Party was therefore particularly anxious not to tear itself apart to make a Nationalist holiday. William Ross, though consistently against EEC membership, did not use his considerable influence in Scotland to campaign actively against it. And while the Labour anti-Marketees — many of whom were fanatically anti-Nationalist in any case — did not think much of the SNP's anti-Market campaign, the Scottish Nationalists returned the compliment, accusing the Labour anti-Marketees of having thrown themselves into the common battle only half-heartedly.

The most active part of the Labour movement in the fight against Market membership was thus the Scottish TUC, led by its Communist General Secretary, James Milne. It worked through some forty Trades Councils, through shop stewards and trade union activists, printed half a million copies each of three hard-hitting pamphlets, and reckoned to cover all major factory gates with mass meetings. The Engineering Workers, the TGWU and ASTMS played an important part — as of course did the Communist Party. Their arguments were predominantly political and industrial — worries over the future of the steel industry, over the freedom of action of a Labour government within the Community on regional policy, over the Community's competition rules, and so forth.

Much less straightforward in their campaign were the Scottish Nationalists, who had polled 11½ per cent of the Scottish vote in 1970, 22 per cent in February 1974, and then surged on to win 30 per cent in October. They were led on the Market issue by Donald Stewart (their MP for the Western Isles who made himself heard effectively in that unique territory), Mrs Winifred

Table 1. *Scottish Opinion on EEC Membership, January—May 1975*

	%					Vote
	Jan 28— Feb 5	Feb 25— Mar 5	Mar 27— Apr 4	Apr 28— May 2	May 26—30	
Pro	29	34	37	39	45	Yes: 33
Anti	45	43	36	38	32	No: 25
Don't know	26	23	27	23	22	Did not vote: 41
	100	100	100	100	100	
Labour supporters						
Pro	24	29	29	37	46	
Anti	52	48	46	44	32	
Don't know	24	24	25	19	22	
SNP supporters						
Pro	25	26	22	21	20	
Anti	55	58	58	59	58	
Don't know	20	16	20	20	21	
Conservative supporters						
Pro	48	54	64	63	71	
Anti	30	28	17	22	16	
Don't know	22	19	19	15	13	

Source: System Three as reported in the *Glasgow Herald*, Feb 10, Mar 20, Apr 8, May 5 and June 2, 1975. The question ran: 'Which of these would you prefer? — 1. That Britain stays in the Common Market. 2. That Britain comes out of the Common Market. 3. Don't know.' The respondents were a quota sample of just over 1,000 people each time.

Ewing (later to become the SNP's member of the European Parliament), and what the *Financial Times* described as 'the delicious Mrs Margo MacDonald'<sup>9</sup> (the former MP for Glasgow, Govan, who formed a travelling circus with James Sillars and the Conservative ex-Minister Edward Taylor at factory gate meetings and anti-Market rallies up and down Scotland). In the light of the overwhelming preponderance of anti-Market feeling in Scotland at the turn of the year, the SNP had decided that a Scottish No vote would be a splendid tactical device at once against Westminster and against Labour. It had perhaps a

<sup>9</sup> Joe Rogaly, 'The Scottish time-bomb ticks away', *Financial Times*, May 13, 1975.

majority among its ranks who in any case did not see why being ruled from Brussels should give them greater self-determination than being ruled from Westminster. They were afraid of a Community energy policy restricting freedom of action over what they regarded as Scotland's oil resources, they were worried about fisheries and they feared that industrially Scotland might become 'the periphery of the periphery'. But there were many among its prosperous membership who for commercial reasons preferred to remain within the Community, and it soon became clear also that the farmers, particularly in the Lowlands, felt they were on to a good thing in Market membership. Indeed it was widely thought that some of the Nationalist MPs were privately pro-Market. After very little consideration the SNP nailed to its mast the ambiguous slogan, 'No – on anyone else's terms'. This rather suggested it might be 'Yes – on Scotland's terms' (and some SNP speakers toyed with the notion of Scotland joining as an independent member state). It was an uncertain clarion call and not one to carry the conviction that makes for full-hearted dissent. (Some of the SNP supporters refused to turn out for joint rallies with GBO; others cut off the bottom part of their No posters to remove the qualifying clause.) When their spokesman, Stephen Maxwell, argued 'A "No" vote here against a "Yes" vote in England would be ideal... this is our great opportunity to further Scotland's cause and the cause of the party'<sup>10</sup>, he was highlighting the opportunist gamble which, in the event, signally failed. Margo MacDonald was equally ingenuous about the ulterior purpose of the exercise: 'Parliament will not be influenced in its final decision to stay in or pull out by the Scottish, Northern Irish or Welsh vote. In the event of an English "No" the Scottish "No" would simply reinforce the decision. In the event of an English "Yes" we owe it to ourselves to flex our political muscles and demand from London and Brussels much better terms than we endure at present.'<sup>11</sup> And Donald Stewart pointed to the long-run electoral advantages to be reaped later on whatever the Scottish vote now: 'Any party which could point to a committed anti position will win tremendous credit and support.'<sup>12</sup>

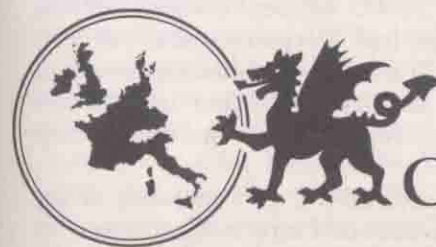
<sup>10</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 22, 1975.

<sup>11</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 4, 1975.

<sup>12</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 2, 1975.

It was perhaps not surprising that a great many of the SNP's voters in the October election – if the polls are any guide, between 2 and 4 out of ten of the SNP's votes – refused to follow its lead at the time of the referendum; and for that very reason the Yes vote which Scotland returned must not be seen as a weakening of the SNP's hold North of the Border.

According to the opinion polls of the time, Scotland had, in early 1971, been the part of the United Kingdom most hostile to Britain joining the Community – with 81% opposed and only 14% in favour. Yet by the end of September of that year in the same ORC series the antis were down to 50% and the pros up to 43%.<sup>13</sup> In 1975 the swing may not have been quite so extreme, and again it followed, rather than led, the swing in England; but greatly to the pro-Market's gratification after a period of precarious balance in April and early May, Scotland actually moved to a clear Yes at the end.



## Cymru yn Ewrop

Wales, too, had been regarded at the outset as an area that would vote heavily against membership – and indeed until the very end of the campaign the commentators expected it to vote No. Nearly half of Welsh voters had supported Labour in October, and another 11% had voted for the Plaid Cymru, which was pledged to fight with the Labour left for a No in the referendum. At the Plaid's annual conference in Aberystwyth on January 4, 1975 a sizeable section of the party championed the 'Europe of the Regions' – the notion of a pincer attack on the monopoly power of the nation state by devolving some of its functions down to the Bretons and Basques, Scots and Welsh, at the same time as integrating some of them at the Community level in Brussels. But the more vocal elements feared a vast unitary amalgam that would swallow up Welsh identity,

<sup>13</sup> *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, p. 365–7.

language and hopes of self-determination. They feared that Wales would be left on the periphery of a capitalist bloc in which jobs and population gravitated towards the 'golden triangle' between Paris, Hamburg and Frankfurt at the centre, and were suspicious of Mr Thomson's 'hand-outs policy' as being merely a palliative. And they hoped, by allying with the anti-Marketeers in the Labour party, thus to make electoral inroads into the Labour fief in South Wales in the future.

Get Britain Out was well organised in Wales, with George Wright, the Welsh Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Jack Brooks, a South Glamorgan Labour leader (and formally Jim Callaghan's agent) as its Chairman. Bert Pearce, Secretary of the Welsh Communist Party and Noel Paulley, a committed Powellite, were on its committee, and Dai Francis, the Communist leader of the Mineworkers, was also prominent. GBO had £6,000 to spend centrally from Cardiff, where it maintained five full-time workers. In addition, George Wright could call on fourteen TGWU offices in various Welsh towns. The Welsh GBO campaign had forty-nine local committees and claimed 1,500 helpers. It held over a hundred meetings and twenty-five mass rallies – the last addressed by Michael Foot on the eve of poll on Nye Bevan's mountain top overlooking Ebbw Vale.

George Wright and his allies secured a 2 to 1 majority at the annual conference of the Welsh Labour Party in Llandudno on May 10. But the minority was not inactive; on March 24 a Wales Labour and Trade Union Committee was launched under the chairmanship of Cledwyn Hughes, the former Secretary of State for Wales. A number of Welsh trade unionists had visited Brussels in the preceding eighteen months, and come away impressed. Indeed the unions in Wales were by no means united on the issue. Opposite George Wright stood Tal Lloyd, the regional organiser for AUEW, who saw British membership as a great opportunity for Welsh industry and for British socialists to galvanise their continental comrades, and Graham Saunders, the Welsh Secretary of APEX, who became Secretary of the Wales Labour and Trade Union Committee.

Wales in Europe was organised, at least at the outset, by Wil Edwards, the former spokesman on Welsh affairs in the Commons. It published bilingual literature and posters – including a splendid red dragon poster *Heb y Ddraig yn Iwrob* (Keep your Dragon in Europe) – and organised three dozen

local groups. It worked closely with a Welsh-speaking Commission official who was in Cardiff prior to the opening of a Commission office there and who wrote a bilingual pamphlet published by the EEC arguing that 'Community membership is in no way inconsistent with the devolution of important issues.'<sup>14</sup>

Dai Francis and George Wright were using the referendum to make 'a transparent attempt to assert the power of the Labour Left . . . Mr Wright said: "Our problem is, this is a tremendous area of traditional loyalty to the Labour leadership. But we are breaking that loyalty down."<sup>15</sup> They were helped by a Commission document that suggested coal production in South Wales should be halved by 1985. Yet John Morris, the Secretary of State for Wales, could argue that uncertainty was delaying investment decisions in Wales – like the expansion of Hoovers' plant to create 3,000 extra jobs in Merthyr Tydfil; and economic insecurity – particularly at the British Steel Corporation plant at Ebbw Vale, where half the 8,600 jobs were due to disappear by 1979 – led to fears of what would happen if Britain pulled out. The Welsh industrialists were in favour of staying in, as was the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the major union in the Welsh steel industry; and the farmers were certainly not for leaving the Market. But these did not seem, until the morning after the referendum, to outweigh the militant traditions of the socially cohesive South Wales valleys. 'Even on referendum day itself', wrote a fervent pro-Marketeer at the heart of the organisation in Cardiff, 'few people would have forecast a "Yes" return and fewer still prophesied such a large "Yes" vote.'



Northern Ireland had, of course, been suffering from a surfeit of polls – the referendum was the seventh in two years and

<sup>14</sup> *Western Mail*, May 20, 1975. (Aneurin Rhys Hughes explained: 'To say that the Commission could be unbiased on the Referendum would be like asking the Queen to chair a debate on the dissolution of the Monarchy'. See also *Guardian*, May 29, 1975.)

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 27, 1975.

followed only a month after the election of the constitutional convention. There had originally been fears in Britain that 'a million anti-Papist votes could take the United Kingdom out of the EEC.' The Unionists, although traditionally close to the Conservatives, were on the whole against continued membership of the EEC; it was an erosion of national sovereignty, and might lead to union with the South. All too predictably, religion played as large a part as economics. The Reverend Ian Paisley committed himself to the statement that 'the Virgin Mary is the Madonna of the Common Market,' and his Democratic Unionists were opposed to anything connected with Rome, a 'Roman Catholic super-state' or, in the words of the chairman of the Ulster branch of Get Britain Out (who was an official Unionist), 'a collection of polyglot nations, people who speak strange languages, have foreign cultures and in so many cases a different national religion'.<sup>16</sup> Curiously enough the Provisional Sinn Féin was on the same side as Ian Paisley and Enoch Powell — on the grounds, it would seem, that the Treaty of Rome recognises existing national frontiers and thereby stands in the way of Irish unity. On the other hand William Craig, the Vanguard leader was pro-Market and so was the Ulster Farmers' Union and the bulk of the middle class, and that to some extent neutralised the official UUU stand. In addition, the Social Democratic Labour Party did not want the border with Eire to take on economic significance, and hoped that by campaigning to stay in the Community it would bring a united Ireland nearer. It managed to deliver much of its Catholic vote without stirring up a Protestant backlash. Northern Ireland in Europe spent £8,500 in the twelve constituencies of the Province. Until referendum day itself, all the predictions were for a No vote on a low turnout.

#### *The Impact of Local Campaigning*

An earlier French Republic was once described as consisting of a calm people with agitated legislators, and in many ways the local scene in Britain, in spite of the agitation of the little bands of enthusiasts on either side, remained placid, bored or even unaware. Both sides were faced on the doorstep with a standard reaction, not perhaps surprising in the run-up to the third poll

<sup>16</sup> *Guardian*, May 30, 1975.

in sixteen months: 'Grief, it's them again' or exhortations to 'b . . . off, as no Jehovah's witnesses were wanted round here.' There were the usual stories of canvassers asking about a woman's attitude to the Common Market and being told she never shopped there, or about the EEC and being told she only used gas. In Sonning the single pro-Market meeting packed a tenth of the electorate into the village hall, but it was more usual for groups to report that 'the populace was agog with apathy.'

On polling day there was very little activity by the rival groups in the constituencies. In places the local MP or other notable toured some of the polling booths as they would have in a general election. Some of them went around with loudspeakers in areas they thought would favour their own side — in Hook a pro-Marketeer exhorted supporters to 'Vote early, vote often'. Some groups organised transport for the infirm — and an anti-Marketeer from Palmers Green noted perceptively: 'It is a sad comment on life today that many old folk look forward to these fleeting social occasions as the only time they ever get out or even have contact with other human beings.' But since there had been no systematic canvass, there could be very little knocking up of supporters.

The bulk of activists on both sides really swung into action only after the poll closed, when they had to act as scrutineers at the verification of ballot papers in the evening, and at the count on Friday. After that exhausting climax to their campaigns, they went home to their families, exhilarated or dejected depending on their cause, and often finding some reason why their own efforts had done something to affect the local result; but even the pro-Marketeers suffered 'post-natal depression' as they settled back into humdrum routine.

We should certainly not overestimate the effects of the two rival efforts at the local level. Even their visibility was limited. In many places, pro- and anti-Marketeers, while both working valiantly, were so thin on the ground that they were hardly aware of each other. Even a few days before the poll only 30 per cent of the electorate had noticed any local activity by either side (see Table 2). Despite the efforts in certain constituencies, the proportion of households in the whole country which received any literature as a result of voluntary effort by local groups cannot have been very large. The nationally prepared leaflets delivered to every household by the Post Office made much

Table 2. *The Visibility of Local Campaigns*

	May 15	May 23	May 28	June 2
Q. Have you yourself seen any sign of people campaigning for Britain to stay in or leave the Common Market in this area? IF YES: For which side or sides were they campaigning?				
Campaigning for Britain to stay in	9	8	11	20
Campaigning for Britain to leave	9	8	13	16
Neither	84	84	80	70

Source: Louis Harris International Inc.

more impact. According to a BBC survey (see p. 212) 75 per cent of the population claimed to have read all or part of these leaflets. There are no national figures as to the attendance at meetings, but it must have been well under 5% of the electorate. Some tens of thousands of people were struggling hard to make themselves heard and felt: but their impact on the consciousness of their fellow citizens in the end remained small.

When it comes to their effectiveness either in increasing turnout or else in swaying votes, that seems even more problematical. Regional organisers from Britain in Europe could point to excellent groups whose work none the less did not stop a lowish turnout, and cited results that were at least as good in areas where local effort had been conspicuously lacking. At the National Referendum Campaign, there was equal scepticism as to the correlation of effort and result. The evenness both of the turnout and of the breakdown between Yes and No votes across the country made any very significant causal relationships in any particular locality extremely doubtful (see p. 272-3).

But that did not in retrospect make voluntary efforts on both sides seem pointless. The local groups, as one Britain in Europe official put it, were bad administration, but good politics: what mattered was less what the groups actually did than the fact that they existed and tried to do something. The same could be said of the anti-Market side. In terms of the polity as a whole, the fact that several hundred thousand private individuals were prepared to give time, money and effort publicly to witness to their convictions on such an issue was evidence of a certain public spirit at the grass roots that could also prove important

for the future health of British democracy. What would have been said of a referendum in which only the national headquarters and the television personalities had been active, while the rest of the country remained totally uninvolved as mere passive consumers in the campaign?

## 7 National Campaigning

All election campaigns lack shape. A large number of politicians make speeches and broadcasts. But each utterance tends to be an isolated event and is seldom directed to answering the arguments of the other side. Sometimes the observer has a sense of two entirely separate campaigns, each aimed against straw armies of its own devising. Although the coming of active television coverage in the early 1960s did somewhat increase the debating quality of elections, the referendum campaign seemed to revert to the more formless electioneering of the 1950s.

Partly this was because the leading figures on the rival sides were not the top men in the rival organisations. The anti-Market ministers operated to a large extent outside NRC, and Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan (and indeed Mrs Thatcher) operated outside BIE. Partly it was because the arguments for and against British membership of the Community were so well worn. It was very difficult to say anything new. Pro- and anti-Marketeers commented on their sense of boredom with their own speeches. Partly it was because there were no great incidents during the campaign. Nothing happened in the outside world to change attitudes towards the general situation of the nation and nothing happened in the campaign to make much difference to the way in which the rivals were regarded by the mass of the British public.

The opinion polls which by early May were showing a 2 to 1 lead for the pro-Marketeers never faltered significantly enough to induce a change in campaign plans. None of those involved in the battle had a strong sense that particular themes were getting through to the mass public or altering the likely outcome of the struggle. Yet, despite all this, the referendum campaign did achieve something of an unexpected climax in the last three days as public interest mounted and television provided notable confrontations between some of the leading figures.

It is difficult to define when the referendum campaign began. In general elections, because of the law which dictates that

twenty days shall elapse between the dissolution of Parliament and polling day, because of the legal limits on election expenditure, and because of the broadcasting organisations' allocation of time, there is a definable duration to the contest.

In the case of the referendum it was apparent from March onwards that the country would be going to the polls in June, and in early April it became clear that the date would be June 5. The press was never without referendum stories from the Dublin meeting of March 10–11 onwards. Before the end of April, there had been several publicity-seeking referendum gatherings, quite apart from the special Labour Party conference. No legal restraint held back campaigning. The limit was the digestion of the British public. The newspapers quite early on decided that, while the referendum must be covered, it was something of a bore.

The broadcasting organisations offered some timetable for the campaign. The requirement to put on four pro-Market and four anti-Market broadcasts before the poll led to a start on May 22, while Robin Day's 'phone-ins' began on May 20 and feature programmes on BBC and ITV began to focus on the referendum early in May.

The pro- and anti-Market organisations slipped readily into the assumption that the full campaign would be of much the same duration as a general election. BIE consciously avoided too early a start; they held the first of their nightly rallies on May 10. The first of the routine NRC press conferences was on May 12 while BIE started on May 13. But BIE had a strong sense that the public's appetite for referendum news could soon cloy and they only held two press conferences in the week of May 12–16 and only three in the week of May 19–23.

Press reports made it plain that the public did, in fact, 'switch on' in the last ten days of the campaign. Attendance at meetings and the general level of interest plainly increased. The tendency to say 'the referendum is a bore' markedly diminished as June 5 approached.

It is important to remember that the whole campaign was taking place against a background of economic crisis. On May 9 Mr Crosland in a much quoted phrase told local authorities 'The party is over.' On May 17 *The Times* had the headline 'Inflation Running At Over 30%; April Index Up 3.9%'. On May 22 unemployment was reported at 817,000, an increase of 57,000 in a month. The pound, which in January had fallen by 22%

from the 1972 parity, in May was 25% below. At the beginning of the referendum there was a strong run on the pound and on May 12 the Bank of England had to step in. It was thought possible that the government might have to advance the package of economic measures which they were believed to be preparing and it is possible that the central bankers of other countries intervened at this point to prevent the crisis getting out of hand before the referendum.

At the same time there were the early signs of a looming national rail strike; the Industry Department, which was still settling the affairs of British Leyland, in May was bailing out the electronics giant, Ferranti, and started negotiations to save the ailing Chrysler (UK). On May 8 the American commentator Eric Sevareid was widely reported for a doom-laden assessment of Britain 'drifting slowly towards a condition of ungovernability' and 'sleepwalking into a social revolution' like Allende's Chile. His observations were brushed off by Mr Wilson as an emanation of 'London's cocktail circuit', but the fact that a not unfriendly observer could speak thus was yet another reminder of the national predicament.

Early in May the main referendum news was coming from overseas. Immediately after the special Labour party conference on April 26 Mr Wilson had gone off to Jamaica for the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers and had only returned home via Washington and Ottawa on May 8. While in Jamaica he and Mr Callaghan had managed to secure the assent of all the Commonwealth Prime Ministers and Heads of State to a statement endorsing the idea of British membership of the Market. The anti-Marketeters were plainly embarrassed, although they could point out that the Heads of State did not necessarily speak for all their people. NRC spent £600 on a special poll in New Zealand which showed that by 49% to 32% New Zealanders would prefer Britain to come out and that by 52% to 30% they thought this would be in New Zealand's best interests. However this poll received virtually no publicity in the British press; it was mentioned by Neil Marten at the end of a NRC press conference on May 2 but no major anti-Market speaker seems to have followed it up.

While in Jamaica, Mr Wilson briefed at least one lobby correspondent on his plans to move Tony Benn after the referendum was over. The lead story in the *Daily Telegraph* on May 7 was clearly an inspired statement and it was followed in

the next week by other stories which evidently had some solid foundation about plans for a post-referendum reshuffle. Some at least of the referendum story reflected the battles to save Mr Benn or at least to shape the reallocation of portfolios.

The government information unit (see p. 56) started work on April 3 under Martin Morland with a staff of six officials.<sup>1</sup> One of its immediate jobs was to draft the government leaflet that was to be distributed free to every home together with those prepared by BIE and NRC. Sidney (now Lord) Jacobsen, a former Editor of the *Daily Mirror*, was recruited to draft a popular version of the March White Paper (see p. 294). But the unit's main task over the next two months was to field 6,000 enquiries, mostly by telephone but a few by letter. Special arrangements were made for phone calls to a number of principal centres to be routed to London without extra charge. On the whole these enquiries were fewer in number and less abrasive than expected. About 25% were plainly from pro-Marketeters and 45% from anti-Marketeters. Many reflected great ignorance and confusion. The unit was supposed to be neutral but the anti forces took exception to some of their answers and on May 24 NRC announced that because of the bias shown by the government unit it was setting up its own independent information centre. An information centre at Conservative Central Office attracted relatively few enquiries.

The problems of the information unit highlighted the wider dilemma facing the whole civil service. How neutral were they supposed to be? Their duty, after all, was to support government policy and the government's policy was to enter the Market. For the period of the referendum anti-Market ministers were to some extent cocooned from the general business of government. Papers on many ongoing problems were not circulated to them and it was alleged that the civil service refrained from supplying them with material for speeches.<sup>2</sup>

Parliament continued to sit until May 23 and provided the

<sup>1</sup> The Central Office of Information (not the Referendum Information Unit) arranged two large-scale press advertising campaigns; the first in early May publicised procedures for securing postal votes (on the lines of similar operations before each of the 1974 elections) and the second, more controversially, appealed on election eve for everyone to use their vote.

<sup>2</sup> The *Times* reported on May 2 that senior civil servants had been 'told not to assist anti-EEC ministers in the preparation of speeches' and to treat the referendum situation 'as they would the run-up to a general election'.

forum for some campaigning. Both sides put down the questions which they hoped would give them ammunition. The Conservatives did their best to drive wedges through the cabinet's agreement to differ, trying in particular to entrap Mr Shore and Mr Benn into criticising their colleagues or breaking the cabinet guidelines which confined anti-Market ministers to stating the government's position and barred the making of points against their official EEC policy (see p. 50–64).

On May 5 Mr Shore when challenged about a suggestion that 99% of Britain's trade deficit was due to the EEC: 'When I am speaking from the Dispatch Box of course I reflect the Government's policy as a whole – except when I am clearly reflecting my own policy.' And on May 14 Mr Benn attacked a Conservative MP: 'The passion for redundancies of secure well-paid people like you and including Cabinet ministers of the Conservative Party, or even the present Cabinet ministers, indicates ... a hatred of working people,' but he quickly withdrew his references to his colleagues as 'a slip of the tongue'.

The absurdity of the guidelines became more and more apparent. After Peter Shore had been forced by 10 Downing Street to refuse a *Panorama* programme permission to use an excerpt from his remarks in the same programme as appearances by pro-Market ministers, the Prime Minister on May 23 modified the guidelines and said that in the final four days of the campaign ministers could confront each other in television programmes.

On April 30 the *Daily Telegraph* received, through the post, copies of the three leaflets due for general distribution in the final fortnight of the campaign (see p. 55 and 57). When news of this leak reached the government, the general release of the documents was authorised. The leak was traced to a printing works in Leeds, but no one was identified as blameworthy. The leaflets (which are reproduced in full on pp. 291–304) created no particular stir. They were distributed to every household between May 21 and May 30 and in many localities they may well have been the only direct contact between the individual and the referendum campaign.

The press conferences on both sides were carefully stage-managed, with a good backdrop for television and a changing team of spokesmen. But at first the heavyweight journalists did not come; questions were sluggish and as late as May 26 only four were volunteered at a BIE press conference (three of them

from BBC men) even though Roy Jenkins and Reginald Maudling were available for interrogation. NRC attributed the low attendance at their early press conferences to their Park Lane venue and, as we have seen, later moved to the Waldorf to share the BIE audience. But BIE having pre-empted the 10.45 spot continued at a great advantage in access to the evening papers and the lunchtime television news.

The anti-Market conferences were supplemented by Get Britain Out's independent efforts. Starting on April 11 Mr Frere-Smith managed several headline-grabbing press calls in Fleet Street and in the provinces. The NRC had fewer 'names' at their disposal than the pros and sometimes they threw away their chances, as on their first Waldorf meeting when they assembled some lawyers, unknown to the general public, to develop the argument over national sovereignty; they got sidetracked by the reference, in an injudicious handout, to Britain's EEC entry as a *coup d'état*. BIE tried to diversify its appeal by always having a woman on the platform and by bringing in fresh faces. But it tended to be only their top figures who were reported. They gave up their June 3 press conference to separate gatherings, one run by the Labour Committee for Europe with Lord Feather, Shirley Williams, Tony Crosland and others and one by the Conservatives, with Mrs Thatcher to the fore. But the only opportunities for journalists to question Mr Wilson or Mr Callaghan were on the air, or in exclusive interviews.

At the major rallies and meetings, the audiences were often very large and enthusiastic. In Bristol on June 2 Tony Benn could boast, 'The anti-Market meetings have been enormous, far bigger and more enthusiastic than any political meetings any of us have ever attended in our lives.' The other anti-Market ministers spoke of the exceptional eagerness of their hearers. Most of the BIE rallies were near sell-outs, but there were some disasters, notably in Glasgow. The Labour Campaign for Europe also had uneven success with only a sprinkling to hear Jim Callaghan in Aberdeen or Shirley Williams in Norwich. None the less, the general view was that the audiences were above general election standards in numbers, enthusiasm and intelligent attentiveness. The pro-Market rallies sometimes drew just enough interruptions to make them more interesting, without any threat of disruption.

The campaign saw relatively little extremism in action or



words. The National Front was occasionally in evidence and its members disrupted an early NRC gathering in London as well as a Heath speech in Glasgow on May 25. On June 3 Mr Wilson was almost shouted down by protesters from right and left in St Pancras Town Hall. But in general, although there was plenty of heckling and questioning – more perhaps than in general elections – there were very few complaints of objectionable rowdiness.

Scare stories were not much in evidence. Although on the whole industry conducted its pro-Market campaign with great and conscious restraint, anti-Marketeers did object to the propaganda that a few employers slipped into pay packets.<sup>3</sup> They also exhumed an old story that the CIA had subsidised the European Movement twenty years earlier and there were suggestions that much of the current BIE campaign was being financed by multinationals. The pro-Marketeers with varying degrees of delicacy pointed to the extent to which the anti-Market campaign won the united support both of the National Front and the Communists, as well as almost all other extremists. Reg Prentice said at Ealing on May 13, 'Who are the people who would lead us out of the market? With one or two honourable exceptions they belong to the way-out factions: the *Tribune* group, the Communist Party, the Powellites, the National Front. Whatever their theoretical differences they are all living in the past'. Cyril Smith observed, 'The fact is that Mr. Benn wants us out of Europe because he believes that if we stay in it will make it more difficult for him and his lefties to throw Great Britain into a left-wing socialist state. Let him be honest enough to admit it.' Perhaps the nearest to old-fashioned scare stories came from opposite sides in the last days of the campaign when Mr Heffer suggested that staying in the Market might lead to the return of conscription and Mr Short suggested that getting out of the Market might lead to the return of rationing.

<sup>3</sup> For example the Chairman of Guest Keen and Nettlefold wrote to his employees that if the referendum went against the Market, 'then our futures and our families' well-being will be at risk.' Marks and Spencer's house newspaper *St. Michael News* published a special report in May coming out strongly for staying in the Community. Similarly Wimpey the builders told their employees that 'the Directors of the Company support the House of Commons' recommendation that the U.K. remains in the Common Market,' and the Chairman of Rank Hovis McDougal wrote to his staff: 'I am convinced that the prospects for Britain and for RHM are better if Britain stays in the EEC.'



Join the professionals

Evening Standard, Mar 24, 1975

But the campaign was much less rough than many had expected. The hardest words were reserved for Mr Benn. After some wild headlines in early May, the pro-Marketeers made some efforts to damp down the assault, lest it produce sympathy for an underdog. But the controversy over the 500,000 jobs (see p. 180–82) was to revive it. A major stir was caused by Mr Jenkins's deliberate and cutting phrase of May 27: 'I find it increasingly difficult to take Mr Benn seriously as an economics Minister.' But no major spokesman replied in kind. Some lesser figures rushed to Mr Benn's defence, and Mr Wilson was assumed to be rebuking Mr Jenkins when on May 29, he said that he totally deprecated the use of personalities in the campaign Mr Wilson went on:

The freedom to argue was up to June 5, which is only a few days from now. After that, that ends. It was unprecedented because of the unprecedented nature of the referendum campaign. That ends after June 5, and I will see to it that normal collective responsibility and courtesy and comradeship will be restored.

Quite early in the campaign various reporters began to notice the great camaraderie shown on BIE platforms by Conservative, Liberal and Labour spokesmen. The idea that the BIE operation was a rehearsal for a coalition began to be expressed. At a meeting of NEDC as early as May 7, Tony Benn had more or less publicly teased Shirley Williams on this theme when she had spoken of the need for an area of 'industrial consensus'. Her response was categorical: 'I have never wanted coalition. I have never talked about coalition and I am not after coalition.' Lord George-Brown went further than anyone else in the coalition direction when he said on May 23 that if ever there was a time for 'something different from party government' the country was in that position now. Michael Foot on May 17 argued that staying in the Community would suck Britain into a coalition method of governing its economic affairs, for Europe was a coalition and the other members of the Nine had coalition governments. The sense of impending crisis kept the notion alive and the fact that each day representatives of each of the three parties appeared together at BIE's rallies and press conferences underlined the possibility. Various of the spokesmen afterwards commented on the novel exercise in self-restraint that this imposed. 'It was very good for me to think what would be

embarrassing or offensive to the other two parties', commented one of them. But some Labour politicians were very uneasy at being seen on these joint platforms. Certainly Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan eschewed them completely.

None of the commentators produced a convincing scenario of how a coalition would come about or under whose leadership, and talk on the subject rather died away until the final weekend when Reg Prentice made a speech at Leeds on June 1, which in the version leaked in advance to the Saturday and Sunday papers was taken as a call for a coalition. The essential passage ran:

The Common Market Campaign has united the majority of realistic and moderate politicians of all three political parties. It has been a refreshing experience for us to work together in a common cause. I believe our co-operation has been welcomed by millions of people throughout Britain, who have become fed up with the traditional party dogfight. We must not lose this spirit of unity after June 5. Our continued membership of the Common Market will provide us with the best possible framework for success in our economic struggle. But we shall still have to win that struggle by our own efforts.

We shall need national unity as never before. People are entitled to demand of politicians of all parties that they should abandon their obsession with scoring points off each other and concentrate on finding answers to the critical problems facing Britain.

But Mr Prentice denied that this was intended to suggest a coalition, and Mr Wilson is understood not to have disapproved of the speech, though it may have contributed to Mr Prentice's cabinet demotion the following week.

From time to time, the anti-Marketeers accused the Commission of trying to manipulate the referendum. In fact there had been elaborate co-ordination with Brussels to forestall charges of EEC interference. Apart from Sir Christopher Soames and Mr Thomson, four Commissioners did visit Britain during the campaign,<sup>4</sup> but they were not much reported and on

<sup>4</sup>Herr Brunner came over at the invitation of the Liberals. There was also a visit by Finn Gundelach, the Danish Commissioner to Glasgow on May 30, when he made a specific attack of Tony Benn's 'horribly naive concept of the world economy'; and Pierre Lardinois and Claude Cheysson were reported on less controversial visits to London in the course of May.

June 1 a BIE official discreetly removed from a press release Commissioner Brunner's remark that Europe would not be satisfied with anything less than 60% Yes. The Commission did not suspend its routine activities during the referendum and, by accident or design, various announcements were made on new Community grants and loans: on May 20 news came of a £15 million loan for an Ebbw Vale Steel Mill, on May 28 there was £30 million for the National Coal Board and £12 million for a whisky blending plant near Glasgow, and on June 2 a £7 million loan for a coal-mine development in Yorkshire and South Wales. On May 27 a routine announcement was also made which showed that since entering the Market Britain had received £210 million in food subsidies from Brussels.

The anti-Market forces could make play with the idea voiced by Mr Heffer on May 12, 'Is it true, as rumoured, that some Government Ministers have met Commissioners and agreed that the Commission should take a soft line while the referendum campaign is going ahead?' On May 30, Mr Shore warned against the sudden appearance of 'Sir Christopher Soames as Santa Claus'. Mr Benn suggested that the Ebbw Vale announcement was 'geared to influence the outcome of the Referendum' and that the EEC was waiting until after June 5 to veto his rescue plan for the ailing motor giant, British Leyland; however, on May 29, the Commission gave its blessing to the scheme.

The British public was made aware of foreign interest in the referendum — not only in Europe. On May 23 President Ford was widely reported when he said on television:

Britain's participation in the EEC is very important, both for the Community and for the Western World as a whole. . . . I don't think I should get involved in the voting. . . . [but] the overall Western World as well as the Community itself is improved by Britain's participation in the EEC.

This caused little stir. A foreign intervention that had more potential to disrupt the campaign came two days earlier from President Giscard d'Estaing when he remarked that Europe should pursue its progress towards economic and monetary union without Britain and Italy, thus appearing to suggest a two-tier Community with the richer nations acting in advance of the poorer. The anti-Market ministers, led by Mr Benn, promptly issued a statement:

We feel it is necessary at the earliest opportunity to draw attention to the fact that he made a statement that effectively repudiated the terms. He reaffirmed French insistence on economic and monetary union although we have been told it could only happen in the distant future. . . . A ruling bloc, a rich man's club of six prosperous nations, will be formed within the Common Market. The six rich countries will follow concerted economic policies. Britain will be the poor relation. This is not the Common Market of equal partners we were promised. Britain will be in a worse situation than if we had never joined. We will still be forced to buy expensive French food, forbidden to make trade arrangements in our own favour, powerless to influence the course of the Market's development — yet the ruling block will accept no responsibility for our economic problem.

The pro-Marketeers replied that France had made no progress even among the Six on her monetary union plans and that anyway Britain would continue to have her power of veto. The President's staff said he had been misreported and, somewhat surprisingly, the subject then dropped from the news.

British residents on the Continent, notably in Brussels, Paris and Milan, with their grievances over the franchise, got a fair ration of publicity. British Airways were criticised for offering half fares home to vote. The *Sunday Times* ran a write-in poll for Britons abroad which resulted in a 96% Yes from 8,000 replies.

It was notable that the voice of large interest groups, apart from the trade unions, was heard almost entirely on the pro-Market side. Eirlys Roberts of the Consumers Association was one of their most indefatigable spokesmen; so was Sir Henry Plumb of the National Farmers Union; businessmen and companies were revealed in several surveys to be over 90% pro-Market<sup>5</sup> and the Confederation of British Industries devoted large resources to the cause.

The trade unions were visibly divided. On the anti-Market side Jack Jones and Clive Jenkins were frequently reported while Len Murray made speeches and wrote a number of articles

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. *The Economist*, May 17, 1975. By contrast, the Labour Campaign for Europe printed 2 million copies of its broadsheet and distributed 6 million pieces of literature in all.

on behalf of the TUC. But his predecessor, Lord Feather, who was probably better known, received more than matching publicity as a campaigner in favour of continued membership, including the whole of one of BIE's four television programmes, and a number of middle-rank union leaders were given prominence under the wing of BIE or the Trade Union Alliance.

The Labour party was relatively inactive during the campaign. It distributed almost 500,000 copies of the broadsheet *Let's fight with both hands*, mainly bought by Trade Unions, and some Speaker's Notes, which like the 30,000 word statement issued to all delegates to the April 26 Special Conference, were violently attacked by pro-Marketees as tendentious. Ron Hayward, the General Secretary, sent a letter to all constituency parties at the beginning of May restating the party's position. He also seemed to intervene on Mr Benn's behalf at the end of the campaign when he told *Labour Weekly* on June 4 that it would be a 'severe blow to party morale' if Mr Benn was sacked in response to a press campaign. 'Tony Benn's only sin is that he is seeking to implement fully our manifesto policies.'

But the Labour Party outside Parliament attracted little attention. Anti-Marketees commented that, on the whole, the party in the country had been effectively neutralised by its own divisions and by Harold Wilson's stand.

Both sides groaned at times about the support they received from youth organisations; they welcomed their zeal but feared their administrative inefficiency, their tendency to get distracted by internal feuds, and their indiscretion. Get Britain Out and the National Union of Students combined in a press conference on May 13; but the headlines were drawn by the challenged credentials of one supposed convert and the photogenic subterfuge of another, who ended his talk by revealing a pro-Europe T-shirt. When BIE sponsored a Youth Rally in Trafalgar Square on May 4, Peter Hain complained that his radical speech was being censored. BIE reluctantly allowed its Youth Groups to take one of their routine press conferences — but on Bank Holiday, May 26, when there would be fewer journalists; David Steel chaired the gathering adroitly and the federalist message and the cry for direct elections to the European Parliament were not reported in a fashion likely to frighten the more hesitant pro-Europeans to any serious

extent.<sup>6</sup> The National Union of Students certainly failed to deliver the mass of students to the anti-Market cause and Mr Benn was taken aback when on May 9 he found his audience at Bristol University 3 to 1 pro-Market. 'That may tell us something about the social origins of University students,' he commented.

Occasional stories reached the papers from the Don't Know Campaign, a skeleton organisation, allegedly of only seven people, which sought to foster abstention in order to 'Pass the buck back where it belongs', i.e. to Parliament. In the last week before the vote the Don't Know Campaign reported a street poll which claimed to find that 48% of voters did not know what EEC stood for.

Both sides tried to imply that the immigrant vote was on their side. At a GBO press conference on May 23 the Chairman of the radical Indian Workers Association declared that coloured people were second-class citizens of Britain and would become third-class citizens of Europe. The only Urdu daily newspaper the *Daily Jang*, repudiated the IWA stand and advised Indians to vote Yes. West Indian spokesmen appeared on the anti-Market side, speaking critically of the way the Community treated its immigrant workers, but leaders of the Pakistani community advised support for continued membership. The Labour Campaign for Europe claimed a good response to its special efforts in the Indian community. In fact, though the samples were small, the private polls suggested a clear Yes majority among coloured voters.

The Conservative party was providing much of the administrative backbone of the BIE campaign, distributing speakers' notes and leaflets, partly through Conservative Associations and partly through BIE branches, and Conservatives arranged for most of the stewarding and organisation of the rallies. The level of activity was somewhat patchy but there were no obvious abstainers apart from the declared anti-Marketees and Mr du Cann. Towards the end of the campaign

<sup>6</sup> A few dissident young Europeans, some actually working in the BIE headquarters, raised the money privately to produce six issues of a campaign magazine, the *Federalist*. It was somewhat in the style of *Private Eye* and its thrust seemed as much against the cautious old fuddy-duddies of the BIE campaign as against the enemy NRC. For an indication of the attitudes of this group see *The Times*, June 2, 1975.

there was increasing comment on the limited contribution being made to the campaign by Mrs Thatcher. She had included pro-European passages in all her speeches but these had not been widely reported; she tried at a special press conference on June 3 to make plain how fully she supported the campaign. But that press conference took place on the day of what, to the Conservatives, was the the most embarrassing news break of the campaign, Edward du Cann, Chairman of the Conservative Back-bench 1922 Committee, (who had been anti-Market and abstained in 1971, and who had abstained again on April 9), made a speech in his Taunton constituency on Tuesday, June 3, well publicised in advance, in which he firmly asserted that half of the Conservatives were anti-Market. Mr Powell quickly remarked, 'There is no comparable authority upon whom one could more rely for a judgement of the balance of the truth.' The motives of Mr du Cann were obscure and continued for a long time to be the subject of speculation. Why, near the end of the campaign, when the outcome seemed inevitable, should he have declared himself? If he had wished to produce an anti-Market vote, he should surely have come into the open at an earlier point and taken a leading part in a campaign which was so notably lacking in influential Conservative spokesmen. The hypotheses about his conduct ranged from suggestions of pique at the favourable publicity which Mr Heath had been receiving (his antipathy to Mr du Cann had long been notorious), to simple irritation at the display of pro-Market unanimity by a party that he knew to contain many sceptics. Since Mr du Cann was widely regarded as a hard-headed politician, one plausible hypothesis to explain his conduct was that he was acting on a calculation that Britain's continued membership of the Market would, within a few years, prove to be a catastrophe, and that the Conservative party and indeed the country might then turn to one of the few substantial figures who had been willing to declare himself against the disastrous step of endorsing Market membership.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On June 4 Mr Crouch, a Conservative backbencher, promised to raise a question of no confidence in Mr du Cann. 'Mr du Cann is obviously completely out of touch with Conservative thinking. One thing that is certain to come out of this referendum... is that we shall have to elect a new Chairman of the 1922 Committee.' But Mr du Cann did not receive the punishment which was almost universally predicted for breaking the party line: in November 1975 he was re-elected unopposed to the Chairmanship of the 1922 Committee.

The Liberals issued a special manifesto for the referendum — the only party to do so — and throughout the campaign they stressed their specific party role. 'When its normally so difficult for the party to get into the news, it's hard not to exploit the chance when it comes', said one Liberal. But a Labour pro-Marketeer commented 'Liberal speakers were always anxious to make the point that they were first in the field. As so often, they misread the signs: fewer Liberals voted Yes than Tories. They gave the impression that the issue mattered less than their espousal of it. A pity.' However Jeremy Thorpe, David Steel and Cyril Smith contributed a fair share of the pro-Market points that got into the press.

The official referendum broadcasts attracted less attention in the press than election broadcasts have usually done.<sup>8</sup> One reason may have been that the NRC did not use well-known spokesmen, while BIE used its stars so obviously in filmed 'mood' pieces that no journalist could regard them as providing hard news. Mr Guggenheim's elaborate innovation in technique was hardly noticed. The broadcasts that really drew press coverage, in addition to the much publicised debates on June 2 and 3 (see p. 205–7), were long interviews on *This Week* and *Panorama* given by Mr Wilson on May 15 as well as the extended appearances on *Weekend World* and on *BBC-Radio 4* of Mr Wilson and Mrs Thatcher. Although these broadcasts ostensibly covered the whole political scene and not just Europe, they did make plain to large audiences that the Prime Minister and the shadow Prime Minister were both voting Yes. Mr Wilson had quickly perceived that he was being left out of the battle, since he did not fall under either of the umbrella organisations whose broadcast appearances were being so carefully balanced. He therefore provoked the invitations to be interviewed on both channels on May 15 and he complained to Llew Gardner on ITV that he was being kept off the air. When asked why he was maintaining a low profile, he explained, 'All our people are going to get so fed up with the screaming cacophony that they are going to put their fingers in their ears... The more they get confused the more, I believe, they will listen to the voice of reason, which is how Jim Callaghan and I approached it.' Jim Callaghan had an embarrassing exchange when he appeared as a BIE nominee on Robin Day's 'phone-in':

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 8.

*Callaghan:* . . . I am not pro, nor am I anti . . .

*Day:* What are you doing on this programme?

*Callaghan:* I'm here because you asked me.

*Day:* You're here to advise people to vote 'Yes' aren't you?

*Callaghan:* . . . I am here, and the Prime Minister has taken the same line; it is our job to advise the British people on what we think is the right result. Now there are a lot of other people who've always been emotionally committed to the Market. A lot of other people have been always been totally opposed to the Market. I don't think the Prime Minister or myself have ever been in either category and that is not our position today. I'm trying to present the facts as I see them and why we have come down in favour of – now Britain is in, we should stay in.

In the last ten days of the campaign Jim Callaghan and Harold Wilson spoke frequently under the auspices of either the Trade Union Alliance for Europe or of individual unions or constituency parties, and, as Chapter 8 shows, after elaborate manoeuvres, Jim Callaghan appeared on the final BIE television broadcast.

Mr Wilson, at his rather hastily arranged meetings, met with some hostility from Labour audiences. At Bedworth on June 1 a Labour MP, Tom Litterick, walked out on him at a Labour Party meeting<sup>9</sup>, while on several occasions Norman Atkinson and other leading *Tribune* figures criticised his defiance of the Party Conference. But he adhered steadily to the Wilson–Callaghan line: they were the reluctant converts who had renegotiated the terms of entry in a manner most favourable to Britain, and who now, with the support of the Commonwealth, were convinced that Britain should stay in. Whether an extra segment of the electorate was lured in the European fold by the flanking movement of Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan remains unproven.

The media have to tell the story of an election, like everything else, through the words of people, but, because the subject matter is so complex and confusing, there is a tendency to focus on the credibility of the spokesmen rather than on the

<sup>9</sup>Mr Litterick explained later: 'The Prime Minister lied at the meeting when he said he was there as leader of the party and speaking for the Government. He was not. He was there as the fraternal delegate from the party's National Executive Committee, whose anti-Market policy is well-known, and well-established. . . . I am asking the General Secretary to discipline the Prime Minister.'

substance of their arguments. Mr Benn could say on the Robin Day 'phone-in' on May 27:

The British people are fed up with personality politics – I know that I am. They are even fed up with personality politics in elections. I have heard many people say, why can't we get on with the issues, why do we have to have the two leaders slanging each other? . . . Newspapers dominate the British political scene and I think you have been taken in by attempts to have a debate about something else – about the Labour Party or some other issue.

What you are being asked to decide is whether you want Britain to be self-governing and independent, or whether you want to be under Commissioners you cannot remove.

Mr Benn was of course an Aunt Sally to much of the press even before the campaign began. For a start, Mr Benn was heavily involved in the issues and events forming the context of the campaign. Ever since the electoral defeat of 1970 he had been a key figure in the debate inside the Labour movement about the future direction of policy. His interventions in Court Line and Norton Villiers Triumph had, together with his increasingly populist style, made him a controversial figure. Now he was the architect of the Industry Bill and of government intervention in British Leyland and Ferranti. Like Enoch Powell before him, his name had become the symbol of an ill-defined set of attitudes – 'Bennery' – that were apt to provoke violent antipathy and of which he was seen as the embodiment.

Mr Short remarked in Parliament, 'If we can look behind all the neuroses and hysteria in the press in recent days about Mr Benn, I think he is doing an excellent job for Industry. . . . There is an anthropological explanation [for the Conservative attacks]. The Conservative Party is a very primitive party. It has got to have a bogeyman and the present bogeyman is Mr Benn.' But two days later Mr Wilson indicated that Mr Benn would be curbed. Interviewed on *Weekend World*, he said, 'Mr Benn has, I think some of the qualities of an Old Testament prophet, without a beard, who talks about the New Jerusalem he looks forward to at some future time; but the policy is decided quite clearly by the Cabinet . . . after June 6 there will be one Cabinet and one Cabinet view.' It was perhaps significant that Mr Benn absented himself from the Front Bench on May 23 when Mr

Wilson announced rescue plans for textiles to be supervised by Harold Lever and not by the Secretary for Industry. With one exception, Mr Benn refused to reply in kind to the very vicious and personal attacks being made on him as a staring-eyed fanatic. He did on May 16 single out Mr Heath for an extended assault on his false claims in 1971 about the benefits of joining Europe. But his remarks were less personal than those of David Steel the same day who called him Mr Phoney Benn.

While I have some respect for passionate ultra-Left champions of working class radicalism, I have none at all for upper class public school and Oxford-educated sons of the peerage who seek to exploit class grievances as the only means of obtaining political power for themselves — power which their own ability or political record would deny them.

Jim Sillars on May 16 described the attacks on Tony Benn as a modern witch-hunt. 'All witch-hunts degrade and debase a society and this one is no different.

One anti-Marketeer privately blamed the press for focusing on the least sympathetic antiis. 'I've been at three meetings at which it was agreed that Tony should have a lower profile — and each time he's been cornered by journalists later and badgered into saying things that stole the headlines.' Even the pro-Marketeers took fright lest the anti-Benn stories should become counter-productive and evoke a sympathy vote. There were deliberate efforts to ease off — but Mr Benn catapulted himself to the centre again with his 500,000 jobs charge (see p. 180–2).

After Mr Benn the anti-Marketeer to win most publicity was, inevitably, Mr Powell. There were indeed pro-Marketeers who believed that he was the one man who, if he could strike a chord like the one he struck on immigration in Birmingham in April 1968, could transform the contest into a close-run thing. In the event he only made six speeches, ending in Mr Heath's constituency at Sidcup on June 4. He managed some fine passages of rhetoric but the old fire seemed to be lacking. He spoke most often of the issue of sovereignty but he did turn repeatedly to his old colleagues in the Conservative party: 'As I watch and listen to the voices that are raised to persuade electors to surrender their own birthright because they fear their fellow subjects, I think I discern ahead the shape of a

Conservative Party that is the party of a class, and not of a nation — and thus doomed to extinction.' On June 3 in the most brilliant of all the main press conferences he kept the journalists roaring with laughter with, as one of them wrote, 'a bravura blend of doom and humour', as he pointed to the contradictions in Mrs Thatcher's position and criticised Mr Heath 'I would dearly have liked to be friends but, like everyone else, I found it impossible.'

Some of his fellow anti-Marketeers felt a certain embarrassment about sharing a platform with Enoch Powell but by the end of the campaign almost all the leading figures had made some joint appearance with him, either at a press conference or at a public meeting. The one person who ostentatiously avoided such contamination was Tony Benn, who refused to appear in Granada's final debate because he was not prepared to sit beside Conservatives (see p. 207).

Tony Benn was trying to symbolise his distaste for the coalition mentality which he felt permeated the pro-Market camp. He considered that Roy Jenkins and Reg Prentice were discrediting themselves with the bulk of the Labour Party by their close association with Conservatives and he disagreed with his own anti-Market colleagues who were willing to make common cause publicly with such suspect characters as Enoch Powell and Neil Marten.

On the anti-Market side, despite ministerial distractions, Peter Shore, Michael Foot and Barbara Castle won considerable coverage and with Tony Benn issued a number of joint statements. Less was heard from John Silkin, who was associated with them. The other two cabinet dissidents ploughed lone furrows. Eric Varley, the Energy Secretary, was almost totally silent until the final Sunday, when, too late to change the campaign, he suggested in a major speech that Britain might lose control of North Sea Oil if she stayed in the Community. William Ross, the Scottish Secretary was equally quiet, making his only campaign speech on June 1.

Some junior ministers achieved unwonted prominence during the campaign: Michael Meacher, with his support for Tony Benn's claim on lost jobs; Eric Deakins of the Department of Trade, buttressing Peter Shore's arguments on food prices and industrial output; and John Gilbert, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, with his lugubrious forecasts (noticeably uncontradicted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer).

Politics is about publicity — for persons as well as ideas. In covering the referendum, the media were delighted to seize on Tony Benn and to a lesser extent Enoch Powell as the key anti-Market spokesmen.<sup>10</sup> On the pro-Market side their aim was less certain; they focused most on Ted Heath and, especially when he was waspish about Tony Benn, Roy Jenkins. In both the pro-Market and the anti-Market camps there was conscious jockeying for the limelight. Various innocent observers expressed astonishment at the tough politicking, especially on the pro-Market side, that went on about access to the media. More than one BIE insider commented on the delicate struggles within the organisation on whether the referendum was to be arranged as a 'Ted benefit match' or a 'Roy benefit match'. There were also hints of Roy Jenkins's friends elbowing Shirley Williams out of the limelight.

But the problem was 'who was left out?' as much as 'who was included?'. On the Conservative side the last days of the campaign saw some snide press comment about the comparative silence from Margaret Thatcher. The relative inactivity of Denis Healey and Reggie Maudling on one side and of Eric Varley and William Ross on the other was barely noted.

The most substantial and sustained issue to arise during the campaign was presented in highly personal terms — because it was Mr Benn who raised it. Without his name it would have had less mileage, but it might have won more serious discussion. On May 18 Mr Benn suggested that 500,000 jobs had been lost, saying 'We are exporting jobs to the Common Market fast. In our trade with the rest of the world we are sustaining jobs by maintaining a surplus in our balance of payments. That runs exactly counter to everything forecast by Mr. Heath and that leads to the figure of 500,000 lost jobs.' He was basing himself on a paper prepared by a Cambridge group of economists, which had the blessing of Lord Kaldor. The paper argued that since 1973 UK trade with the original Six had moved from surplus to a deficit of almost £1,000 million, which had the 'direct impact' of a 137,000 jobs loss; a further 360,000 jobs loss could be attributed to the deflation needed to offset this trade deficit. The assumption behind these calculations was that one job disappeared for every £5,000 loss of trade (for steel and

<sup>10</sup> Michael Foot made some well-reported speeches but he was in hospital for part of the campaign.

chemicals a £10,000 figure was used). It was a highly technical argument and on Mr Benn's own logic some very different answers could be reached.<sup>11</sup> But the issue, which was not taken up until Mr Benn had reiterated his point for several days, was dealt with more crudely. Lord Feather suggested that Mr Benn was working on a 'flat-earth' principle of observing that Britain had been losing manufacturing jobs at 200,000 a year for two decades and that Britain had been in the EEC for two and a half years. Roy Jenkins suggested that Mr Benn's approach was to think of a figure and then double it. Mr Whitelaw said Mr Benn knew he was standing the truth on its head. Mr Cyril Smith said Mr Benn was 'guilty of an absolute lie . . . A statement like this is a disgrace.' In Parliament on May 20 Mr Wilson said simply, 'I do not agree with these figures.' On May 22 Mr Mellish, the Labour Chief Whip, spoke of 'a classic mixture of doubtful logic and raging fantasy'. On May 25 Mr Healey, in one of his two interventions in the campaign, issued a statement:

When war breaks out truth is the first casualty. Certainly truth has taken some hard knocks in the battle now raging over the referendum. Take, for example, what is being said about the effect of Britain's entry to the Common Market on our trade and employment . . . There is no firm evidence that our entry had a significant effect on our trade as a whole . . . There is no necessary correlation between trade and employment . . . What is particularly damaging about this sort of falsehood is that in throwing the blame for all our difficulties on to the Common Market they divert attention from our real problems . . . these problems arise in part from weaknesses in our manufacturing industry. But these weaknesses have nothing to do with the Common Market; they have been steadily increasing for the last 30 years.

Mr Benn stuck to his guns, complaining on May 26 that his figures had been attacked but not challenged in detail. On May 28 his under-secretary, Michael Meacher, upped the 500,000 by suggesting that 200,000 more job losses could be attributed to the diversion of British investment to Europe. As the BIE spokesmen pointed out to a public that certainly did

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Peter Wilsher in the *Sunday Times Business Supplement*, June 1, 1975.



not follow the niceties of the argument, there was something implausible about the idea that at a time of world slump, 700,000 of the country's 860,000 unemployed could blame entry in Europe for their plight.

It is hard to say whether any votes were won or lost over the issue, but it certainly served to keep Mr Benn and his credibility in the forefront of the news over the last ten days of May.<sup>1 2</sup>

Apart from the 500,000 jobs no single issue took fire during the campaign. On each side familiar arguments picked them up. But no theme was sustained over a period of days, with the argument advancing over repeated exchanges.

The nearest to a tactical encounter came in the battle of the shopping baskets. In order to highlight the food prices which the common agricultural policy produced, Barbara Castle had the idea of going on a shopping expedition to Brussels. However, news of her plans speedily reached the ears of the pro-Marketeers. Brian Murphy, who had worked for her before working for the Commission, was asked to make the arrangements for this Brussels visit. Barbara Castle flew over on May 28 and, although cold shouldered by the BBC, conducted a well-recorded expedition round the shops of Brussels on behalf of her niece. A basket of food which cost her £4.24 in England came to £6.92 in Brussels, and clothes for her seven-year-old niece cost 55% more. Meanwhile, BIE sent a Swedish-speaking member of their own staff, Vicky Crankshaw, to Oslo. Ms Crankshaw was able to show that a £5.82 shopping basket in London cost £10.05 in Norway. When Barbara Castle had her press conference on May 29 to illustrate the horror of high prices in the Market, her efforts were neatly capped by Ms Crankshaw's demonstration of what it had apparently cost the Norwegian housewife to stay out of the Market.

This small coup had a tonic effect on the BIE campaign who had at times felt a bit discouraged by the limited feedback to their daily endeavours.

One general theme that recurred powerfully in pro-Market speeches could be summed up in Sir Christopher Soames's phrase, 'Frankly, it's damn cold outside.' As Michael Stewart said on May 21, 'If we do walk out, into what sort of world shall we walk?' The same day Lord Carrington attacked the NRC sovereignty arguments more strongly: 'Britain's economic ills

<sup>1 2</sup> For a discussion of the way the press treated Mr Benn, see pp. 257-66.

would not be solved by locking ourselves away on this small island, unsure of ourselves, increasingly poor, fiercely nationalistic - but with our sovereignty safely locked up in a deed box in Barclays Bank, as irrelevant as gum-boots in the Sahara.'

But Peter Shore put the counter argument on May 27:

What the advocates of membership are saying, insistently and insidiously, is that we are finished as a country; that the long and famous story of the British nation and people has ended; that we are now so weak and powerless that we must accept terms and conditions, penalties and limitations, almost as though we had suffered defeat in war; that though we have the right to vote on June 5, we have no option but to remain in the Common Market age.

Roy Jenkins in the final BIE rally on June 2 said that for Britain to leave the Market would be to go into 'an old people's home for fading nations . . . I do not think it would be a very comfortable old people's home. I do not like the look of some of the prospective wardens.'

The patriotic theme was in fact less heard from either side than had been expected. But Mr Heath and Mr Powell were among its exponents.

At a BIE rally on May 12 Mr Heath observed:

One of the sadder aspects of the campaign is the way the anti-Marketeers are talking Britain down. They tell us that the British people are too weak to hold their own in the European Community, that we are not able to compete in the open market of Europe and that we cannot survive the rigours of fair competition. I reject totally that kind of defeatist talk. They may have lost faith but I have not.

On May 10 Mr Powell told a Get Britain Out meeting in Bournemouth that there was a new and sinister pro-Market argument that unless Britain stayed in the EEC it would fall prey to

socialism, and the left-wing or to Communism. Membership of the Common Market was now being urged as 'a talisman against political hobgoblins,' . . . The pro-Marketeers now say to their hearers: 'You can no longer rely on yourselves, on

the British electorate, to reject the politics which you abhor. You can no longer trust either the good sense of the British people or the democratic power of public argument inside and outside Parliament to make the right choice.'

He returned to the theme on May 17 at West Bromwich. 'To the groaners and moaners who want to chloroform the British electorate by telling them that they have no hope of making a living outside the protective womb of the EEC we reply "Don't be silly" . . .'

Early in the campaign there was some exploitation of the Red menace as a pro-Market argument. Mr Heath in Trafalgar Square on May 4 pointed to the zeal of the Communists to get Britain out of the Community. Neil Marten replied, attacking McCarthyite tactics, inspired by imported American public relations men.

It is very un-British – but what can one expect from people who are determined to end Britain's independent self-government? If the fear of these leading politicians is the Communists, then let them look at the Common Market itself. Five million people voted Communist in the last French elections, nine million in Italy – and 17,000 in Britain.

Frank Judd on May 21 accused 'leading colleagues within the Labour party' of using smear tactics, 'by implication supporting the traditionally desperate last throw of the Establishment – the Red scare'. Ian Mikardo attacked the pro-Europeans:

They have been busy telling the British people that we ought to stay in the Common Market not because it is good for us . . . but because the Soviet Government wants us to come out. The anti-Marketees, they say, are only the extremists, notably the Marxists and the Maoists . . . yesterday the No 3 Maoist in the whole world, Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping, First Deputy Prime Minister of China, made a speech in Paris supporting the EEC in language 'even more fulsome and enthusiastic' than that of Mr. Thorpe and Mr. Prentice. Does that prove that these two gentlemen are secret Maoists? No, of course it does not. But it may induce them, when they have recovered from the shock of Mr Teng's speech, to start discussing the

real issues in the Common Market debate instead of behaving like the late unlamented Senator Joseph McCarthy.

It is noteworthy that some advertising copy pointing to the associations between the anti-Marketees and extremists at home and abroad was prepared but never used.<sup>13</sup>

One theme that stirred a limited number of people deeply was the sanctity of treaties. The idea was touched on in a number of speeches – perhaps most eloquently by Ted Heath. At Buxton, on May 30, he observed that when he signed the Treaty of Accession, he had signed on behalf of the British people with the support of both Houses of Parliament. If the Treaty was now to be treated as a scrap of paper, with whom would we make treaties in the future?

The need to honour treaties was also evoked by various Conservative speakers who suggested that even if there were a No vote, Parliament might refuse to repeal the Treaty. William Whitelaw had suggested this possibility in a speech on April 20:

Parliament has voted overwhelmingly in favour of staying in, and should the referendum result in a negative or unclear decision, members of Parliament would be faced with a choice between following their own judgment or their electors. The alien device of the referendum could provoke an unparalleled constitutional crisis, especially if our present European partners proved less than over-willing to help our Government to undo complex legislation.

The thought was developed by Margaret Thatcher on May 16 and again on June 3: 'the Referendum is advisory not binding.' Reginald Maudling elaborated on the theme in a letter to constituents published in *The Times* on May 26. But it was a commentary on the general expectations about the result that there was so little discussion of what, in practical terms, would follow a No vote.

One theme that drew less attention than expected was an echo of the Norwegian anti-Establishment idea. A number of writers

<sup>13</sup> One advertisement that was never used, because Roy Jenkins and Willie Whitelaw would not authorise it, contrasted the 'goodies' at home and abroad who were for the Market and the 'baddies' who were against, while another pushed the theme 'Out of Europe, Out of Work'.

contributing to the newspaper symposia on 'Why I shall vote YES' and 'Why I shall vote NO' suggested that because all the old gang, who had led the country into such trouble, were pro-Market, they would vote anti-Market. But the theme was not taken up much by the leading anti-Market spokesmen. Alf Morris argued on May 24 that the battle was between the little people and the big people and 'small is beautiful'. Perhaps the most eloquent statement on the idea came in article by Enoch Powell in the *News of the World* on June 1:

In Thursday's referendum the British people are deciding if they want to put their shirt on the Common Market — and not only their shirt but the shirts of future generations as well. As they stand wondering, and turning it over in their minds, a whole crowd of touts come up and say to them: 'Look, mates, you know nothing about all this. It's much too complicated for you to understand.'

The touts add: 'You must take the advice of the people who know best — the Conservative Party; the big industrialists; the CBI; the National Farmers' Union; above all, Ted Heath. Take their tip. Do what they tell you. Vote to stay in.' So let's look at the record of these people who 'know best' who can tell you what will be good for Britain, not just this year or next year but for generations to come. We discover that these are the very people who have always been wrong. Not one horse they have tipped has ever won.

Anxiety about prices, above all about food prices, had been central in the public unease about entry into the EEC. The anti-Marketees had their case weakened by the general rise in prices and BIE spokesmen were able to argue, in a very technical way, that by 1975 the EEC had caused food prices to Britain to be lower than they would otherwise have been. The opinion polls suggested that this argument hardly got across. Fourteen Labour women MPs issued a statement on May 23 blaming the Market for high food prices and the anti-Marketees could point emotively to the Community's creation of beef mountains, butter mountains and wine lakes. On May 19 the Intervention Board admitted to a 500,000 ton mountain of milk powder in Europe (though stocks in Britain were only 25,000 tons).

As Edward Taylor put it in a Glasgow news conference on May 27:

The agricultural policy is simply a mechanism to keep food prices artificially high by using every known device to stop food getting to the people who need it. First, there is the creating of giant and rotting surpluses of food — over 400,000 tons of milk powder, over 200,000 tons of beef and a great mountain of butter. Secondly, there is the use of subsidies to stop food production. We have had the subsidies to slaughter cows. Now we have the new subsidy for the destruction of greenhouses in Lanarkshire by tomato growers there.

The pro-Market response was to stress security of food supplies as more important than the level of food prices and to exploit memories of the short-run sugar and salt famines in the autumn of 1974 as a spectre that might return, only many times worse, if Britain left the Market.

There had been some muted complaints, especially from the younger Europeans, that the case for a more federal Europe was too little heard. BIE was most anxious not to frighten off the moderate Europeans or to give ammunition to anti-Marketees like Ronald Bell who said on May 16, 'There is every sign that many politicians in Britain and very many on the continent are hell bent on political union.' It was not till the Oxford Union debate on June 3 that a leading figure made a really uninhibited call to go wholeheartedly into Europe. Mr Heath said that he was 'absolutely prepared to make a sacrifice of national sovereignty to the well-being of the community . . . The future of Britain lies in the Community. It is there that decisions are taken . . . Let us be there, where and when decisions are taken.' A more extreme call for involvement came in a sour speech from a leading Liberal pro-Marketee, John Pardoe, MP, on June 4

If referenda were won or lost by the competence of those who lead the debate on either side, the result on Thursday would be a landslide victory for the 'No' campaign . . . [Leaders of BIE] advised by an army of public relations hacks and with their campaign coffers loaded with gold they have thrashed around in an expensive Euro-fog. Pedestrian

and boring, they have never once given even a glimmer of the glory or the European feast. When asked about the real stuff of political unity they have skated round it with half hearted apologies about 'it not happening in our lifetime'. With people like this in charge it wouldn't happen for a thousand years. Far from stirring the hearts and minds of the people, these men couldn't even stir a Christmas pudding and would make Henry V's call to arms sound like an invitation to a whist drive.

The campaign was punctuated by opinion polls, each with much the same message of a 2 to 1 Yes lead. In the final week, bookmakers' advertisements began to appear with odds that by June 3 reached 1/8 Yes and 11/2 No; the more sophisticated punter would find the shortest odds on the Yes proportion were 6/1 against it falling between 62% and 64%.

The pro-Market camp uttered some dutiful warnings against over-confidence, while the antis detected signs of a last minute sweep towards them. Mr Frere-Smith on June 4 observed, 'We detect from the latest canvass returns from the regions that there has been a dramatic change in voting intention in the past few days.' Mr Marten told the final NRC press conference on June 4: 'We have every confidence that opinion in the last few days has been swinging substantially towards us.' And Mr Benn said on June 3 that he 'deeply believed' Britain would vote No.

As the campaign closed, there were many reports of 'tremendous apathy', 'a horrible lack of enthusiasm', 'low activity' and of anxiety about whether people would vote.<sup>14</sup> Mr Jenkins at the final press conference said that the 'No-men' had given up hope of victory but

What they hope for is a low turnout and a relatively narrow margin on the basis of which they can continue the struggle, prolong the uncertainty and try to prevent Britain from playing an effective, constructive and influential role within the Community. Let us vote decisively to settle the issue overwhelmingly and to free us from the continued debilitation of being hesitant and reluctant partners.

The anti-Market ministers in a final statement called on the

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. *Sunday Times*, June 1, 1975.

people to make June 5 'Britain's independence day by voting "No".' BIE ended their campaign on June 4 with an all-night torchlight vigil at the statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square visited among others by Harold Macmillan (who had earlier emerged from retirement to speak in Brighton on June 2 for his old cause).

Mr Wilson gave his last message in Cardiff on the eve of the poll:

Tomorrow is the decisive day in the affairs of our people. When all the arguments have died down and this campaign comes to an end and when the dust has finally settled, tomorrow's decision will be seen not just as a vote, but as a vote about the future of our young people, our children and those who come after them.

## 8 Broadcasting

Anthony Smith<sup>1</sup>

The dilemmas of balance and responsibility which the broadcasters always face in connection with politics emerged in a fresh guise with the coming of the referendum – and they did so at a time when there was a new mood of self-doubt about past solutions. The vast expansion in the scale and enterprise with which television covered politics in the 1960s reached and passed its peak in the two elections of 1974. In the February contest the broadcasters learnt that by allowing too much of the time of the major medium of entertainment to be given to a political campaign, they could damage their own goals and actually impair the democratic process. Reactions to the coverage of the February election led the BBC in particular to alleviate the impact of the October election on peak-hour viewing. As the referendum drew near, senior officials reflected somewhat ruefully on the lessons of 1974. Sir Michael Swann said at Leeds on March 17 1975:

If I read the signs aright, I believe the greatest risk we face is that the public cries a plague on both your houses and proceeds to abstain from voting . . . now we look like having a third major election type campaign within eighteen months, and a campaign, moreover, restricted to the one topic. The risk of overdoing things is a very serious one and we shall, I expect, set or endeavour to set a slower tempo and a lower key than we have done for ordinary elections.

<sup>1</sup>I am deeply indebted to Miss S. M. Richards of St Antony's College, Oxford for preparing all the charts and assisting me in the collection of all the material; to David Glencross of the IBA, Colin Shaw, Chief Secretary of the BBC, and his colleague Patrick Mullins; David Nicholas, Deputy Editor of ITN; Peter Hardiman Scott, Chief Assistant to the Director General of the BBC; and Desmond Taylor, Editor of News and Current Affairs – who have all given me interviews or supplied material. Brian Winston of the Television Research Unit at Glasgow University has kindly given me a great deal of data on the content of news bulletins.

In the event the BBC decided to confine as much of the coverage as possible within its normal current affairs and news 'slots', while the ITV programme companies continued to mount a good deal of their coverage in a series of 'specials' or in normal programmes promoted to a more prominent place in their schedules. The BBC decided not to lengthen its *One O'Clock News* as had become usual in elections, and it set aside only one Outside Broadcast unit for covering evening speeches. However, in the final days of the campaign, both broadcasting systems increased their coverage very considerably. Table 1 shows how the time given to the referendum increased after being held back in the early stages.

Table 1. *Weekly Total of Referendum TV Coverage<sup>a</sup> (in hours and minutes)*

	BBC		Network <sup>b</sup>	ITV	Combined total
	BBC1	BBC2		Regional average	
May 1–7	28m.	1m.	31m.	11m.	42m.
May 8–14	1h. 58m.	1m.	1h. 4m.	17m.	1h. 21m.
May 15–21	2h. 37m.	3h. 3m.	1h. 55m.	28m.	2h. 23m.
May 22–28	1h. 47m.	1h. 21m.	1h. 0m. <sup>c</sup>	1h. 4m. <sup>d</sup>	2h. 4m.
May 29–June 4	7h. 12m.	2h. 17m.	8h. 20m.	42m. <sup>d</sup>	9h. 2m.

Note: Data on news bulletins kindly supplied by Glasgow University Television Research Unit for whole period except May 30–June 4 on ITV. Supplementary data from BBC and IBA.

<sup>a</sup>BBC1 and BBC2 are combined timings for news bulletins, specials, inserts into regular programmes and Referendum Broadcasts.

<sup>b</sup>This figure represents the combined total coverage on all ITN programmes, all networked specials, regular current affairs programmes and Referendum Broadcasts.

<sup>c</sup>May 22 only. An industrial dispute lasted from May 23–9 inclusive. Some of the 'lost' programmes were transmitted in the last few days of the campaign. ITV data is calculated on a different basis from the Glasgow material, omitting newsreaders' and presenters' time, and therefore tends to underestimate ITV's total referendum coverage.

<sup>d</sup>This figure has been compiled by averaging the time spent on referendum coverage by those companies which actually managed to transmit on any single day.

### *Balance*

In general elections, the broadcasters can use the existing strength of the parties in MPs or in votes at the last election as a guide in establishing the general priorities of coverage. In the referendum, however, Parliament handed over its rights to the

country as a whole and it was recognised that the pro and anti proportion among elected politicians would be an inappropriate basis for coverage. The White Paper of February 26 1975 offered no particular formula: 'The Government are confident that the IBA and BBC will exercise editorial discretion designed to ensure that there is a fair balance between the opposing views in news and feature programmes'.<sup>2</sup>

The BBC's solution to the problem was explained by Sir Charles Curran, the Director-General of the BBC;<sup>3</sup> in the absence of the standard election guideline the BBC would 'settle to some sort of 50-50 division of time and opportunity'. News bulletins would deal with *events* as they arose, irrespective of which side the interpretation of particular occurrences happened to favour; but even in news bulletins the reporting of *speeches* would be conducted under the 50-50 guideline; a skimmed-milk mountain or a wine-lake, welfare beef arrangements or rows over sugar prices would fit into the relevant bulletins but the *argument* would be reported in such a way as to achieve equality by the end of the campaign. The Director-General had deliberately chosen to declare the BBC's intentions at the outset so that the public 'can judge whether, in the event, we succeed'. The BBC were plainly expecting a bumpy ride; as Sir Charles observed:

I would say we're absolutely on a hiding-to-nothing. At the end of the game the winners won't thank us, they'll thank themselves; the losers will certainly blame us. And what we've got to try and do is, at the end, convince reasonable people that we've tried to do a fair job.

But in the event the broadcasting organisations were to meet with much less criticism than in recent election campaigns.

The BBC had actually started to apply the principle of equality to its programmes from very early in the year. It was far more difficult for the IBA to implement any such policy since it only shares editorial control with Independent Television News and with the fourteen programme companies. The Deputy Director-General of the IBA, Bernard Sendall, had been involved in talks among the various programme controllers since

<sup>2</sup> Cmnd 5925, para. 33

<sup>3</sup> In broadcasts on *Midweek* (BBC1) and *PM* (Radio 4) on April 28, 1975.

February when some of the detailed implications of the 50-50 rule were thought out. Even in selecting speakers for discussion programmes about the advisability of holding the referendum at all, the balance had to be kept between *views* on the issue rather than between parties, with the relative status of each speaker being taken into account. It was agreed that where pairs of programmes or series were concerned, the publicity should make clear the pattern of equalisation into which the programmes fitted - though in the final seven days each individual programme would have to be internally balanced.

Internal party divisions presented special problems. In reporting the special conference of the Labour party, for example, the focus had to be on the arguments about EEC membership to avoid giving the impression that in the referendum the voters would be judging the parties. It was particularly difficult to strike the right balance in those regions where Labour MPs decided to adopt a policy analogous to the national decision that Labour leaders were not to appear in public debate against each other; Tyne-Tees experienced a special problem in matching Labour pro-Marketeters to Conservative anti-Marketeters (since they did not want to leave the impression that the antis were all Labour or the pros all Conservative, nor to exclude the local Labour pro-Marketeters from the air).

The IBA did not impose the same rule of timed balance as the BBC in the reporting of the national debate within news bulletins; major meetings and speeches were to be dealt with on the basis of their news value, though care was to be taken to prevent news coverage appearing to convert an item into a platform for the view concerned.

The position of the government as an entity distinct from the pro- or anti-Market campaigns was a source of concern to the broadcasters, particularly when it was learnt that Mr Wilson was considering a formal request for a ministerial broadcast to explain government policy as such, independently of any Britain in Europe campaign. A ministerial broadcast automatically carries with it a right of reply for the opposition and a further opportunity for the Liberals to discuss the matter with the two large parties.<sup>4</sup> Since all three party leaderships were on

<sup>4</sup> The pattern of response to Ministerial Broadcasts is set out in an Aide-Memoire which has been in force since the 1960s, though reconsidered from time to time by the Committee on Party Political Broadcasts.

the pro side this would have led to a severe and more or less irreparable distortion of the 50-50 balance. In the end the Prime Minister let it be known that he would not pursue the idea and saved the broadcasting authorities much embarrassment. The essence of the position had been set out in January: 'If we are to have [a referendum] it will be because Parliament has decided in effect to waive its rights. Once it has taken that decision, logic and public expectation demand that the rules offer an equal chance to both sides.'<sup>5</sup>

Table 2. Personalities Appearing in Television Broadcasts (Number of times individuals appeared in feature programmes or as principle news items, May 1-June 4)

Anti		Pro		
		Under umbrella		Government
52 Benn	Lab.	27 R. Jenkins	Lab.	25 Wilson
23 Powell	UUU	23 Heath	Con.	6 Callaghan
22 Shore	Lab.	11 Thatcher	Con.	6 Peart
13 Marten	Con.	11 Thomson	EEC Lab.	4 Hattersley
12 Castle	Lab.	9 Prentice	Lab.	4 Healey
12 Foot	Lab.	7 Whitelaw	Con.	3 Crosland
10 du Cann	Con.	6 Thorpe	Lib.	
9 Heffer	Lab.	5 Williams	Lab.	
5 Hart	Lab.	4 Maudling	Con.	
5 Varley	Lab.	4 Rippon	Con.	
4 Jay	Lab.	3 George-Brown	Lab.	
4 C. Jenkins	TU	3 Grimond	Lib.	
3 Buchan	Lab.	3 Walker	Con.	
3 Ewing	SNP			
3 Murray	TU			

One important consequence of the equality principle was that the well-known figures of the anti-Market campaign, because they were fewer, each received more coverage as individuals than the celebrities on the pro-Market. Table 2 records the number of times the main politicians either appeared in a programme or were featured as a *principal* subject in a news item (television only). It shows how overwhelmingly the campaign revolved around parliamentary personalities.

<sup>5</sup>Geoffrey Smith, 'Making sure of fair play when broadcasters move in on the EEC Referendum', *The Times*, Jan 23, 1975.

### The 'Referendum Broadcasts' The White Paper had suggested

The broadcasting authorities may also decide to run a series of short 'referendum broadcasts'. In this way an equal number of short periods of broadcasting time would be made available to the two main campaigning organisations in the two or three weeks before polling day. The Government would welcome such an initiative.

There were divided precedents and obvious risks in the decision to allocate 'free' broadcasting time directly to the umbrella organisations. Ireland and Denmark, in their referenda, had given equal time to all the parties represented in their parliaments and this had meant that the pro-Marketeers had far more time than the antis. There were a few in Britain who asked for this course of action; certainly Sir Con O'Neill argued strongly that his side should have the bulk of the broadcasting time on the ground that the government and a very large proportion of the elected representatives of the people were advocating our remaining in the EEC. On the other hand in Norway the principle of equality had been adopted for all broadcasting. But equal time for the British umbrella organisations could have led to difficulties since it might have excluded important elements in the debate: some nationalists or the Labour left could easily have refused to stay within a structure which also contained elements from the far right; a rift in either umbrella organisation could have put the broadcasting organisations in an awkward position. However, apart from little regarded complaints from the far left fringe groups and the National Front, together with the abortive efforts of the government to get in on the act as a third party, the principle of equal time was hardly challenged.

But the allocation of facilities and responsibilities raised problems. The semi-official Committee on Party Political Broadcasting (which contains representatives of the BBC, the IBA, the Conservative, Labour, Liberal and Scottish Nationalist parties and is convened by the Secretary to the Chief Whip, Freddie Warren) was heavily weighted on the pro-EEC side and could not automatically command the confidence of the anti-Marketeers. But the broadcasting authorities were reluctant to take all the decisions themselves; by working through the

PPB committee they could make the party whips 'recognise' the umbrella organisations and, by bringing them into the discussion, obtain the consent of all those involved to the 50-50 allocation of time. The IBA went along with the BBC on this general approach while remaining somewhat sceptical about the validity of the PPB committee's jurisdiction.

On January 24, the day after the Prime Minister's initial statement on the referendum, John Crawley, Chief Assistant to the Director General of the BBC,<sup>6</sup> took the initiative. He wrote to Mr Warren to clarify whether there would be a fixed period of campaigning with the umbrella organisation recognised as surrogate political parties. On February 7 Mr Short reported to the cabinet on the results of the informal exchanges between the BBC, the IBA and Mr Warren, and these formed the basis of Clause 33 of the February 24 White Paper.

Meanwhile the umbrella organisations had started to set up their own machinery. Early in February Sir Con O'Neill invited Christopher Serpell and Eric Robertson, senior ex-BBC men, to start work as his main broadcasting advisers. The NRC worked through a small broadcasting committee under Bob Harrison, after some discussions in the Soho Square headquarters of the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians. Both groups made separate visits to the Chairmen of the BBC and the IBA and then to the Directors-General; the purpose was to learn something of the authorities' overall policies for the referendum, but the opportunity was seized by Sir Con O'Neill to explain his case for the pros to be given more than half the available time. The anti-Marketeers, anxious about the hostile balance in the press and their own lack of resources, were much relieved to receive assurances that both the BBC and IBA were intending to operate on the 50-50 principle.

After this round of meetings at the end of March, the BBC and IBA sent on to Mr Warren their draft proposals for the referendum broadcasts. This explained that the authorities were planning to give BIE and the NRC forty minutes' television time each, as well as appreciable radio time during the three weeks before the vote. This allocation assumed that there would be no requests for party political broadcasts or for ministerial broadcasts during this period. The government gave quick consideration to the proposal and a meeting of the PPB committee was

<sup>6</sup> John Crawley retired during April and was succeeded by Peter Hardiman Scott.

called for April 8. The Lord President took the chair and beside the Chief Whips of the three main parties there were representatives of the SNP and Plaid Cymru (attending for the first time).<sup>7</sup> The group approved the proposals, and at a further meeting on April 22 (with Mr Warren in the chair and Sir Charles Curran joining Mr Scott) Sir Con O'Neill and Mr Marten were presented with the plan for their broadcasts. It was proposed that, within the last fortnight of the campaign, each organisation should have four national television broadcasts of ten minutes each (with the option of splitting the third of them into four regional editions), mostly going out simultaneously on all three channels. On radio each would have three broadcasts of ten minutes on Radio 4 at 8.50 a.m. and two of five minutes on Radio 2 at 1.45 p.m. (One of the radio broadcasts could be split into regional editions.)<sup>8</sup> Sir Con and Mr Marten accepted the plan in general but Mr Marten objected to the final Tuesday evening broadcasts being given, as in general elections, to the *status quo*. A lottery was held, using the Chief Whip's ceremonial hat. Mr Marten won and, after consulting his colleagues, chose to have the last word on television, leaving the last word on radio to BIE.

It is open to question whether the referendum broadcasts would have followed so closely the pattern of election broadcasts if a different jurisdictional machinery had been established. In practice, BIE and NRC had each to prepare a series of short documentary programmes, paying for any film themselves. The BBC made available studio facilities, production staff and technicians. The NRC spent only £2,500 on its four broadcasts while the figure for BIE was £105,000. The possibilities of such inequality are built into the PPB framework which seems so spontaneously to have extended its sphere of responsibility over the referendum arrangements.

The NRC chose to base each of its four programmes on a single theme (Food and Prices, Jobs and Trade, the Regions of Britain and Sovereignty) and to give each programme a general 'news' feel; the format was based on two presenters (Paul

<sup>7</sup> Also present were, for the IBA, Brian Young, Bernard Sendall; for the BBC, Peter Hardiman Scott; for the Labour party, Percy Clark, Doreen Stainforth; for the Conservative party, John Lindsay, David Davies.

<sup>8</sup> These arrangements provided for a total of eighty minutes' broadcasting compared to the 130 minutes given to election broadcasting in the October 1974 general election.



Johnson and Patrick Cosgrave) with a girl reporter (Sally Vincent) who became a third presenter as plans developed. The small group responsible for the production were a contented working alliance of individuals from both ends of the political spectrum. They consulted with Neil Marten and Douglas Jay at the final stages of each script. The only problem arose over the last programme in which it was planned to have Michael Foot and Enoch Powell ('the two most distinguished parliamentary figures of our time') jointly warning the voters of the dangers of the EEC to British sovereignty. A few prominent members of the NRC objected to this but eventually were brought round and the programme took place with Neil Marten holding the ring.

The BBC and IBA both had rules that no chairman of a regular programme could take part in a referendum broadcast. In the event this penalised the NRC more than BIE whose format did not demand an experienced studio presenter. NRC approached various well-known broadcasters for help and received apologetic refusals. Therefore, having firmly decided not to use actors, however distinguished, it turned to three journalists familiar with television but not much used to the demands of 'presenting'. The programmes offered the same aura as normal election broadcasts: charge and counter-charge rang through them and debatable statistics were flung before the audience; 'experts' delivered straight-to-camera threats and prognostications. Dennis Potter offered a hard judgement on the first of the series: 'It would have made a cruel parody of all those offensive but compulsory party politicals we have endured for the past decade.'<sup>9</sup>

BIE had much more resources of money, personnel and ideas to bring to the referendum broadcasts. On a visit to the United States in 1973 John Harris had come across an Academy Award-winning film-maker, Charles Guggenheim, with wide experience of political propaganda. The Kennedys had discovered him after his film on the Little Rock school desegregation crisis and he had acted as film-maker for the McGovern Presidential Campaign in 1972; he had also worked to re-elect McGovern to the Senate in 1974 with a 'ciné-verité' series of television commercials, showing the Senator campaigning across the prairies in a battered Chevrolet. A certain legend attaches to the name of Mr Guggenheim as one of the most effective

<sup>9</sup> *New Statesman*, May 30, 1975.

propagandists in the United States. His technique has been described:

You have to get out to the people, where they are, and capture their mood and essence. You then select the moments which make your case . . . You look at people's eyes in the pictures and see they're telling the truth . . . The philosophy is that most of us are influenced by other people and not by statements about a position.

After Lord Harris and Geoffrey Tucker had been to see him in February, Mr Guggenheim was hired by BIE for \$3,000 a week, as adviser on the four broadcasts (see p. 89). David Marquand, the Labour MP for Ashfield, was asked by Lord Harris to assist him as political adviser.

Charlie Guggenheim was quick to get the mood of Britain. His aim was to catch the doubtful voter by engulfing him in a warm comforting feeling about the EEC. The films all showed ordinary people drawn from a wide variety of different walks of life talking to the leading BIE politicians. They saw voters like themselves expressing their doubts about the Common Market and being reassured in the vernacular by a team of moderate people of different parties. In the first programme Roy Jenkins was seen in his constituency office, Shirley Williams talking to shoppers, Sir Keith Joseph on a building site, David Steel in a crowded tavern. The second programme focused almost entirely on Lord Feather, as the voice of trade unionism, talking with steel-workers in South Wales. The third programme offered endorsements of EEC membership from political celebrities and from ordinary people. The last, which returned to the politicians, produced internal ructions in BIE. Since it would be impossible to get Mr Wilson, Mrs Thatcher and Mr Thorpe in a joint appearance, it seemed to some a good idea at least to get a public endorsement of their campaign from the Foreign Secretary. But Mr Callaghan had made it clear that he would not appear within a BIE programme — only as a senior minister, aloof from the struggle. A shaky compromise was worked out whereby the BBC announced that there followed a Referendum Broadcast on behalf of BIE and BIE then announced a statement by the Foreign Secretary as if it preceded the Referendum Broadcast. It was an awkward manoeuvre which must have given some viewers at least a

suggestion of the dispute that had gone on behind the scenes; however, more may have been impressed by Jim Callaghan's earthy and 'independent' endorsement of a Yes vote.

Both sides watched anxiously for the public reaction. Within BIE there was a fear that their first programme had sped along too fast; as one official put it, 'It was "New Yorkese" and baffled many of our own supporters in, shall I say, the more rural areas.' The NRC felt that their first programme on prices had had the superior virtue of being clearly about a single subject and had therefore struck home more than a programme which had skated from issue to issue on the basis of emotion rather than logic. BIE's private poll the day after the programme with Vic Feather registered it as 'a definite if not outstanding success'; it found that the NRC's following programme on jobs, featuring Jack Jones and Peter Shore, scored badly in comparison, even by the standards of party political broadcasts and allowing for the unpopularity of the anti-Market cause. Even among the undecided the NRC programme had little impact, 54% claiming that it made no difference to their view; among the pro-Marketeters half claimed that it strengthened their views. Half of all those viewing came away from the programme believing that 'the Common Market taxes food' in Britain. The poll concluded that, in its primary purpose, the programme 'must be rated a definite failure'.

It was thought by many that the Guggenheim films would exert an important influence on the development of party political broadcasting, even if they did not exert a great influence on the referendum. Peter Lennon judged that, despite occasionally misfiring, 'the core of the "Yes" campaign showed sophisticated television sense.'<sup>10</sup> But Dennis Potter concluded:

I had hoped that the Referendum campaign would somehow be pushed out of the hands of the politicians. There was a chance that we might have had access to a different order of testimony, a richer cadence of thought and speech, a wider reference of argument. Some hope. What has happened is that pro and anti positions have been swamped by familiar styles and deceits, even by people who do not need to use such stale old devices.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Sunday Times*, June 8, 1975.

<sup>11</sup> *New Statesman*, May 30, 1975.

### *News Treatment*

BBC television news concentrated on the progress of the national debate, with extracts from the major speeches of the day: ITN decided to use part of its bulletin time, as it had done in October 1974, for an entirely non-news purpose, presenting a series of films explaining different aspects of the working of the Common Market: eighteen such films were shown between April 17 and May 16; ranging from two to five minutes in length they added up to seventy-two minutes of viewing. This was mostly at the expense of other items in *News at Ten* but the programme drew quite heavily on the two-minute network extension allowed on nights with important news. The films were made by John Landa, ITN's European Correspondent, and the topics ranged from descriptions of Britain's budget contribution and of the powers of the Commission over national governments to an account of Norway's situation after its decision not to join and an exploration of the possible alternatives after a British No.

ITN's midday news *First Report*, chaired by Robert Kee, started on May 1 a referendum post bag which lasted through the month; it also had a number of question sessions, with small studio audiences and phone-in questions, and it prepared two fifty-minute 'specials' (one of which was killed by the strike).

All-in-all the ITV channel gave more of its news bulletin time to the referendum than the BBC, as Table 3 shows.

### *Information, Comment and Debate*

*ITV Regional Coverage* Following the precedent set in 1974 representatives of IBA, ITN and almost all the programme companies met before the campaign to plan their joint coverage of the referendum. The three networked current affairs programmes, *Weekend World*, *This Week* and *World in Action*, agreed to demarcate their roles and not to act in competition. Each company was of course free to produce its own duly balanced programmes in its own region.

Tyne-Tees's *Division* put on half-hour interviews with major politicians and had a discussion between Geoffrey Rippon and Clive Jenkins as well as between local MPs and councillors. Granada ran debates between personalities from the North-West (Eric Heffer v. John Davies, Hugh Scanlon v. Cyril Smith) and on the final Monday it featured a fifteen-minute item involving

Table 3. Referendum Coverage on BBC1 and ITN Evening Bulletins (minutes)

	BBC1	ITN	May 8	BBC1	ITN	May 15	BBC1	ITN	May 22	BBC1	ITN	May 29	BBC1	ITN
May 1	3.8	1.4		0.6	6.0	15	1.3	5.5	22	3.4	6.4	29	5.6	
2	—	—	9	1.3	5.2	16	0.5	3.5	23	5.5	S	30	5.4	S
3	—	—	10	—	2.3	17	1.5	0.4	24	—	T	31	6.2	T
4	2.5	0.3	11	4.4	5.8	18	0.5	0.5	25	0.4	R	June 1	7.4	R
5	1.0	5.8	12	1.6	6.4	19	4.5	5.1	26	—	I	2	5.4	I
6	—	—	13	6.2	5.6	20	3.4	5.0	27	7.1	K	3	9.2	K
7	—	4.4	14	5.6	4.7	21	5.4	7.4	28	3.2	E	4	—	E
Total	7.3	11.9		19.6	35.4		17.0	27.4		19.6			39.1	
Average	1.0	1.7		2.8	5.1		2.4	3.9		2.8			5.6	

comedians from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland discussing Europe 'in a humorous vein' (with the wit, if not very funny, at least scrupulously balanced between pro and anti). Granada also announced public meetings in its area. Ulster TV had provided in March a major programme on implications of EEC membership for Northern Ireland and during the campaign offered a number of studio discussions between local political figures. Southern Television mounted magazine items featuring MPs from the region (and the producers' task was easier than in Tyne-Tees because Labour MPs were willing to debate each other) and on May 21 offered a major special with Barbara Castle, Willie Whitelaw, David Steel and others. Yorkshire TV concentrated its coverage into its daily magazine *Calendar* and dealt with the implications of the EEC for many of the regional industries. Anglia TV adopted a low profile but included some EEC items in its popular programmes. Harlech Television was more innovative allowing two pre-recorded forty-five-minute 'open access' programmes provided by the umbrella organisations: it also offered a debate in Welsh between the two sides. ATV (Midlands) provided a forty-five-minute regional *Question Time* in which car workers, housewives and farmers interrogated Roy Hattersley and Neil Marten.

The two London companies, Thames and London Weekend Television, provided in their regional programmes *Today* and the *London Programme* debates between Home Counties MPs and reports on the views of Londoners. Thames's *People and Politics* put on a confrontation between Mr Heath and Mr Foot.

In Scotland the campaign was reported in the local magazines of all three companies, Grampian, STV and Border. Grampian matched Harlech's initiative in offering time to the pro- and anti-Marketeers on two successive nights: to preserve total fairness the order of transmission was only decided by the toss of a coin after the final recording of both programmes on the afternoon of the first transmission; unfortunately the antis then discovered that their programmes would coincide with the transmission on BBC1 of the England v. Wales football match; an injunction was threatened against the IBA but eventually the NRC accepted their ill-luck.

*BBC National Programmes* The BBC's policy was to explain the issues and report the debate without allowing the referendum to become 'unduly obtrusive'; but there was also a

conscious sense of corporate duty to perform the task in such a manner that no one could subsequently complain that there had not been an adequate national debate. Since the BBC planned to contain most of the coverage within its normal scheduled programmes, it was convenient to devise an overall plan and leave its execution to the normal programme editors. The BBC, in the absence of other guidance, decreed May 19 as the start of the campaign and *Panorama* that day mounted a wide-ranging hour-long debate between Enoch Powell and Shirley Williams.

Yet the previous week the late night current affairs programme *Midweek* had transmitted three major expository programmes, designed to precede the grand debate. *Midweek at the Market* dealt with Industry and the Common Market, with the regions and with the work of the EEC Commission. The team of reporters deployed around the country produced, with great skill, a series of essays which, like so much of the referendum coverage, led the viewer along a logical tightrope towards an almost contrived objective of indecision; at times the necessary objective of balance stood blatantly in the way of the educative task.

The *Panorama* programme was followed by two BBC2 *Controversy* programmes also chaired by Robin Day, and held with a protagonist facing an invited and mainly hostile audience in the chamber of the Royal Institution. In the first Andrew Shonfield argued that Britain needed her friends in Europe to see her through the necessary period of industrial remodelling, while in the second William Pickles, a veteran academic anti-Marketeer, argued that the tentacles of Brussels stretched into undreamed of areas and that Britain was not only losing her sovereignty but facing a deteriorating economic situation.

By concentrating coverage within existing programmes, the referendum was fitted into a series of established formulae. Thus *Nationwide*, the popular early evening magazine, mounted 'On the spot' sessions (one with Geoffrey Rippon and one with Barbara Castle) in which viewers phoned in questions; it also ran a 'Referendum Postbag'. *Newsday* on BBC2 carried a number of interviews with campaigners on both sides. Robin Day conducted in *Newsday* and *Nationwide* two interviews with Mr Wilson and two with Mrs Thatcher, though only part of these touched on the European question.

Two major debates dominated the BBC's coverage in the final days. On *Panorama* on Monday Tony Benn was able to face

Roy Jenkins. Confrontations between ministers had been banned at the outset (see p. 51) and on May 15 Downing Street pressure had led to interviews with three ministers (Peter Shore, Fred Peart, and Roy Hattersley) being withdrawn from *Midweek*; cabinet disagreement over the edict was evident and the Chairman of the BBC was asked to tea at No. 10 to discuss things. He invited Mr Wilson to appear in *Nationwide* and he received news that the 'no-debate' rule would be relaxed for the last four days of the campaign.<sup>12</sup> Mr Benn and Mr Jenkins disappointed expectations by not echoing the insults which had been voiced at the morning press conferences. Exercising firm ministerial politeness they achieved a decidedly more lucid and intricate level of discussion than is commonly seen on political television; partisans of each side could feel that their man had held his own on the key talking-point of the 500,000 lost jobs.

But for the BBC the climax of the campaign was the Oxford Union Debate on Tuesday to which two peak hours were devoted. It was conducted in dinner jackets with full quasi-parliamentary ritual. Mr Thorpe and Mr Heath supported the motion 'That this House would say "Yes" to Europe' against Mrs Castle and Mr Shore. The proponents were both ex-Presidents of the Union and in familiar surroundings put on star performances, Mr Heath surprising many viewers by the passionate eloquence of his federalist appeal (see p. 187). Mr Shore replied powerfully but Mrs Castle was somewhat out of her element. Perhaps the high point of the evening came when Mr Thorpe intervened to ask her whether she would resign office if the vote went for Europe; her reply was 'If there is a "Yes" vote, my country will need me all the more to serve it.'

*ITV's Network Programmes* The three regularly networked current affairs programmes abandoned their rivalry for the campaign. Thames's *This Week* opened on May 15 with Llew Gardner giving an extended interview with a very prickly Prime Minister: the programme had been billed under the title 'Harold Wilson says Yes'. This was balanced on May 22 by an examination of the activities of the antis in Bournemouth Liverpool and South Wales; the programme showed how the No preference spread across party lines and united different social groups such as dockers, businessmen and teachers. This was one

<sup>12</sup> See *Daily Mail*, May 29, 1975.

of the programmes which gathered the easily drawn wrath of BIE headquarters; Sir Con O'Neill protested directly to Lady Plowden, the new Chairman of the IBA, arguing that the programme, while purporting to be a documentary about the anti-Marketeers, had given them a platform. Thames TV's reply that the programme was balanced by the previous interview with the Prime Minister did not appease Sir Con.

Granada's *World in Action* planned a voyage of discovery through Europe, 'In Search of the Market'. A coach-load of British passengers, accompanied by that ebullient pair, Lord George-Brown and Clive Jenkins, set off on a 3,000 mile journey through the countries of the EEC. The German Chancellor was invited to take breakfast with them, the French President to join them in a toast, and the Brussels bureaucrats to answer their questions. The industrial dispute cut the programme from a two-part series to a protracted evening programme (running parallel to the Oxford Union Debate on BBC1) before and after *News at Ten*. There were over thirty interviews in the two hours, set in German supermarkets, Italian factories and Alpine picnics. The programme showed the technical difficulty of 'getting the essence' of a real and human topic; the truth was hard to find in the interlocking complexities of non-comparable situations. The good-humoured vehemence of running debate between George Brown and Clive Jenkins left the most enduring recollection. *Weekend World* concentrated their efforts on the task of detailed exposition and produced what was almost certainly the most technically proficient and intellectually lucid programme of the campaign. On Sunday, June 1, the programme moved from its morning slot to a ninety-minute evening special, presented by Peter Jay. Sir Con O'Neill had protested about the use of Mr Jay as a 'neutral' since he had declared himself an anti-Marketeer in his *Times* column but the IBA allowed him to proceed under the normal rules of balance. The programme set out a great deal of information making plentiful use of its own carbon graphics system. It presented the anti-Market case as a concerted stand rather than the overlapping positions of heterogeneous groups; this misrepresentation, if such it was, was perhaps built into the demand for intellectual balance, and the more competent the programme, the more troublesome the demand. On May 11 Peter Jay had interviewed the Prime Minister in *Weekend World's* normal Sunday morning slot but in this programme Mr

Wilson had ranged over the whole area of the economy, spending only seven minutes on the EEC.

ITV was also responsible for two other massive offerings, provided by Granada's *State of the Nation* team. On May 19 the viewers faced a ninety-minute film on how the machinery of Brussels actually worked: from three months of camera work the producer followed the fate of a single clause in an EEC regulation through its various procedural hoops. On June 2 a quasi-parliamentary debate was held in a setting designed to resemble a House of Commons Committee Room. A former Deputy-Speaker took the chair and called 'Order, Order' in traditional fashion. On the pro-Market side were Messrs Heath, Jenkins, Maudling, Hattersley, Steel and Davies; on the anti-Market side Messrs Powell, Shore, Jay, Marten, Henderson (SNP) and Mrs Hart. The only novelty lay in the grandiose presentation: the argument followed the same lines as the Oxford Union debate, though with less sparkling oratory. Mr Shore was at his best on both occasions, though in the staid atmosphere of the ITV show with no audience but fellow MPs, he was less moving than at Oxford. The excitement about the programme was, however, provided by the man who stayed away: Mr Benn had refused through the campaign to share a platform with a Conservative and the producers of this debate wanted to put the pro- and the anti-Marketeers on facing benches, rather than have a party division as in Parliament: to meet Mr Benn's objections they offered him seven different variations in seating, including a gangway to separate Labour from other opponents of the EEC. He rejected these and, since the pro-Market team refused to be divided, the Granada team had to find a substitute for him a few hours before transmission and at Euston station snatched Mrs Hart from an express train to Scotland — a visual drama that was not, alas, televised.

#### *Radio Coverage*

The flexibility of radio and its more plentiful channels, national and local, made possible much more variety in form. The sheer quantity of factual presentations and debates brought out one important fact about the referendum: a far greater proportion of people already prominent in public life were for the Market than against; radio producers, above all at the local level, often had great difficulty in finding No speakers of equal calibre to their opponents — and this was exacerbated when anti-Market

Labour MPs could not appear if pro-Marketeer Labour MPs were due to speak (especially since there were so few antis among Conservative MPs to fill the gap).

The most important function of the local radio stations, in both EEC and IBA systems, was to involve ordinary members of the public in debate and discussion, with special emphasis on bringing out local implications of EEC membership. The BBC local stations could retransmit the official referendum Broadcasts from Radio 4. In special local offerings speakers were supplied by the umbrella organisations. There was also a certain amount of straight exposition. Dominic Harrod, the BBC's Economic Correspondent, prepared twelve talks for circulation among the BBC local radio stations, which were quite widely used.

All stations covered referendum stories in their local bulletins and one (Bristol) started a regular section each morning devoted to this. Practically all stations had 'phone-in' programmes of half an hour to an hour at a time; BBC Radio Leicester had a 'phone-in' in Hindustani. BBC Radio Medway organised four lectures at a local College of Technology at which the public could put questions and the Carlisle station did the same with a local sixth form.

The longest broadcast was the seven-hour marathon from London's Capital Radio on June 3. A team of MPs and other prominent pro- and anti-Market speakers debated continuously until 1 a.m. London Broadcasting presented 'paired' programmes on its *Open Line* with Messrs Callaghan, Powell and Benn among its principal contributors. In Manchester, Piccadilly Radio ran a special feature on Brussels and a 'See-it-Yourself' competition in which the best arguments sent in for Yes and No won a week-end in Brussels.

The BBC's regular national radio programmes all did special referendum editions: the morning *Today* did six editions from European cities — by no means entirely or even mainly about the EEC. On May 29 *Today* interviewed the Prime Minister and in the campaign it offered eight other special Common Market items. *Woman's Hour* did two programmes on daily life in Europe and *Newsbeat*, Radio 1's current affairs outlet, presented six special programmes in which rival speakers answered young people's questions. Radio 3, at the other end of the intellectual scale, presented a series of thirty-minute discussions, *The Great Debate*, chaired by the ubiquitous Robin Day, in which

speakers were encouraged to take a more historical approach. The main subjects were *Sovereignty and the Constitution* (Lord Hailsham v. Enoch Powell), *Is Britain part of Europe?* (Ralf Dahrendorf v. A. J. P. Taylor), *The EEC and its Alternatives* (Peter Shore v. Ted Heath) and *Ideologies in Conflict* (Sir Keith Joseph v. Lawrence Daly).

In *From our own Correspondent* John Simpson, the BBC Common Market Correspondent, gave five talks (from Brussels, Frankfurt, Rheims, Rotterdam and London) in which he summed up important issues from a scrupulously neutral standpoint. On the last two Saturday mornings *Talking Politics* examined the operation of referenda in Switzerland, France, Denmark and Norway and looked in depth at the campaign in one London borough (Brent). In four programmes, *From the Grass Roots* examined opinion in each of the four nations of Britain.

The main special series mounted by BBC radio was *Europe: Year of Decision*. The first half of these three forty-five-minute programmes was information, with the second half given to debate; they covered *The Political Case* (Roy Jenkins v. Enoch Powell), *The Economic Case* (Tony Benn v. Ted Heath) and *The Alternatives* (Peter Shore v. Peter Walker).

*It's Your Line*, the major regular 'phone-in' programme, started its referendum coverage early, and between January 28 and May 14 offered six programmes in which prominent pro- and anti-Marketeers answered listeners' questions.<sup>13</sup> For the campaign the approach was extended. The 1974 elections had seen the first extensive use of the 'phone-in' technique in the daily *Election Call*. Robin Day, chairing eight *Referendum Call* programmes, encouraged callers to pursue their questions to senior politicians rather further than professional interviewers usually do, though he firmly restrained the tendency to freelance speech-making. The number of people phoning-in mounted steadily and so did the audiences which averaged 2 million — well above the 1974 *Election Call* level. There is no evidence to suggest that there were any centrally run efforts in organised telephone 'lobbying' though there may have been one or two local party efforts. The proportion of pro calls increased as the series advanced, as Table 4 shows.

<sup>13</sup> Neil Marten was belatedly substituted for Sir Derek Walker-Smith as an anti-Market spokesman for a February 25 programme after the BBC had received representations about Sir Derek's conversion to a reluctant Yes vote (See p. 100n.)

Table 4. Number of Phone Calls in Referendum Call

Date		Calls used			Calls not used			Total	Over-flows
		Pro	Anti	Neutral	Pro	Anti	Neutral		
May 20	Powell	6	2	3	93	104	74	282	36
21	Callaghan <sup>a</sup>	3	7	3	95	74	85	267	25
22	Whitelaw	2	6	4	102	84	76	274	138
23	Marten	5	1	4	96	84	67	257	395
27	Heath	3	7	2	120	96	95	323	317
28	Benn	8	1	5	190	85	66	355	376
29	Shore	9	3	—	181	94	101	388	1,795
30	R. Jenkins	3	7	2	142	132	133	420	2,380

<sup>a</sup>Mr Callaghan, though presented as one of the four pro speakers, claimed in the programme that he was neither pro nor anti, but merely a supporter of the government's recommendation to vote Yes. See p. 176.

### Protests

'The pros kept making themselves a damned nuisance, ringing up network companies and telling them how to produce programmes,' observed one ITV figure. There may have been something counter-productive in BIE efforts to see that the broadcasters put the Yes case across to the viewers. Sir Con O'Neill was certainly extremely active, protesting almost on a daily basis to the Chairmen and the Directors-General of the two broadcasting authorities. A principal grievance was the presence of anti-Marketeers in key roles. Peter Jay provided one example; George Gale, with his daily LBC 'phone-in' provided another, for he was known to be playing a major role in preparing the NRC broadcasts. After BIE protests, the IBA interviewed George Gale and they agreed that he should continue his daily job but without acting as chairman in discussions involving the EEC.

Another typical problem arose when *Newsday* was planning a discussion between a pro-Market industrialist and an anti-Market trade unionist. Christopher Serpell objected on behalf of BIE that the programme would foster the impression that the referendum was being fought between industrialists and the unions. But the BBC supported the producer's plans against continued protests from Sir Con to the Director-General, and the contestants, John Whitehouse of the CBI and Clive Jenkins, produced what a BIE official called 'a typical dogfight'.

Sir Con later explained his frequent approaches to the BBC and IBA; he felt that the other side had been complaining and

that it was up to him to redress the balance; he went on to argue that BIE knew its cause was right and that the truth for which it stood had to be protected, all the more because it was supported by the reasonable and the moderate who so easily got thrust aside. However he admitted the failure of his attempts to get the BBC and IBA to desist from what displeased him; they only seemed to 'confirm them in their impenetrable self-righteousness'.<sup>14</sup>

Neil Marten had complained once or twice but had no strategy of making frequent protests; he stressed at the Media Society post-mortem that he had no grievance against the broadcasters though he had against the press. The difference in approach between Mr Marten, the professional politician, and Sir Con, the diplomat, was very marked.

Christopher Frere-Smith made a major protest to the Chairman of the BBC on May 11, attributing the failure to report a speech by Enoch Powell to 'some one at some level of the BBC... deliberately manipulating the coverage of news'. Mr Benn made a similar attack at a rally in Manchester on May 4 when he accused the BBC of becoming 'a mouthpiece of a cynical and defeatist section of the middle class' and slanting the presentation of the EEC debate to make it appear to be a private wrangle within the Labour party. As the campaign developed, this type of attack from the anti-Marketeers seemed to diminish; they perhaps realised the extent to which they were benefiting from the broadcasters' insistence, despite BIE pressure, on giving them equal time.

The broadcasting authorities took the complaints calmly; those involved were on the whole inexperienced in campaigning and seemed, as one BBC official put in, 'genuinely to believe that they had the right to take over the production of programmes'; they had to learn that the broadcasters remained firmly in editorial control. On the day before the poll, a small organised telephone campaign was launched to complain that no outside broadcast unit was going to report Enoch Powell's final speech; the organisers were too innocent to know that the BBC has a routine system for detecting and discounting such campaigns.

The total audience for the referendum programmes was slightly above that for the two previous general elections. The

<sup>14</sup> Sir Con O'Neill was speaking in a discussion arranged by Media Society on June 17, 1975.

'pacing' of the campaign was vindicated: the broadcasters' strategy of holding down coverage for several weeks and then expanding rapidly in the final days was successful in maintaining public interest in the referendum. Although the issues were complex and not novel, viewers and listeners proved unexpectedly willing to accept the great doses of exposition and debate which they received immediately before the day of decision. However an elaborate study of public opinion conducted during and after the campaign jointly by the BBC and the IBA gave no support to those who argue that broadcasting tells people what to think.

The survey gave details of the audiences for the various referendum programmes.<sup>15</sup> Although these were sometimes capriciously inflated or depressed by the nature of the preceding or following programmes, they indicate a high level of interest.

The four BIE presentations had an average audience over all three channels of 22 million viewers, while the NRC presentations drew 20.6 million. The *Panorama* argument between Roy Jenkins and Tony Benn on June 2 drew 8.1 million, and the ITV debate the same night drew 6.4 million. On June 3, 10.8 million watched the Oxford Union debate and 8.9 million the George-Brown—Clive Jenkins *Bus Round the Market*. The Harold Wilson and Margaret Thatcher *Talk-ins* on May 23 and May 30 were watched by 12.4 million and 10.5 million. Various *Nationwide* interviews at 6.15 p.m. attracted audiences of from 14.2 million to 24.2 million. The campaign broadcasts on radio were heard by an average of 2.2 million listeners.

The survey showed the audience was satisfied about fairness. Some 80% thought that bias was absent from television and

radio coverage. Such bias as was discerned was deemed to have been in favour of staying in Europe. But on the issue of sufficiency of coverage, opinion apparently began to alter once the referendum was over: nearly half of the people questioned two weeks after referendum day now thought that the amount of coverage had been excessive and only one-third thought it had been about right — a considerable swing towards the 'too much' position. Most people believed that the coverage had been helpful, especially in showing what sort of people the leading campaigners were; but over half of those interviewed could not give a correct answer to a single one of six questions about the EEC and only 5% thought that broadcasting had helped to change their minds during the campaign.

The most important (and devastating) data derived from these studies relates to the contribution of broadcasting to the evolution of opinion. There was evidently a large shift in interest in the referendum as the campaign wore on: most of those initially interested became bored and a large minority of those originally uninterested became involved. (During the campaign the number of those able to answer some factual questions about the EEC did increase slightly). Two-thirds of the sample ended up by voting exactly as they said they would in mid-April and only 8% made a positive switch to the opposite direction. Although the issues thought to be decisive altered in people's minds during the campaign, there was no evidence that this was a result of exposure to media coverage. The BBC—IBA study concluded that 'some arousal of interest may well have occurred, some information conveyed, but there is no support for the view that broadcasting "either told people what to think" or even "what to think about".'

<sup>15</sup> *Studies of the Impact of the Radio and Television Coverage of the EEC Referendum Campaign*, BBC document (Jan 1976). The design and conduct of the survey was mainly the responsibility of BBC Audience Research. The work was supervised by a Steering Group consisting of academics and representatives of broadcasting research bodies; ORC's Speedsearch survey was used to obtain data on public attitudes at fortnightly intervals starting on April 15. In all, four such 'waves' of sampling occurred, the last just before Referendum Day. In addition, data was obtained from a 'panel study' confined to the Birmingham area (which contains both BBC and commercial local radio stations) which involved a sample of 529 people providing information in four separate 'waves', the last soon after the referendum itself. Finally, 2,500 randomly chosen adults were used in a national survey (covering sixty constituencies) which took place between June 13 and 22 and was conducted by BBC Audience Research with the help of Dataplan Ltd.



## 9 Press

Colin Seymour-Ure<sup>1</sup>

The press disliked the idea of a referendum from the beginning. They had seen the Common Market issue through three elections, in one of which, 1966, they had fought the party leaders' desire to play it down. They had dutifully recorded the 'great debate' during the negotiations in Mr Macmillan's time, during Mr Wilson's 1967 attempt and again before entry under the Heath administration. The issue was past history: yet now it was to be raised all over again. The prospect was all the worse because most papers, as they reminded us, had decided in favour of membership ten years ago and had not changed their views. The *Daily Express* was the only recent convert, and its opposition had always seemed a sentimental echo of Lord Beaverbrook's old Empire cry.

The referendum principle itself was unpopular too. Just as some MPs saw in it a threat to their role as representatives who are chosen precisely to exercise judgement on high matters of policy, so journalists perhaps felt jealous of it as a populist innovation. For what part does the tribune play if the people speak for themselves? The Common Market, further, remained an extremely bad news subject. It was foreign, impersonal and (in its details) complex; most accessible in the imagery of butter mountains and juggernauts. It did not give rise to clearcut, decisive events. Too often it was vague. Key points in the present campaign, as the *Guardian* said of the rows about jobs and food prices, were not susceptible to statistical proof either way. Others were disconcertingly novel as well. Sovereignty, for example. When did anyone last argue about that?

The referendum's natural frame of reference — an election — simply made things worse. The campaign had been worthy of

<sup>1</sup>The author is grateful to Steve McBride and Philip Mogel for their help, especially with the tables.

the average general election as a spectacle, wrote the *Daily Telegraph* on June 3; 'That was what a lot of us had feared.' The country had suffered two frustrating general elections within the last eighteen months. The press certainly did not want another. But it was impossible to get away from the election format. The campaign organisations were non-party; yet both — the pro-Marketees in particular, as Sir Con O'Neill afterwards remarked — were overshadowed for the media by the party and government personalities. The rival press conferences, across the hall of the same hotel, competed to define the day's agenda, just like the election conferences in Smith Square. Many other items in the election kit were there: official rival broadcasts; opinion polls; tours by leading spokesmen. There would be guest articles by the same spokesmen and profiles of them; and there was an obligation to provide at least a minimal discussion of the issues at stake.

Obviously there were fundamental differences from the style of an election campaign (notably the absence of constituency candidates); but some of these differences were frustrating too. The main problem was to decide where the referendum began and ended. 'When all is said and done', Bernard Levin (who still had plenty to say) wrote in his *Times* column on June 3, '... we shall still have to decide on what grounds we should decide how to vote, before we actually do decide, let alone before we vote.' According to one's view, the referendum was variously tangled up with the level of public expenditure, domestic investment, inflation, the balance of payments, foreign confidence in sterling, the government's industrial policy (especially public ownership), divisions in the cabinet, coalition government, the future of the party system, and a possibly more basic change in the political, social and economic structure of the United Kingdom; not forgetting, as the *Daily Telegraph* reminded us, 'the context of a world crisis, a massive threat from within and without to what remains of Christian and liberal civilisation.' It followed that the lines between subjects that were and were not connected to the referendum often became blurred, the classic case being the figure of Mr Benn; and that some subjects which were not obviously connected to the immediate issues were seized on and pushed into the referendum context. Of this the best example was Mr Prentice's speech on June 1. To the *Sun*, for instance, which saw the referendum as an instrument for inter-party unity and

for defeating the 'extremists', the slightest hint of coalition talk deserved playing up.

The problem of defining the boundaries of the campaign was particularly important because of its connection with ideas of balance and fairness. Anti-Marketeers were specially sensitive to these, having nearly all the press against them. Even on a simple quantitative plane, balance could mean several things. Most appealing to anti-Marketeers was balance as equality — fifty-fifty coverage. Ian Mikardo complained in the campaign run-up that although the Referendum Act would make public funds available to both the umbrella organisations, the pro-Marketeers would have millions of pounds extra at their disposal from private contributions. By the same criterion the *Daily Express* could feel virtuous in making the main element of its feature coverage six guest contributions — three of them by pro-Marketeers and three by antis. The paper no doubt enjoyed being able to tell the anti-Marketeers, when they approached the editor with a request to contribute an article, that three had already been commissioned. Balance could alternatively mean coverage proportionate to the strength of the rival sides. In this case the pros could fairly enjoy an advantage because of the fact that Britain was already a member of the Community and the majority of leading politicians were in favour. A further refinement could see balance as proportionate to the 'output' of the campaigners. This again would justify greater coverage for the pro-Marketeers. They had a staff of seven dealing with the media full-time and six part-time. The anti-Marketeers relied on far fewer. As a result, the *Financial Times* noted on May 30, 'Editors organising the reporting of the debate point nervously from a comprehensive pile of advance texts of the pros' speeches on the one hand, to a couple of pre-releases from the antis on the other.' A different and even cruder notion of quantitative balance, completely irrelevant in the event, would have required the number of papers supporting each side to be the same. But even then there would have been difficulties. Should the broadcasting organisations be counted separately? What account should be taken of the regional press? Among national papers the *Morning Star*, itself of very limited size and readership compared with the rest, fought a lone campaign for the anti-Marketeers. In the regions there was significant support for the antis only in Scotland, from the D. C. Thomson group (daily papers in Dundee and a Sunday paper in Glasgow) and

from the *Scottish Daily News*, which was struggling to establish itself as a co-operative in competition with its predecessor, the *Scottish Daily Express*, which now came up from Manchester instead of being published in Glasgow. Editorial attitudes, which are at the heart of this notion of balance, were so overwhelmingly pro-Market that for main support on the other side, apart from the *Morning Star*, one must look to more specialised publications than the general-interest daily and Sunday press. The Labour weekly *Tribune* and the Transport and General Workers' Union monthly *Record* are good examples. The latter, with a regular circulation of 300,000, published four-page pull-out supplements from February onwards. Thousands of extra copies were printed for circulation in factories.

Supposing there were agreement on what notion of balance was appropriate in the referendum, the question would then arise of what to count in the calculation. The definition of the referendum's boundaries would be crucial. The best single illustration of the difficulty was a feature in the *Daily Mirror* called 'Hello Germany!'. It ran for four days in the week beginning May 12. Its aim was to 'examine life — German style', saying 'Hello!' along the way also to Denmark and the Benelux countries. The material generally had at most a tenuous connection with the pros and cons of the referendum debate: it was mainly about fashion, the pop scene, life in Hamburg and so on, and it has been omitted from the tables of press coverage in this chapter. But the paper linked it implicitly to the campaign by presenting it under the question, 'Will their future be our future?' In quantity the articles amounted to as much as all the *Mirror's* explicit campaign features put together. To an anti-Marketeer it must have seemed straight pro-Market propaganda. A pro-Marketeer might have regarded it as neutral.

The construction put upon stories is central to the idea of fairness. The press were bound to consider not only how much coverage to give each side but also what sort. To anti-Marketeers on the left, coverage certainly could not be fair even if it was in some sense balanced. For newspaper proprietors, to quote Mr Benn, 'reflect the economic interests which find the Common Market attractive.' They would inevitably look at the subject through capitalist spectacles. A less sweeping problem was how far explicit anti-Market coverage was implicitly pro-Market (and vice versa). As later analysis shows, this was above all a problem

for Mr Benn, whose activities seemed to some papers counter-productive. It was exacerbated by the dichotomy between issues and personalities. Mr Benn warned a *Tribune* rally in April that the press 'are seeking to make this campaign a campaign about personalities and about the Labour Party'. The more it was presented in that way, the less fair, in the anti-Marketeers' view, would the presentation be. An added danger of unfairness lay in newspapers' priorities about which stories to highlight. The anti-Marketeers felt that some of their biggest points, such as the other side's attitude to European political union, never had proper treatment. The lack of a single major daily supporting them must have reduced the chance that papers would rank priorities in the same way as the anti-Marketeers, however earnest the editors' intentions. Since the death of the *Daily Herald* the Labour Party had had the same problem at elections, having to trust that the *Daily Mirror* would toe the party line voluntarily instead of knowing that the *Daily Herald* had no option. For the press, however, the position was different from an election. One defence to the complaint about coverage of political union was that the pro-Marketeers spoke with several voices on that topic. In this campaign the umbrella organisations existed purely for short-term administrative convenience. They had within them no individuals with quite the authority of a party leader. Nor were there pronouncements with the peculiar stamp of party election manifestos: the officially circulated documents lacked that status precisely because they were not backed by a legitimate, responsible party leadership. The press, in other words, had no touchstone for an 'official' anti-Market definition of the fairness of their coverage. Except for the *Morning Star* there were not even rival newspapers that would serve.

Fleet Street approached the referendum, then, with some distaste. The device was pernicious and the subject tired. There would be no bouquets but plenty of brickbats. The result was probably a foregone conclusion – though most papers did not say so openly until the last week. The only good thing, almost, was the advertising revenue. Not surprisingly, therefore, the number of days when the campaign made headlines was low – much lower than in recent general elections. In the four weeks from May 9 till polling day, as can be seen from Table 1, there were 47 lead stories on the referendum in the national dailies, including the *Morning Star*, out of a possible 211. Since

the *Star* had three times as many as most papers, the ratio is rather worse if the national dailies conventionally defined are taken by themselves – 33 out of 188, or 17.5%. Given the lack of precedents for the campaign and the flexibility of its boundaries, one could expect greater variations in papers' headline treatment than in an election; and there was indeed no day when all the papers led with a referendum story. Five out of nine did so on May 26 and June 2 and six on June 3. Even on polling day one paper, the *Daily Mail*, preferred to lead with a story about an 'export bonanza' to Saudi Arabia. That may not have been a bad idea, for some papers seemed to feel that they ought to lead with the referendum but had nothing climactic to say. The *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, led flatly with DECISION DAY FOR BRITAIN and the *Financial Times* with CALL FOR HIGH POLL TURNOUT. *The Times* was hardly more breathtaking: SERVICE VOTES ARRIVE AS EEC CAMPAIGN WINDS UP. By far the largest number of lead stories was about the jobs argument – fifteen out of forty-three on the campaign from May 19 onwards (eleven out of thirty-two excluding the *Morning Star*).

The distribution of lead stories gives a fairly good idea of the development of the campaign. Apart from the *Morning Star*, which started campaigning early, the referendum made very little impact at all on the front pages until May 26, the Bank Holiday Monday of the week before polling day. Until then there were two solitary headlines in the *Sun* – one marking the first pro-Market press conference (May 15) and the other Mr Benn's jobs claim (May 19) – and a single story in the *Daily Mirror* on May 10, an exclusive interview with Mr Wilson ('Dateline Chequers') that was as rotund a puff as ever emerged from the Prime Minister's pipe. The first headline in the *Daily Express* did not come until May 29 and in the *Daily Mail* not until May 31. Both those papers had only two headlines on the campaign altogether. No paper except the *Morning Star* (fourteen) managed more than six. In one of these, the *Daily Mirror*, four of the six were leading articles; and in the other, the *Sun*, three were highlighting the paper's polls.

Compared with recent general elections the insignificance of polls was striking. (In 1970, their peak, they formed 25% of election headlines.) Besides the *Sun* (Marplan), polls appeared in the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* (Gallup), *Daily Express* (Harris), *Scotsman* (ORC) and *Evening Standard* (ORC). The

Table 1. Lead Stories During Campaign (dates in May and June)

	9	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	19
<i>The Times</i>	Chrysler	Local Authority spending	Wilson TV talk on economy	Sterling drops	Chrysler	Mayaguez	Chrysler	Inflation rate 30%	Tory policy on inflation
<i>Guardian</i>	Chrysler	Govt economy plans	Wilson TV talk on economy	TUC wage vetting plan	Sterling drops but trade improves	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Inflation rate	Union views on J. Jones flat-rate rise plan
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Tribune	Crisis starts run on £	Wilson TV talk on economy	(no paper)	(no paper)	(no paper)	Mayaguez	Inflation at record 21.7%	Unions challenge Jones pay plan
<i>Daily Express</i>	Chrysler	Chrysler	Wilson TV talk on economy	Sterling crisis	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Child kidnap	AUEW voting methods
<i>Daily Mail</i>	'Left ready to ditch Wilson'	'Now Wilson slaps down Benn'	Wilson TV talk	Mayaguez	Chrysler	Mayaguez	New navy plan	Inflation rate	AUEW voting methods
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	Benn replies to critics	Racing court case	Wilson interview	Sterling drops	Arab's message of confidence to UK	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Child kidnap	LA on trade unions
<i>Sun</i>	LA 'Sack Benn'	Inventors court case	LA on Wilson TV talk	Sterling crisis	Pic of Thorpe Heath Jenkins 'Europals'	Mayaguez	Judge in race storm	Child kidnap	'Benn's jobs scare storm'
<i>Financial Times</i>	Chrysler	Sterling drops	Wilson TV talk on economy	Sterling crisis	Bank aids £	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Inflation rate over 30%	Reactions to Jones pay plan
<i>Morning Star</i>		LA on EEC	CF's policy on EEC	Labour left on EEC threat to oil and steel	Cambodia	Mayaguez	Mayaguez	Inflation rate	Benn jobs claim
<i>The Times</i>	20	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	
<i>The Times</i>	Steel jobs saved	CBI pay plan	£375 m. steel loss	Unemployment rising	Chrysler	Healey on Benn jobs claim	Ulster	Wilson on Benn jobs claim	
<i>Guardian</i>	Jaguar deal	Chrysler	TUC & CBI pay policy views	Govt pay policy	Chrysler	EEC campaign warms up	'EEC steel curbs boosts the Antis'	Coach crash	
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	TUC & CBI pay policies	ITV strike	Baby's heart operation	Healey on Benn jobs claim	ITV strike	Coach crash	
<i>Daily Express</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	Healey jobs plan	ITV strike	Baby's heart operation	ITV strike	Sinatra tour	Coach crash	
<i>Daily Mail</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	Chrysler	ITV strike	Heath speech in USA	ITV strike	Evel Knievel	Coach crash	

Table 1. (continued)

	20	21	22	23	24	26	27	28
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	TUC & CBI pay policy views	Cambridge rapist	Scots football fans	LA on EEC	Evel Knievel	Coach crash
<i>Sun</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	Rape debate	ITV strike	Scots football fans	EEC poll	Evel Knievel	Coach crash
<i>Financial Times</i>	Steel jobs saved	Chrysler	Steel price rise bid	Unemployment up	Chrysler	(no paper)	Attacks on Benn jobs claim	EEC campaign speeches
<i>Morning Star</i>	Steel jobs saved	Education cuts	Chrysler	TV anger at pro-EEC propaganda	LA anti-EEC	Protest at police demonstration	Benn defends jobs claim	Jenkins attack on Benn jobs claim
<i>The Times</i>	29	30	31	2	3	4	5	Total Referendum stories
	Ford on NATO	Ford on NATO	Heathrow strike	Rhodesia riots	'Rail strike call	Hattersley warning on No vote	Service votes arrive as EEC campaign winds up	5
<i>Guardian</i>	Channel Ferry strike	EEC approves govt Ley-land plans	Heathrow strike	Rhodesia riots	Rail strike call	'Low poll fear haunts Pro campaigners' breath	'Pollsters say 2-1 Yes and hold	5
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Channel Ferry strikes	Railway pay offer	Heathrow strike	Rhodesia riots	Rail strike call	'Du Cann turmoil at Tory HQ	'Decision day for Britain'	3
<i>Daily Express</i>	EEC cash for Whisky & Steel	ITV and railway pay prospects	Railway pay gloom	Rhodesia riots	Rail strike call	Rail strike prospects	'Super-Market It's a 3-1 poll for Europe'	2
<i>Daily Mail</i>	Spanish holiday accident	Railway pay	'Prentice call for coalition'	Rhodesia riots	Rail strike call	Healey attack on Benn jobs claim	Saudi export orders	2
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	LA on Benn jobs claim	Bay City Rollers	Prentice speech	LA on EEC jobs claim	Rail strike call	AUEW voting methods	Montage of EEC front pages	5
<i>Sun</i>	Paris football riot	Bay City Rollers	Prentice speech	'Women swing to the Market'	Bad weather	Derby gambling	Benn jobs scare cuts	6
<i>Financial Times</i>	OECD aid to 3rd world	Railway pay	Railway pay	EEC campaign speeches	Rail strike call	Healey attacks EEC jobs argument	'Yes lead - poll	5
<i>Morning Star</i>	Jones defends Benn jobs claim	All out attack on 'militarist' EEC backers	Anti-EEC speeches	NRC Press Conference	Rail strike call	Du Cann speech	'Your chance to free Britain'	14

*Daily Mail, The Times, Sunday Times* and *Observer*, all sponsors of election polls in the past, carried none. Moreover the frequency as well as the range dropped. The decline was put down to editorial scepticism, cost and the fair degree of certainty about the result.

The consolidated figures in Table 2 conceal the development of press coverage but they show clearly the grossly unequal treatment of the two sides as far as sympathetic column inches were concerned. Omitting the extreme case of the *Morning Star* the mean balance was 54% pro and 21% anti (with the rest neutral content). By this measure the *Financial Times, Daily Telegraph* and *Sun* were most typical. The *Daily Mirror* was most heavily pro. *The Times* and the *Guardian* were closest to an exact balance, but this still meant half as much again for the pros as the antis. The inequality was least in the news columns. *The Times, Daily Mirror* and *Sun* were most level. The *Daily Mail* gave three times as much space to the pros as the antis; the *Daily Telegraph* and *Financial Times* gave twice as much. The only kind of news where the weight was sometimes the other way round was the Waldorf press conferences. Figures for these are shown separately in Table 3. *The Times, Sun* and *Daily Express* all gave considerably more space to the anti-Marketeers than the pros, and the *Guardian* struck a more or less exact balance.

Feature coverage seemed less prominent than Table 2 might imply. News drizzled on day by day but features came in sharp showers. The *Daily Mail* had a 'three-day intensive crash course'. The *Sun* and *Daily Mirror* had a few centre-page spreads. *The Times, Guardian* and *Financial Times* had a cloudbank of special supplements. The *Guardian's* was also available separately as a pamphlet. Compared with an election there were generally fewer leading articles, certainly until the last week. Most papers had one or two long keynote leaders and occasional comment on major themes like jobs. Leaders were a much higher proportion of the *Sun's* coverage and the *Daily Mirror's* than of the others. The distribution of space between news on the one hand and features and comment on the other varied quite widely. The 'heavy' papers had proportionately more of both, and less of photographs, cartoons and advertisements. The *Daily Mirror, The Times* and *Financial Times* had more features than news; the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* much the same of each, and the rest more news than features.

The most intriguing figures in Table 2, surely, are for the advertisements. In the *Daily Express* these actually took more space than all the paper's own coverage. The *Daily Express* attracted such lavish attention partly because its readership contained many likely waverers. The same was true of the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun*, particularly for Labour waverers. Most of the advertising was by the umbrella organisations. Britain in Europe's wealth, about which Mr Mikardo had grumbled, gave it a great advantage: the fruit of the anti-Marketeers' efforts was a mere pip to their apple. In the *Daily Express* there were pro-Market advertisements early on and every day from May 26, while the anti-Marketeers advertised only on May 13 and June 2, 3 and 4. The figures are swelled on both sides by 'unofficial' contributions. Examples are Air Vice-Marshal Donald Bennett's 'Operation Out' and an *ad hoc* group of 'Writers For Europe', who got a free bonus by attracting news coverage too from the *Guardian*. The pro-Market side benefited also from some advertisements by industry (Ford, for instance) that were loosely connected to the campaign. The neutral advertising consisted mainly in the government's announcements about procedures. Following its long-standing policy, the government placed no advertisements in the *Morning Star*, on the grounds that it received no satisfactory circulation figures. The paper protested, as it had many times before, and secured some support in Parliament, but to no avail.

Even in those papers to which the umbrella organisations gave little attention, the total of advertising was quite significant. Table 4 shows the percentage of each side's coverage that advertising comprised. The proportions are such that it is almost worth considering seriously whether the anti-Marketeers might profitably have discarded conventional graphic advertising techniques and used some of their space to counter the inequality and unfairness (as they saw it) of which they complained in the news columns. Anti-Market advertising in the *Daily Express*, for instance, occupied more than twice the space of anti-Market news. The situation was not unlike elections and TV in the United States, where politicians get what they pay for. In effect the *Daily Express* made twice as much space available to the anti-Marketeers to present their own case as to report it for them free. Was there any reason why the anti-Marketeers should not have turned their advertisements into news and feature columns? However odd it sounds, the

Table 2. Referendum Coverage of National Daily Press, May 9—June 5 (Column inches—percentages in brackets)

Name of paper (Circulation '000)	Speeches, press conferences, broadcasts, gossip, etc.			Features, foreign comment, polls, letters, etc.			Leading articles			Photographs						
	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total				
<i>Daily Mirror</i> 4,001	343 (10)	246 (7)	113 (37)	702 (20)	739 (21)	121 (3)	8 —	868 (25)	354 (10)	—	—	354 (10)	296 (8)	26 (1)	—	322 (9)
<i>Sun</i> 3,419	288 (11)	216 (8)	23 (1)	527 (20)	133 (5)	62 (2)	204 (8)	399 (15)	260 (10)	—	6	266 (10)	109 (4)	59 (2)	13 (1)	181 (7)
<i>Daily Express</i> 2,819	296 (8)	169 (5)	100 (3)	565 (16)	215 (6)	125 (3)	290 (8)	630 (18)	57 (2)	3	45 (1)	105 (3)	76 (2)	16 (2)	92 (3)	184 (5)
<i>Daily Mail</i> 1,742	383 (14)	145 (5)	81 (3)	609 (22)	336 (12)	198 (7)	124 (5)	658 (24)	75 (3)	—	20 (1)	95 (3)	87 (3)	21 (1)	—	108 (4)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> <sup>a</sup> 1,333	862 (19)	473 (10)	334 (7)	1,669 (36)	771 (17)	263 (6)	321 (7)	1,355 (30)	160 (4)	—	—	160 (4)	104 (2)	51 (1)	28 (1)	183 (4)
<i>Guardian</i> 338	1,787 (24)	1,310 (18)	383 (5)	3,480 (47)	943 (13)	578 (8)	750 (10)	2,271 (31)	166 (2)	—	40 (1)	206 (3)	261 (4)	132 (2)	24 (2)	417 (6)
<i>The Times</i> 320	1,103 (17)	812 (13)	349 (6)	2,264 (36)	1,101 (17)	626 (10)	1,037 (16)	2,764 (44)	130 (2)	—	4 —	134 (2)	100 (2)	71 (1)	21 —	192 (3)
<i>Financial Times</i> <sup>b</sup> 182	1,256 (19)	665 (10)	526 (4)	2,177 (33)	1,683 (26)	570 (7)	905 (14)	3,158 (48)	117 (2)	—	9 —	126 (2)	113 (2)	151 (2)	42 (1)	306 (5)
<i>Morning Star</i> <sup>c</sup>	87 (3)	1,403 (43)	15 —	1,505 (46)	5 —	648 (20)	22 (1)	675 (21)	—	191 (6)	5 —	196 (6)	10 —	300 (9)	11 —	321 (10)

Name of paper	Cartoons			Advertisements			Totals					
	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total	Pro- EEC	Anti- EEC	Neu- tral	Total
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	80 (2)	—	60 (2)	140 (4)	624 (18)	145 (4)	380 (11)	1,149 (33)	2,436 (69)	538 (15)	561 (16)	3,535 (100)
<i>Sun</i>	120 (5)	—	32 (1)	152 (6)	498 (19)	192 (7)	368 (14)	1,058 (41)	1,408 (55)	529 (20)	646 (25)	2,583 (100)
<i>Daily Express</i>	33 (1)	—	122 (3)	155 (4)	1,045 (29)	352 (10)	536 (15)	1,933 (54)	1,722 (48)	665 (19)	1,185 (33)	3,572 (100)
<i>Daily Mail</i>	178 (6)	—	44 (2)	222 (8)	613 (22)	112 (4)	336 (12)	1,061 (39)	1,672 (61)	476 (17)	605 (22)	2,753 (100)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> <sup>a</sup>	90 (2)	4 —	56 (1)	150 (3)	505 (11)	93 (2)	424 (9)	1,022 (23)	2,492 (55)	884 (19)	1,163 (26)	4,539 (100)
<i>Guardian</i>	140 (2)	—	82 (1)	222 (3)	123 (2)	92 (1)	589 (8)	804 (11)	3,420 (46)	2,112 (29)	1,868 (25)	7,400 (100)
<i>The Times</i>	—	10 —	39 (1)	49 (1)	218 (3)	88 (1)	636 (10)	942 (15)	2,652 (42)	1,607 (25)	2,086 (33)	6,345 (100)
<i>Financial Times</i> <sup>b</sup>	—	—	3 —	3 —	394 (6)	19 (5)	352 (5)	765 (12)	3,563 (55)	1,405 (21)	1,567 (24)	6,535 (100)
<i>Morning Star</i> <sup>c</sup>	—	214 (7)	3 —	217 (7)	—	321 (10)	3 (10)	324 (10)	102 (2)	3,077 (95)	59 (2)	3,238 (100)

Note: Percentages are rounded out to the nearest nought and may not add up to 100.

<sup>a</sup>Omitting May 13-15, when only a limited edition.

<sup>b</sup>Omitting May 26 when no paper was published.

<sup>c</sup>Analysis starts on May 10.

Table 3. Distribution of Space Given to Press Conferences, May 9–June 5 (exc. photographs)

Name of paper	Pro-EEC %	Anti-EEC %	Total Column inches
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	61	39	137
<i>Sun</i>	26	74	104
<i>Daily Express</i>	19	81	43
<i>Daily Mail</i>	68	32	92
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	53	47	361
<i>Guardian</i>	49	51	656
<i>The Times</i>	37	63	306
<i>Financial Times</i>	56	44	351
<i>Morning Star</i>	—	100	47

Table 4. Advertisements, May 9–June 5

Name of paper	Pro-EEC advts		Anti-EEC advts	
	as % of total pro-EEC material	Column inches	as % of total anti-EEC material	Column inches
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	26	2,436	27	538
<i>Sun</i>	35	1,408	36	529
<i>Daily Express</i>	61	1,722	53	665
<i>Daily Mail</i>	37	1,672	24	476
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	20	2,492	11	884
<i>Guardian</i>	4	3,420	4	2,112
<i>The Times</i>	8	2,652	5	1,607
<i>Financial Times</i>	11	3,563	1	1,405
<i>Morning Star</i>	—	102	10	3,077

argument underlines the extent to which in this campaign, as in no previous British political campaign, the relationship between the participants and the press rested on direct commercial transactions.

Within the general pattern of coverage, what did Fleet Street think the referendum was about? Three views predominated. Firstly, as Mr Benn rightly indicated, much of the press saw it as a product of divisions in the Labour Party:

... the real reason for the referendum was to cover up a split in the Labour Party ... (*Guardian*, June 5)

... The Common Market has been made an issue by the left

wing in the Labour Party's internal controversy. (*Financial Times*, May 12)

If Mr Wilson can go for a referendum to solve the Labour Party's internal difficulties, others will do the same. (*Daily Express*, May 15)

Today's referendum ... was conceived and imposed by most of its leading advocates as part of the struggle for power in this country. With a few notable exceptions they are on the Left wing of the Labour and trade union movements ... (*Daily Telegraph*, June 5)

... the next stage of the struggle for the Labour Party. This, after all, is what the referendum is really about ... (Hugo Young, *Sunday Times* May 4)

Secondly there was a tendency in the leader columns to stress the primacy of political, not economic considerations; to kick aside the gravel of statistics and gaze at the shimmering highway. The *Daily Telegraph* complained of the dedicated banality with which the debate had been turned into 'a row about jobs, prices and percentages' (May 22). It saw 'an intellectual, moral and spiritual value' in the Market (May 29). The *Guardian* was probably looking at the same thing when it said that a Yes 'could represent a psychological watershed' (May 20). Its leader on June 5 was 'A Vote for the Next Century'. The concluding *Times* leader talked of 'The Heroes and Ideals of the Campaign' and lauded the ideal of Europe 'because it involves an outgoing of will towards nations who belong to the same European family as the four nations of the United Kingdom' (June 5). 'The great issues are the political ones and the long-term potentialities of membership', said the *Financial Times* (May 21). The campaign on both sides, remarked the *Daily Express*, has seen an agreeable appeal to patriotism (May 30). The *Daily Mirror* characteristically struck a more earthy note: 'The Mirror does not claim that the Market is the gateway to Heaven' (May 26); but its own keynote leader was 'A Vote for the Future', and 'The Most Important Day Since the War' was the theme of its polling day coverage.

Thirdly there was broad agreement that jobs had become the central issue of the campaign. They would certainly have had less attention but for Mr Benn's efforts. They would have featured anyway, however, together with sovereignty, food



prices, and the balance of trade, as the main topics round which discussion centred. As with their view of some recent elections, papers thought the level of argument disappointing. Singled out for particular scorn were the rival shopping basket claims at the press conferences. All the papers carefully reported Ms Crankshaw's and Mrs Castle's shopping expeditions; and all took the same view that the episode was, broadly, an embarrassing nonsense. 'Even in terms of "butter" the debate has been superficial,' remarked the *Financial Times*. The *Daily Telegraph* called the whole campaign 'lower, more trivial and at times less honest than the average general election campaign' (May 22). The *Times* thought both sides had used some arguments which 'can hardly be excused even by the excitement of the moment' (June 5). The *Daily Mail* had heard 'enough dishonest arguments for a dozen General Elections' (June 4); and the *Daily Express* felt that the campaign (at least till May 27) had been a slanging match.

The fullest and most imaginative coverage was the *Guardian's*. Editorially its most distinctive line was to stress the value of Britain's membership to her relations with the developing world. Its general view was summed up in the heading to its main leader: 'Britain and Europe – Partner or Voteless Hanger-on?'. The paper began its full page 'Europe Extras' on Monday, May 5, continuing them for a whole week. In pamphlet form they covered forty pages. They included contributions from leading campaigners – Peter Shore, Edward Heath – and a crosstalk act by William Whitelaw and Douglas Jay; plus articles by the paper's regular specialists. When the campaign got under way there was at least a full page and sometimes two of reports of speeches. The paper was adept at finding ingenious angles on an old subject. There were profiles of Richard Body, an MP who had switched his support to the antis since 1967, and of Brian Walden who had switched the other way. What would have been 'constituency surveys' in an election were linked to Market themes. Dennis Barker visited 'the specialist cheesemakers of Hartington', recipients of a £95,370 Brussels grant. The Yorkshire miners, Cornish fishermen and car plants of the Midlands also featured as well as, more traditionally, Ulster, Scotland and Wales. Reporters observed Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams and Tony Benn on the stump. Peter Jenkins and Francis Boyd provided reflection and analysis.

One of the oddities of the campaign was a stream of pronouncements, bubbling to the surface with little pops, about how various organisations would vote. ESPERANTISTS TOLD TO SPOIL PAPERS, ran a *Guardian* headline. Most of these recommendations came from trade and industry – paper mills, insurance groups, meat traders, the British Mechanical Engineering Confederation, Marks and Spencer. The *Financial Times* hastened the urgent message from Courvoisier Cognac: 'NO' DECISION THREAT TO PRICE OF BRANDY. If this might be thought of close concern to the stereotype *Financial Times* reader, the rest of that paper's coverage certainly was not unduly specialised. There were, to be sure, features that would not have appeared elsewhere – a long comparison of the EEC's attitude to cartels with the UK Restrictive Practices Court, for example. But the paper provided a service comparable to the *Guardian's* in thoroughness and enterprise and reflecting the range of its readership. A twelve-page supplement marked the opening of the campaign. Overwhelmingly sympathetic to membership in tone, it focused on the regions, individual industries (oil, aerospace, shipping) and alternatives to the Market, with a characteristic political commentary by its columnist David Watt. Thereafter came a succession of 'Referendum Reports' from key areas. Many of these acquired an extra flavour from being written by the paper's European correspondents. The reporters went back for a second look before polling day and generally sensed a drift in favour of the pro-Market. There were interesting features on the role of the TGWU in the anti-Market campaign and the problem of their having so few household names. In contrast to the official editorial line the paper's columnist 'Lombard', C. Gordon Tether, stood square against membership. In a dozen columns during the last four weeks he ranged over the arguments; and he was one of the few commentators apparently to view the referendum as a useful device for testing popular opinion rather than helping the Labour leadership out of trouble. Editorially the paper felt that 'economic measurement has nothing positive to contribute to the EEC debate' (May 21). Fifteen years ago it had supported entry on short-term economic grounds: now it was swayed by the vision of European unity, especially in the face of United States vacillation.

The coverage in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* was in the same mode. *The Times* letters column was a unique forum.

Argument among the leaders (e.g. Roy Jenkins) spilled over into it probably more than in a general election. On one or two days the entire column was given over to the campaign. The paper's four-page special supplement (May 19) showed 'a picture of the EEC as it is now, and an indication of what will lie ahead for Britain whatever the nation decides on June 5th'. The main features of *The Times*' coverage were the contributions of its columnists, a few intensive interviews and fifteen guest articles. There was much less attempt to get out into the country than in the *Guardian* or the *Financial Times*. Of the columnists, Bernard Levin was most prolific (and prolix). He and Lord Chalfont made no bones of their contempt for the exercise. A characteristic Levin column (May 29) was headed WHY THERE MUST BE A RESOUNDING YES IN THIS FRAUDULENT REFERENDUM. Lord Chalfont talked of a 'charade' (June 2). The interviews were with Len Murray, French Foreign Minister Jacques Sauvagnargues and the Deputy Director-General of the CBI John Whitehorn. Eight of the guest articles, which began on May 9, were by Marketeers (Roy Jenkins, Jeremy Thorpe, Ted Heath, Shirley Williams, Reginald Maudling, Andrew Shonfield, Jack Peel and Maurice Druon — a member of the French Academy); six were by opponents (William Pickles, Tony Benn, Michael Foot, Robert Neild, Jack Jones and Enoch Powell); and the preferences of Raymond Fletcher, MP, were unclear. The nub of the paper's editorial position was in the title of its leader on May 31: IF IN, WE SHARE THE DECISIONS: IF OUT, THEY ARE MADE FOR US. The economic arguments against membership carried no weight. '*The Times* is a committed European newspaper', that article began — and continued that it was taking special care for that reason to cover the anti-Marketeers' case fully.

Industrial disputes prevented the *Daily Telegraph* publishing in London on May 13, 14 and 15. Even so, its coverage was slighter than that of the other 'heavies'. As the most partisan of them, it derived much glee from teasing the Labour Party about its divisions, both editorially and in the angling of news stories. REFERENDUM BATTLE TEARING LABOUR APART IN WALES was one headline (May 27). Equally, the *Daily Telegraph* was worried for the future of the Conservative Party by the talk of coalition. The best use of the referendum would be to give the extreme left 'a massive rebuff'. Like *The Times*, the paper's features included relatively few surveys out in the

country but concentrated on a series of contributions, most of them by outsiders, called 'Behind The Debate On Europe'. There were seven of these, four of them in the last week — two in favour by David Marquand and Margaret Thatcher, and two against by Neil Marten and Len Murray. The feeling that the paper was fighting a party battle was increased by the presence of some old favourites like two 'People and Principles' profiles (Roy Jenkins and Peter Shore) which came straight out of the regular election format; and there were the usual Gallup polls.

The contributions of the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail* were thin. The *Daily Express* had nothing on its front page about the campaign at all until May 29, apart from one opinion poll story (the paper's own Harris poll) and an occasional Osbert Lancaster cartoon. News coverage reached half a page on only a few days. On May 27 a leader announced that three spokesmen on each side were being given the opportunity to write. 'The *Express* is for the Market and will go on giving its opinion regularly, but we think this is the right way to help the public decide.' Clive Jenkins, Enoch Powell and Tony Benn duly argued the case against, and Jeremy Thorpe, Ted Heath and Roy Jenkins argued in favour. There were no analyses apart from these, but early in the campaign George Ffitch had called for a post-referendum national coalition (END THESE PARTY GAMES) and there was a centre-page article on May 16 by a New Zealand journalist who stressed the impossibility of rebuilding Anglo-New Zealand trade links. This was typical of a tendency to give more coverage to pro-Market views. The biggest single feature was half a page of pictures on May 14 about an exhibition of cartoons of EEC personalities by Edwina Sandys, a grand-daughter of Sir Winston Churchill.

Front page coverage was equally sparse in the *Daily Mail*. The paper's 'intensive crash course' consisted in three parts. First came a centre spread on June 2 revealing 'how a wide cross-section of men and women in public life will vote'. Thirty-two were pro-Market (including A. L. Rowse, Jack Warner, Sir Basil Spence, Yehudi Menuhin and Chay Blyth); and nine were against (including Paul McCartney, Laurie Lee and Alfie Bass). The Communist Lord Milford would not say, nor would Cardinal Heenan ('... an abuse of my position...'). Next the *Mail* put one question each to twelve leading politicians on either side of the fence. They were mainly parliamentarians but also included Clive Jenkins, George

Thomson and Christopher Frere-Smith and excluded some of the obvious big names. The questions covered the predictable range of issues. The third part was a full-page leading article on June 4 ('Vote YES for Britain') which surveyed the arguments and reaffirmed the paper's belief that a Yes vote, though solving nothing in itself, would mean Britain did not face her troubles alone. These beliefs were reflected in two profiles of Mr Benn and Mrs Thatcher by the political columnist Anthony Shrimley and, more explicitly, in a centre-page feature on May 20, describing 'A Day in the Life of Siege Britain' (i.e. if we left the Market). The headline was: NO COFFEE, WINE, BEANS OR BANANAS, TILL FURTHER NOTICE.

Thin coverage in the tabloid *Sun* was more predictable. Apart from a photograph of the pro-Marketeers' first Waldorf press conference ('Europals'), a lead story about Mr Benn's jobs claim, and a column by John Akass ('Now that the Great Debate . . . is reaching tepid pitch'), there was virtually nothing at all until May 26. The paper's opinion poll led the front page then, and a series of full-page Market Place Specials was launched. These dealt briskly with topics like prices, the attitudes of different unions and the experiences of Norway, but they were as much concerned with news as analysis. There was a leading article every day from May 28, mostly picking up any items (even a speech by Robert Carr that attracted no attention elsewhere) which could be knitted into the theme of inter-party unity and an end to the 'dreary old party game'. The main effort was saved for a centre-spread leader on June 4, which went over the ground of sovereignty, jobs and prices and took the line of 'Yes for a future together, No for a future alone'.

The coverage in the *Sun* was as direct as the uncoverage of its daily pin-up. Just as the *Daily Mirror's* pin-ups, by contrast, left something to the reader's imagination, so the *Mirror's* approach to the campaign was more allusive, outside the leader columns. As in recent elections, it exploited visual imagery and symbolism. Two of its most striking features this time made use of children. The familiar, reassuring figure of Marje Proops, now regularly dispensing wordly wisdom in an advice column, was spread across the centre pages on June 2, smiling and hugging her seven and five year old grandchildren (and dog). THESE ARE THE TWO MAIN REASONS WHY I SHALL VOTE YES ON THURSDAY was the headline. Is anyone against grand-

children? Marje developed other arguments, too. The market was about 'our secure future, about our husbands' jobs, our children's ambitions and about our peace of mind'; indeed 'It's about a way of life,' and it deserved a Yes all down the line. On polling day the use of children was even more complete. The centre pages were filled with a photograph of nine youngsters at an international school in Brussels, one from each EEC country. Eight stood in a cosy huddle. The ninth stood wistfully, arms folded, apart. 'He's the odd lad out. The boy beyond the fringe. The one whose country still has to make up its mind . . .' FOR THE LAD OUTSIDE, said the headline, VOTE YES. The supporting text played largely on the fear of war and on the massive number of institutions and individuals of authority favouring British membership. 'Can they ALL be wrong about Dermott's Future?'

The bulk of the *Mirror's* coverage on polling day, four pages of it, was made up of a cosmonaut's eye view of British history since 1945, with pictures of a Churchill V-sign, a famous Zec cartoon on VE Day, Suez, de Gaulle saying 'Non', the Beatles, 'Supermac' and so on. The front page consisted of photographs of six earlier *Daily Mirror* front pages, marking the steps of the road to entry since 1961. How else to give historical depth in a tabloid? It was probably as good a way as any; but, like the paper's 'Hello Germany!' series, it cannot have pleased the anti-Marketeers. The rest of the paper's coverage was more traditional. Like the *Sun*, there was little of it till May 28. Then came centre-page features on prices ('Why the Consumers' Association says YES'), on the pros and cons of the debate, using quotes from party leaders, and another benign interview with a statesman-like Harold Wilson. The only real concession to the anti-Marketeers was a feature by Tony Benn, which included one of his attacks on the media.

The *Morning Star*, as Table 2 shows, was dropsical with the anti-Market case. Its attitude was nicely indicated by a 'spot canvass among people in various walks of life' on polling day. This was not any old 'spot canvass': Yes voters were excluded. Much space was given to the press conferences and the speeches of Tony Benn, Jack Jones, left-wing Labour MPs like Eric Heffer and Frank Allaun and, obviously, to Communist Party members. Pro-Marketeers were reported only to be contradicted and under headlines like PRO-MARKETEERS IN NEAR PANIC (June 4, on the du Cann episode). Jack Jones and Len

Murray contributed features. (Murray's points were on social policy, multinationals and internationalism: in the *Daily Telegraph* he wrote about agriculture, the Regional Development Fund and sovereignty.) A 'Common Market Focus' series covered a wide range of subjects — food policy, Norway, EEC immigration policy, the implications for women. Editorially the Market was identified with lowered living standards, mounting unemployment and, time and again, the sinister interests of the multinational companies. Altogether the paper mounted a sustained and varied campaign, within the limits of its resources.

BENN FACTOR NOW DOMINANT ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN ran the headline to the *Daily Telegraph's* referendum page on May 20. Among the antis, wrote the editor of *The Times* giving out prizes on polling day, Mr Benn 'has been the leader of the debate . . . Whatever the result of the referendum, his is a significant achievement. He was the author of the referendum itself and for much of the time he has managed to make his arguments the central arguments in the debate.' In the *Guardian* Peter Jenkins wrote on June 2: '... He has dominated the campaign single-handed, making the headlines day after day.' The Benn factor was central to newspapers' treatment of the referendum — to their conceptions of what it was about and to questions of balance and fairness.

Attacks on Mr Benn were in full flood when the referendum campaign opened; so much so that the *Daily Mirror* headline on May 9 was BENNMANIA, over an exclusive interview in which he shrugged off the latest wave of attacks on him as 'a Dracula-like bogeyman'. On May 11 all the Sunday papers made the differences between Mr Benn and the Prime Minister front page news: the *Sunday People* and *Sunday Mirror* forecast his dismissal in identical headlines — BYE, BYE, BENN. On May 12 Clive Jenkins spoke out strongly against the *Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* for their treatment of him. Members of the PLP called on the press to 'lay off' on May 15 and C. Gordon Tether sympathised in his *Financial Times* column the following day. Mr Benn was also the object of a sustained advertising campaign, starting before the referendum, by Bristol Channel Ship Repairers, a company threatened with nationalisation. Mr Wilson's return from an extended visit to the United States provided the occasion for a spate of 'I'm in charge' stories and editorial demands like the *Sun's* blunt headline, SACK BENN (May 9). Mr Wilson's reference to Mr Benn on TV as a beardless

New Testament prophet was widely quoted. Throughout the first three weeks of May Mr Benn's activities consequently tended to be construed in terms of rivalry with the Prime Minister. For example, he defended striking Chrysler car workers after Mr Wilson had criticised them. This, noted the *Daily Mirror*, would be 'seen by many as a rebuke to Mr Wilson'.

After May 26, reporting of Mr Benn concerned the referendum almost entirely. Until then the extent to which papers linked him to other subjects varied. The British Steel Corporation's reversal on May 19 of its decision on May 5 to scrap 20,000 jobs, for instance, was hailed as a VICTORY FOR BENN in the *Daily Telegraph*, and in the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror* and *Sun*. The *Financial Times* and *The Times* however did not see it in that light, and the *Guardian* described it explicitly as 'a rebuff to Mr Tony Benn's intervention in the affair . . .' Similarly when the heads of several nationalised industries had jointly lobbied Mr Wilson some days earlier about governmental interference, some papers put the reason down to Mr Benn. When the Brussels Commission gave its approval to the government's plans for British Leyland, which had been referred to it, the *Daily Express* asked: 'Did Mr Benn hope that Brussels would reject the plan, thus giving him a big propaganda weapon for use in the referendum campaign?' *The Times* even had a leading article about Chrysler's ideas on industrial democracy called 'Voluntary Bennery'.

One reason why Mr Benn became the dominating personality of the campaign, therefore, was simply his involvement in so many of the political controversies preceding and surrounding it. Beyond that, in a campaign that was all talk he was one of the few politicians who actually did something. Inevitably political campaigns are largely talk, and in this context Mr Benn's row with Granada TV about seating plans for its two-hour televised debate on June 2 constituted an event (see p. 207). The episode was a natural for the populars and the partisan *Daily Telegraph* ('What a Carve-up!', etc.).

More importantly, in his claim of 'nearly 500,000 jobs lost since we entered the Common Market' Mr Benn provided easily the best referendum news story. It was a large, round, simple figure and, as the *Daily Mirror* said, it touched on 'one of the nation's deepest anxieties, the fear of unemployment'. It was highly disputable — and thus fitted newspapers' liking for

clashes and conflict. Other stories, like the TV row and the two Shopping Basket press conferences, had some of these ingredients but none had all. The jobs story had momentum. First came the pro-Marketeters' rebuttals; then came the defence and Mr Meacher's elaborations; and then more rebuttals. Sage comment appeared in the leader columns. Labour ministers' licence to disagree removed the need to mute the argument. Without having to wrap their views in a cloak of collective responsibility, Mr Healey could talk of fantasy and Mr Jenkins could say flat out that he found it increasingly difficult to take Mr Benn seriously as an economic minister. Newspapers, correspondingly, could report them without the smooth opacity of much conventional political journalism. Partisanship could give an extra edge to the hyperbole of Conservative papers: 'Never in recent years', wrote the *Daily Express*, breaking into italics with excitement, 'has one Cabinet Minister gone for another in such language' (May 28). Other stories, notably Mr Prentice's hints about coalition, could be set in counterpoint and take on greater significance.

The importance of all these ramifications can be emphasised by pointing out that until the chain reaction started Mr Benn's original claim did not attract exceptional attention. Indeed a very similar claim made some days earlier went virtually unnoticed. Only the *Sun* made the story its front page lead on May 19. The *Daily Mail* had it tucked away at the foot of an inside page of referendum news and the *Daily Telegraph* also gave it only a couple of inches. The *Guardian* made it a main story on the front page, but most papers, including *The Times*, used it as the lead story of their referendum pages. Later in the campaign, as Table 1 shows, the argument more often hit the headlines.

The jobs argument was typical of Mr Benn's contribution to the campaign also in that much of the noise came from reactions and not from Mr Benn himself. He was more like the dog that did not bark in the night than the hound of the Baskervilles. This can be seen from Table 5, whose last columns show the proportions of space given to Mr Benn, his supporters and his opponents. In the *Daily Mail* as little as 11% of 'Benn coverage' went to Mr Benn himself; and only the *Guardian*, *Daily Express* and *The Times* gave him as much as a third. In the left-hand columns, which show only news coverage, the position is not greatly different. The *Sun* was way ahead in

Table 5. Referendum Coverage of Mr Benn, May 9-June 5 (column inches—percentages in brackets)

Name of paper	Speeches, press conferences, broadcasts, etc.			Features, letters, comments, polls			Photos			Cartoons			Totals						
	By Benn	Supporting Benn	Attacking Benn	Total	By Benn	Supporting Benn	Attacking Benn	Total	Of Benn	Of supporters	Of opponents	Total	Pro-Benn	Anti-Benn	Total	By Benn	Supporting Benn	Attacking Benn	Total
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	59 (36)	4 (2)	101 (62)	164 (100)	39	—	167	206	10	—	—	10	—	—	108 (28)	4 (1)	268 (71)	—	380 (100)
<i>Sun</i>	89 (54)	13 (8)	62 (38)	164 (100)	—	27	136	163	6	2	2	10	—	90	95 (22)	42 (10)	290 (68)	—	427 (100)
<i>Daily Express</i>	66 (31)	13 (6)	132 (63)	211 (100)	40	6	31	77	5	—	2	7	—	68	111 (31)	19 (5)	233 (64)	—	363 (100)
<i>Daily Mail</i>	30 (16)	32 (17)	128 (67)	190 (100)	—	—	91	91	20	1	6	27	—	168	50 (11)	33 (7)	393 (83)	—	476 (100)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	71 (24)	51 (16)	180 (60)	302 (100)	—	—	117	117	10	—	—	10	—	76	81 (16)	51 (10)	375 (74)	—	505 (100)
<i>Guardian</i>	165 (32)	84 (16)	266 (52)	515 (100)	94	53	78	225	25	—	—	25	—	64	284 (34)	157 (17)	408 (49)	—	829 (100)
<i>The Times</i>	157 (37)	38 (9)	235 (55)	430 (100)	22	20	75	117	3	—	—	3	16	20	198 (34)	58 (10)	330 (56)	—	586 (100)
<i>Financial Times</i>	142 (35)	54 (13)	208 (51)	404 (100)	—	—	113	113	3	—	—	3	8	—	153 (29)	54 (10)	321 (61)	—	528 (100)
<i>Morning Star</i>	157 (62)	89 (35)	7 (3)	253 (100)	—	29	—	29	3	11	—	14	—	—	160 (54)	129 (44)	7 (2)	—	296 (100)

Table 6. *Mr Benn's Coverage in Context, May 9–June 5*

Name of paper	Col. inches of/about Benn; & as % of total EEC coverage ( <i>exc.</i> advertisements in brackets)	Col. inches of Benn & supporters; & as % of total anti-EEC coverage ( <i>exc.</i> advertisements in brackets)	Col. inches of Benn opponents; & as % of total pro-EEC coverage ( <i>exc.</i> advertisements in brackets)
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	380 11% (16%)	112 21% (28%)	268 11% (15%)
<i>Sun</i>	427 17% (28%)	137 26% (41%)	290 21% (32%)
<i>Daily Express</i>	363 10% (22%)	130 20% (42%)	233 14% (34%)
<i>Daily Mail</i>	476 17% (28%)	83 17% (23%)	393 24% (37%)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	505 11% (14%)	132 15% (17%)	373 15% (19%)
<i>Guardian</i>	829 11% (13%)	421 20% (21%)	408 12% (12%)
<i>The Times</i>	586 9% (11%)	256 16% (17%)	330 12% (14%)
<i>Financial Times</i>	528 8% (9%)	207 15% (15%)	321 9% (10%)
<i>Morning Star</i>	296 9% (10%)	289 9% (10%)	7 7% (7%)

giving half the space to Mr Benn himself: most papers gave one-third or less. In Table 6 'Benn coverage' is related to referendum coverage as a whole. In the light of papers' remarks about him dominating the campaign it adds up to surprisingly little. 'Benn coverage' as a proportion of total referendum coverage ranged from 8% in the *Financial Times* to 17% in the *Daily Mail* and *Sun*. As a proportion of the total coverage given to the anti-Marketeters' case, Mr Benn and his supporters did better – from 15% to 26%; and if advertisements are excluded the figures for the *Sun* and *Daily Express* are certainly impressive – over 40%. The coverage of Mr Benn's opponents as a proportion of total pro-Market coverage was in the same range. Two things, then, emerge strongly from Tables 5 and 6: Mr Benn was a catalyst, prompting more coverage of others

than of himself; and the quality of his impact was more significant than its weight. The rain seemed heavy because the cloud was dark.

The press were generally agreed on the nature of Mr Benn's significance: he was counter-productive. WEDGIE HAS DECIDED ME – I'M GOING TO VOTE YES was the headline to John Akass's column in the *Sun* on June 4. Mr Thorpe was reported the same day as saying Mr Benn and the other dissenting ministers were 'the best thing to happen to the "Yes" campaign'. 'Mr Benn often complains that the press and television are biased against the anti-marketeters,' wrote John O'Sullivan in the *Daily Telegraph* on polling day; 'And he is absolutely right. They keep on reporting him.' '... The pros console themselves with the thought that every time the big Benn mouth opens it makes more yesses than noes,' Peter Jenkins wrote the same day in the *Guardian*. Support for these views came from a Harris poll in the *Daily Express* on May 21, which suggested voters were less likely to vote No as a result of some of Mr Benn's statements; and a *Sun* poll on May 26 indicated that 6% of the electorate had been most affected in their decision to vote Yes by Mr Benn but only 4% had been most affected by him in deciding to vote NO.

How much may Mr Benn have been a liability just because of his association with policies that people who disapproved of Market membership disliked – most probably nationalisation; and how far, on the other hand, because of biased treatment in the press? Tables 5 and 6 leave no doubt about the extent of quantitative bias. Mr Benn's opponents won nearly all down the line (though, as was argued earlier on, this type of bias could be rationalised). The *Guardian*, *The Times* and *Financial Times* kept an even balance in news reporting, and the *Sun* was even biased towards Mr Benn. But when features, comment and cartoons are added in, only the *Guardian* remains finely balanced; and the *Sun's* leader column hostility made it one of the more heavily weighted against him. In the *Daily Mail* more than four-fifths of 'Benn coverage' went to opponents (including the paper's own leaders and prolific cartoonists); and in the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Telegraph* the proportion was nearly three-quarters.

Bias in the sense of a deliberate attempt to present Mr Benn unfavourably seemed most obvious in the *Daily Express*. On May 9 the William Hickey gossip column included a photograph



*News of the World*, May 11, 1975. Reproduced by kind permission.

sent in by a reader who had touched it up to accentuate an alleged resemblance to Hitler. Another gossip item drew sinister conclusions from Mr Benn's habit of tape-recording journalists interviewing him and called him Commissar Benn. The columnist Jean Rook chided him for complaining of his press treatment. The decision to take a public stake in Ferranti was billed as **NOW FERRANTI FALLS TO BENN**. Prominent on page 1 on May 30 were the views of 'the man regarded by many Labour supporters as the political mentor and "father figure" of Mr Benn, his seventy-eight year old constituency secretary Herbert Rogers. 'Big trouble for the Labour party' following either a Yes or a No vote, was Mr Rogers's 'extraordinary prediction'. In the leader columns Mr Benn was left alone; but the entire campaign saw a rising damp of dislike in the news and feature columns, with one prominent patch left clear when Mr Benn was given the opportunity to contribute a centre-page article of his own. (He wrote in the *Daily Mirror* on the same day, in a suitably shirtsleeved style; and also in the *Guardian* on May 7, the *Observer* on May 11, *The Times* on May 16, and the *News of the World* on May 25).

The *Daily Mail* had a snide gossip item too – about Mr Benn's efforts to conceal his conventional middle-class background. It played up several anti-Benn stories, including one based on an article in *Labour Weekly* and described as stirring up a new quarrel with Mr Wilson. The political commentator Andrew Alexander called Mr Benn 'frankly dotty' and Anthony Shrimpsley wrote a full-page profile that was measured but hostile. The TV row was 'a farcical disagreement' and Mr Healey's 'magisterial pronouncement' on the jobs claim on June 4 was the front page lead – **THE DEBUNKING OF TONY BENN**. A leading article called the claim 'scaremongering at its most brazen'. Mr Benn featured too in no less than sixteen critical cartoons between May 9 and polling day.

Bias in the sense of disagreement with Mr Benn, without this spilling over into the choice and presentation of news stories, was universal. No paper apart from the *Morning Star* thought much of his jobs argument. How far any of their criticisms were 'unfair', however, is difficult to judge because of the intrinsic nature of the claim. Its language was ambiguous. To say that 'about 500,000 jobs have been lost,' to take *The Times* report, does not indicate whether those jobs did exist but now do not or would have existed in the future but will do so no longer.

Headline language is bad at making such distinctions anyway. Hostile observers like the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror* could take the former view and subsequently claim that Mr Benn was making 'a subtle climbdown' (*Mail*) or 'long climbdown' (*Mirror*) when he substituted the word 'imperilled' for 'lost' in a Radio Four broadcast. The very ambiguity of the claim was perhaps part of its attraction: it could fit snugly into papers' preconceptions. Even going over the press retrospectively it seems impossible to discover exactly what sense Mr Benn did intend to attach to the word 'lose'.

The nature of the original claim was more dangerous still. A dramatic charge invites a dramatic response — the language of Roy Jenkins and Denis Healey being the prime examples. It was an argument peculiarly suitable to the tabloids, and it came through strongest in them, partly because a higher proportion of their coverage was comment. The *Sun* called 'Citizen Benn's wild claim' the wettest contribution in a Niagara of nonsense. The *Daily Mirror* talked of LIES, MORE LIES AND THOSE DAMNED STATISTICS in a front page leader and carried on quite a dialogue, challenging Mr Benn to provide more evidence and then returning to the attack. The *Daily Mirror* indeed provided the best example of the affinity between claim and reaction. In a comment already quoted, the paper accused him of playing on the fear of unemployment, which it rightly described as one of the nation's deepest anxieties. Yet the presentation of this very point was scarcely calculated to reassure. It was in a front page leader, grave with black type, headed THE MINISTER OF FEAR.

Argument about how much of all this was 'fair' could be endless. Is it an accepted tabloid convention that to call a minister a liar is just a four-letter way of expressing disagreement? Is it any sloppier than talk about 'losing' half a million jobs? The anti-Marketeers could mount a very powerful case for saying Mr Benn's treatment was unfair; but the press would have no difficulty whatsoever in justifying themselves.

The pro-Marketeers could hardly go wrong in their campaign, faced with a sympathetic press and possessing nearly all the familiar faces. If votes were going to switch in the last four weeks, food prices and jobs were the most likely themes to switch them, judging by general election campaigns. Had the pro-Marketeers unaccountably failed to rebut Mr Benn's charges, they might conceivably have been in trouble. Un-

questionably the press assisted that rebuttal. Apart from that, Fleet Street, lumbered with the referendum, was above all anxious that it should be decisive. The intensity of coverage in the last week may have done a little to increase the turnout and therefore the size of the Yes majority. The *Daily Telegraph* even conceded that it had been a useful educational experience.

Overall the performance of the press was rather variable. The good — the *Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *The Times* — put on a comparable performance to an election; proving in the process that there cannot really be a one-issue referendum any more than a one-issue election. The bad, notably the *Daily Express*, made much less effort than in an election. These subjective evaluations however seem less significant than the powerful feeling engendered by the press that, far more even than in recent elections, the press and broadcasting were the referendum. In the absence of a single, permanent, organised leadership and official orthodoxy on each side, the press could decide for itself what the issues were. No one else could claim to be a more legitimate arbiter. Since nothing was happening in the electoral sense of 635 constituency campaigns, 'media events' became the nearest thing. Granada advertised its two-hour debate quite widely in the press. Articles by Tony Benn and Roy Jenkins in the 'heavy' papers were quoted as news items in the tabloids. The habit of publishing pre-releases of speeches assumed importance in the last week, when Mr Prentice was even able to take account in his 'coalition' speech of comments made upon it in advance. The delivery of the speech technically became unnecessary: its initial impact was solely as a newspaper item. The feeling that the press was the referendum is symbolised most aptly, however, by the *Daily Mirror's* front page on polling day. What was it about? Why, as we have seen, it was about the *Daily Mirror*. The newspaper had become the news.



## 10 Polls

It is a paradox that opinion polls can have most effect on elections when they reveal that the outcome is not in doubt. Although the campaign cannot be called off just because the result is shown to be a foregone conclusion, it can be changed from a life-and-death struggle into a ritual dance. The rival leaders will, of course, cite the great poll fiascos of the past – America in 1948, Britain in 1970 – to offset over-confidence or defeatism and persuade their dedicated workers to ignore the opinion polls. But polls that point to a landslide inevitably take the edge out of the battle; both sides are discouraged from using the more venomous weapons in their armoury.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the referendum campaign did not live up to the expectations that it would very bitter was due largely to the polls which so consistently foreshadowed a 2 to 1 Yes verdict. In the days before opinion polls, the uncertainty about the outcome would have led to a significantly different campaign, and probably a much nastier one.

The polls not only shaped the final battle. They had a key role throughout the long saga of Britain's application for membership.<sup>2</sup> The fluctuating evidence about the public's attitude, summarised in Table 1, matched interestingly the fluctuating positions of politicians. The polls gave President de

<sup>1</sup> Pointing to the consistent and overwhelming lead in the polls, Bob Worcester, reporting on May 16 his private survey for the government (see p. 260), wrote, 'This should have a considerable impact on the strategy of the campaign. When you are ahead (as we are) you reassure people and encourage them to cast their vote. It is not the time to frighten them with the spectre of communism, fear of the consequences of a No vote, or bogeymen.'

<sup>2</sup> See *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, pp. 352–70, 411–21, for a full account. See also *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. V (1966) pp. 49–61, vol. VI (1967–8) pp. 231–49; vol. XI (1972–3), pp. 191–233. See also F. Teer and J. D. Spence, *Political Opinion Polls* (London, 1973) pp. 106–20, and R. J. Shepherd, *Public Opinion and Attitudes to Europe* (Farnborough, Hants., 1975), for a large body of poll findings.

Table 1. *Balance of Feeling on British Membership of EEC, 1961–73 (pro % minus anti %)*

Aug 1961	Jan 1963	July 1966	Nov 1967	Mar 1970	Apr 1972	Oct 1973
+45	0	+44	-6	-42	-1	-17

Source: NOP

Gaulle some grounds for saying in January 1963 and again in November 1967 that Britain was not ready for Europe. Harold Macmillan in 1961 and Harold Wilson in 1966 had a basis for thinking that entry into Europe would be a vote winner. On the other hand in 1970 the polls must have worried Mr Wilson and then Mr Heath as they reopened negotiations, while in 1972 Mr Heath had reason to feel embarrassed about 'the fullhearted consent of the British people'.<sup>3</sup> And from 1972 to 1974 the Labour anti-Marketeers and then Mr Powell could readily believe that a referendum would go their way. Following British entry on January 1, 1973 there was a sharp increase in the percentage believing the country should not be part of the Community.

However in 1974 there was, oddly, little polling on the European issue. The only published polls indicated a continuing majority against membership. Table 2 shows the result of a

Table 2. *Attitudes to EEC Membership, September 1973–November 1974*

	Sept 1973	May 1974	Nov 1974
Very sorry	20	24	31
Indifferent	33	28	22
Relieved	37	40	38
No reply	10	8	9

Source: British fieldwork conducted by Gallup.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Heath's use of this phrase was widely quoted against him, almost always out of context (see *Diplomacy and Persuasion*, p. 371). But pro-Marketeers could not escape the fact that (apart from brief moments in the summer of 1971 and in January 1973) from 1967 to 1974 the polls showed a clear majority against entry.

regular EEC sponsored survey. A private poll conducted for Labour in August 1974 showed 76% favouring a referendum: 50% said that they would vote to get out and 32% that they would vote to stay in. A Gallup poll at the same time confirmed these proportions (47% to 30%), and found that, by 53% to 31%, people thought Britain was wrong to join the Common Market. However, on restating the basic question 'If the government negotiated new terms for Britain's membership of the Common Market and they thought it was in Britain's interests to remain a member, how would you vote then - to stay in or leave it?', the poll got an opposite vote (54% Yes, 24% No, i.e. 69% to 31% among decided voters).<sup>4</sup>

Other polls showed the ambivalence of the public. For example NOP in February 1974 found 18% clearly for staying in and 31% for getting out - but 43% for staying in on renegotiated terms.

As the referendum approached the polling industry was under something of a cloud. Its forecasting record in the 1974 elections had been unhappy<sup>5</sup> and newspapers, seriously short of funds because of the recession, were reluctant to commission polls of any sort. The thumping Yes majorities forecast by every survey from April 1975 onwards discouraged editors from sponsoring any extra work in the last weeks of the campaign.

The *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* opted out of polling and the *Daily Express* and *Evening Standard* published fewer reports than in a general election. Only the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, in conjunction with the Gallup poll, produced weekly reports, though in Scotland where the outcome was much more in doubt the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Scotsman* maintained their rival polls. But although less public opinion poll evidence is available about the referendum than about any general election since the 1950s, the record is ample enough, since such public polls as there were agreed on a fairly clear-cut story and since there were also comprehensive private polls.

<sup>4</sup> A more elaborate and academic study in July 1974 by R. Jowell and J. D. Spence, *The Grudging Europeans* (S.C.P.R. 1975) was only published in March 1975. It showed a high level of ignorance about the nature of the EEC and little enthusiasm for or against it. But 77% favoured a referendum on the issue.

<sup>5</sup> See *The British General Election of February 1974*, pp. 261-2, and *The British General Election of October 1974*, pp. 195-7. See also R. Rose in H. Penniman (ed), *Britain at the Polls*, 2nd ed., pp. 109-30, 223-39.

We have been fortunate to be allowed access to the poll findings which Louis Harris International collected for BIE, to those of National Opinion Polls (NOP) on behalf of NRC, and to a third set produced by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) for Mr Wilson. These polls throw light on a large number of trends in opinion, both generally and among sub-groups of the population, which the published polls did not fully cover.

On the broad story, public and private polls were agreed. At the beginning of 1975 they provided no solid evidence to suggest a Yes verdict for Britain as a whole; since England, particularly Southern England, was plainly more pro-Market than the rest of the country it was therefore widely expected that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would yield a resounding No. It was not in fact until early March that clear indications emerged of a turn in the tide.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the first published poll of the year (Gallup, *Daily Telegraph*, January 24, 1975) contained the key to the story. On the basic question, 'If you could vote tomorrow on whether we should stay in the Common Market, how would you vote or wouldn't you vote at all?' the answer was 33% 'In' to 41% 'Out'. But once again a second question showed how misleading such a finding could be. When asked 'If the Government negotiated new terms for Britain's membership of the Common Market and they thought it was in Britain's interest to remain a member, how would you vote then, to stay in or leave it?', 71% of decided voters said 'In' and 29% said 'Out'. While among Conservatives 64% said Yes to the first question and 80% to the second (an increase of 16%), among Labour supporters the change was from 29% to 64% (an increase of 35%). It was plain that on a subject on which few felt really strongly there was a general willingness to accept opinion leadership, particularly on the Labour side. In February 1975 NOP offered elaborate confirmation of the widespread ambivalence with their study of

<sup>6</sup> See B. Särilvik *et al.*, 'British Membership of the EEC; a profile of electoral opinions in the spring of 1974 with a postscript on the Referendum', *European Journal of Political Research* (Mar 1976 pp. 83-114) which exploits findings of a postal survey just after the referendum with voters who had been previously interviewed in 1974. It seems that on both sides there was a clear move towards a more moderate position by people who early in 1974 expressed strong views on the issue; it seems too that the strength of prior party attachments was strongly correlated with switches in opinion on Europe.

question wording (see p. 60). This must explain why, with the increasing certainty as the Dublin summit approached that the government would recommend the terms, the published polls reported such a switch in February/March. Table 3 shows the Yes lead among decided voters in the Gallup surveys.

Table 3. Majority Yes, February–May 1975 (Yes % minus No % among decided voters)

Feb 27	Mar 3	Mar 20	Apr 4	Apr 17	Apr 23	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 29
+8	+16	+29	+26	+29	+28	+24	+31	+32	+28	+34

Source: Gallup Poll.

Other polls less frequent and regular than the Gallup poll confirm this picture: a sharp rise of support for the Market as the end of renegotiations drew near and as the government formally endorsed the terms, and then an unchanging plateau. Such fluctuations as occurred in the Gallup poll and in its competitors over the last two months seem to have been mainly sampling fluctuations, for the jerks appear at different times in different polls. In so far as there were agreed trends they indicated firstly a fairly steady decline in Don't Knows, and secondly a very slight increase in the Yes lead up to the last two weeks and a slight falling off in the last few days.

Despite the one-sided emphasis of the press and the enormous and well-financed efforts of BIE, together with Mr Wilson's and Mr Callaghan's active intervention, the pro-Marketees seem to have made no headway during the last ten weeks before Referendum day. The Marplan poll in the *Sun* (June 5) suggested a 6% fall in the Yes lead during the final week. The Gallup poll showed a 2% fall and a special June 3–4 reinterview of 300 of its earlier respondents confirmed that there was a slight increase in No support. The private polls also suggested a diminution in the Yes lead during the last few days.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The final NOP poll for NRC, based on May 27 fieldwork, showed a 5% drop in the Yes lead and the final MORI poll, taken on June 3, suggested a 4% dip from the previous week-end. Further evidence on movements of opinion during the campaign is available in the BBC Audience Research Report, *Studies of the Impact of the Radio and Television Coverage of the EEC Referendum Campaign*, BBC document (Jan 1976). See also R. Jowell *et al.*, *Britain into Europe* (Croom Helm, 1976).

Table 4. Final Poll Estimates

Predictions published on June 5					Unpublished polls		
	Daily Telegraph	Evening Standard	Daily Express	Sun			
	Gallup 917 quota + reinterview	ORC 1,610 quota	Harris <sup>a</sup> 1,264 random	Marplan <sup>b</sup> 1,411 quota	Actual result	MORI 541 quota	NOP <sup>c</sup> 443 quota
Yes	68	73.7	72	58 (68)	67.2	67	50 (68)
No	32	26.3	28	27 (32)	32.8	33	23 (32)
Lead	36	47.4	44	(36)	34.4	34	(40)

<sup>a</sup>Allowing for reinterviews on the last day Harris also offered a figure of 71% Yes 29% No.

<sup>b</sup>Marplan refused to allocate its 15% Don't knows. Figures in brackets exclude Don't knows.

<sup>c</sup>NOP's final survey was completed on May 27. MORI's was taken on June 3.

There were four polls seeking to provide the best public prediction of the outcome. They were in no danger of forecasting the wrong winner, but the uncertainties of turnout made them properly anxious about their percentage error – the only sensible measure of polling accuracy. The predictions of Gallup and Marplan were as near as any polling organisation can hope to get. (Granted the unavoidable laws of sampling, to be close is a matter of skill but to be absolutely right is a matter of luck as well.) The error in the forecast of ORC (13% in terms of the gap between victor and vanquished) was greater than in any final poll in any British general election since 1945. Even the 9.6 per cent error of Harris has its only near parallels in the Marplan and Gallup forecasts of 1970, and the *Daily Express* poll of 1966.

As the campaign advanced it became plain that Scotland and Northern Ireland were the areas most in doubt and, since most pollsters kept out of Northern Ireland, interest focused on Scotland. All the public and private surveys agreed on a Yes majority though the final figures varied from 8% in the *Scotsman* ORC poll (based on May 24–7 interviews) and 10% in the Gallup poll, to 17% in the *Glasgow Herald* System Three poll. The actual result in Scotland was 58.4% to 41.6%, a 16.8% lead.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The swing seems to have come rather later in Scotland than elsewhere, particularly on the Labour side (see p. 151).

Table 5. Demographic Profile of Referendum Voting (by sex, class, age and party)

	Men	Women	ABC1	C2	DE	18-34	35-44	45-54	65-	Con	Lab	Lib
Yes	45	46	58	42	35	42	49	46	44	65	35	48
No	23	19	17	22	23	20	26	21	19	12	28	21
Would not vote or not certain to vote	32	35	25	36	42	38	25	33	37	23	37	31
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Gallup Poll.

The public polls naturally focused mainly on the outcome. But all gave some report of the nature of support for both Yes and No in terms of social characteristics. There was consensus on the demographic profile of the electorate. The figures in Table 5 are taken from the final Gallup poll because it came nearest to the result.

In every sub-group there was a comfortable Yes vote. The working class and the young yielded most No votes – in other words the groups where Labour voters predominate.<sup>9</sup> As the results were to show, variations in party support across the country went a long way to explain variations in support for Common Market membership (see p. 271).

The published polls were very meagre in their reports of

Table 6. Issues and Referendum Voting ('better in' minus 'better out')

	%
Britain's defence	+31
Britain's voice in international affairs	+30
Britain's position in the world	+28
The future for British children	+25
The British economy	+19
The level of employment	+18
The level of wages	+17
The general standard of living	+14
The part of the country where you live	+10
Britain's relationship with the US and Russia	+7
The price we pay for non-food goods	+1
The level of taxation	-2
The price we pay for food	-10
Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth	-13

Source: Gallup Poll.

<sup>9</sup> One notable finding, confirmed by several polls, was of the reluctance of trade unionists to follow the official lead of the TUC and a majority of the union leaders. On May 16 MORI was reporting to Mr Wilson a Yes vote of 52% among Labour voting trade unionists as against 48% of Labour voters. Among those with decided views exactly the same proportion, two-to-one, of trade unionists were voting Yes as of the population as a whole. Among Labour voters trade unionists were slightly more likely than the rest to vote Yes (58% compared to 55%).

Another notable finding from the BBC study is that while Conservative ABs voted 83% Yes, Conservatives from Class D only voted 58% Yes. On the Labour side the ABs were 55% Yes and the Ds 44% Yes. For some at least class seems to have been as important a determinant of attitude as party.

questions on various aspects of the referendum issue.<sup>10</sup> The only extensive report from Fleet Street appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on May 8 which produced a table showing the difference between the percentage of the public saying 'better in' and 'better out' on various aspects. It is notable that on the more abstract issues EEC membership tended to draw most approval and that on the more down to earth issues it tended to be least well thought of.

Table 7. *Consequences of Staying In or Withdrawing*

What bad things are likely to happen to Britain if we stay in?	All	Voting		Uncertain
		Yes	No	
Nothing	30	49	0	15
Prices	25	15	47	29
Food prices	8	5	17	8
Loss of independence	9	7	17	7
Unemployment	5	1	11	8

What bad things are likely to happen to Britain if we withdraw?	All	Voting		Uncertain
		Yes	No	
Nothing	14	3	44	9
Lost bargaining power/trade	22	20	11	15
Isolation of Britain	17	23	4	13
Inflation	17	22	7	15
Unemployment	10	13	3	11

Source: MORI, May 5, 1975.

A private MORI poll of the same period summed up the situation (see Table 7). High prices were the dominant consideration for withdrawing while fears of isolation and economic trouble provided the chief pressures to stay in.

In a survey in mid-May when the BIE polls asked voters to give their own reasons why Britain should stay in the phrases 'because we are in now' (20%) and 'Can't go it alone/Can't survive as an island' (15%) were most used.

<sup>10</sup> An unusual polling approach to the referendum is to be found in two articles by Paul Barker and Nick Spencer 'People and Power' (*New Society*, May 31, June 5, 1975) They report on a special survey of attitudes towards democratic efficacy and referenda in general.

In his special regional analysis for BIE in April, Humphrey Taylor found that the only notable variations on issues were that people in the West Midlands and Yorkshire were much more prone to mention trade as a reason for staying in, and that people in Scotland and Ulster were much less likely to put the argument that 'we can't go it alone.'

The private polls analysed their figures to see if there were any special issues that appealed to the potential switchers or to particular regions or sub-groups. But in almost all respects the electorate seemed remarkably homogeneous in their reactions. The voters most open to persuasion were disproportionately working class and female. But these target voters were not concentrated in any particular region and they seemed concerned about much the same issues as the rest of the electorate though unemployment (perhaps because of their DE background) loomed rather larger for them.<sup>11</sup> It was notable that there was no major trend on key issues. Five questions asked by Harris for BIE on May 17 and in early June show no significant difference between the beginning and end of the campaign.

One, isolated, evidence of change was that on May 15 voters, by 33% to 30%, thought most people in the Old Commonwealth wanted Britain to leave the Community while on June 3 a clear majority (41%—25%) thought they wanted Britain to stay in it.

Table 8. *Opinion Change During Campaign*

	May 13		May 31	
	In	Out	In	Out
Percentage believing that:				
Unemployment will go up faster	23	25	22	23
British government will have more influence	38	31	37	28
We will be better off	60	27	59	24
Food prices will go up faster	39	16	38	13
Easier to deal with Britain's economic problems	47	30	45	25
	Pro	Anti	Pro	Anti
More confidence in pro/anti-Market politicians	45	22	45	21

Source: Harris Poll.

<sup>11</sup> MORI in its May 5 survey found that DE voters, who constitute 33% of the population, provided 47% of the 'not sure' and that women, who constitute 51% of the population, provided 68% of the 'not sure'.

Table 9 Public attitudes to leading figures

	Person known	EEC position correctly perceived	Respect and like	No particular feelings	Don't like	Excess of like over dislike
Harold Wilson	97	75	42	32	23	+19
Edward Heath	94	78	42	31	21	+21
<i>Enoch Powell</i>	92	50	33	28	31	+2
Jeremy Thorpe	91	46	40	40	11	+29
William Whitelaw	83	52	33	37	8	+25
<i>Ian Paisley</i>	83	18	3	18	62	-59
Roy Jenkins	82	39	34	39	9	+25
<i>Tony Benn</i>	81	32	17	32	32	-15
Reginald Maudling	79	43	26	39	14	+12
Vic Feather	79	19	33	31	15	+18
James Callaghan	79	43	31	37	11	+20
Lord George-Brown	79	26	28	35	16	+12
<i>Michael Foot</i>	79	33	17	36	26	-9
Shirley Williams	78	34	33	37	8	+25
<i>Hugh Scanlon</i>	75	25	13	33	30	-17
<i>Jack Jones</i>	74	22	17	35	22	-5
<i>Clive Jenkins</i>	74	20	18	31	25	-7
Sir C. Soames	57	38	17	35	5	+12
Tom Jackson	56	9	14	29	13	+1
Geoffrey Rippon	55	31	15	34	6	+9
Reg Prentice	53	15	12	34	7	+5
<i>Peter Shore</i>	45	11	10	28	7	+3

Note: Anti-Marketeers in *italics*.

Source: Harris Poll, Apr 1-6, 1975.

All the polls asked a few questions on personalities and their impact.<sup>12</sup> But the fullest evidence about the standing of the contestants came in a private Harris survey for BIE in April. Among the twenty names in Table 9 (the best known of a longer list), each of the thirteen pro-Marketeers received a positive reaction and six of the eight anti-Marketeers a negative one — and the one exception, Enoch Powell, still excited more dislike than anyone except Tony Benn and Ian Paisley. NRC's poll also ventured into these personality questions which private polls have often regarded as too sensitive. As Table 10 shows, the results were hardly encouraging even though they did suggest that Enoch Powell helped to keep a significant number of No voters loyal to the cause.

<sup>12</sup> See the Gallup report in the *Sunday Telegraph* May 18, 1975 for the fullest published data.

Table 10. Attitudes to Powell and Benn

	As you know Anthony Wedgwood Benn/Enoch Powell is opposed to the Common Market. Does this make you more or less likely to vote to come out of the Market or does it make no difference?							
	Benn				Powell			
	Vote intention		Undecided		Vote intention		Undecided	
	Yes	No	All	All	Yes	No	All	All
More likely to vote No	3	3	5	3	3	12	9	7
Less likely to vote No	18	2	7	12	6	2	2	4
No difference	77	91	79	82	90	83	72	85
DK	2	4	9	3	1	3	16	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: NOP, May 16, 1975.

For its private polling it was natural for BIE to turn to Humphrey Taylor, the Managing Director of Louis Harris International (and of ORC), who had done the Conservative Party's private polling since 1966. On Mr Heath's suggestion he had attended European Movement committees on the referendum from May 1974 and made suggestions about how the case should be presented. However, he was not asked to do any polling until December when he conducted a small study on question wording. This showed that 'stay in' would appeal to the Conservative *status quo* instincts of the electorate and get a better response than 'pull out'. It also indicated that a government endorsement of staying in would make a great difference and that the public was very ill-informed about the EEC. In February Humphrey Taylor, by then a member of the embryo BIE Executive, did the first of several serious surveys. These fell under nine heads:

- (1) A general survey of attitudes towards the EEC issue using a quota sample of 1,075 (February).
- (2) Discussions with four small groups of uncommitted working class voters to explore their knowledge, their anxieties and their phraseology (April).
- (3) Continuous monitoring of opinion through questions tacked on to routine Harris market research surveys.
- (4) A reinterview approach to the February sample to check on individual changes of attitude (April).

- (5) A survey to examine the public standing of the leading figures and institutions on the two sides – a quota sample of 959 (April).
- (6) A special breakdown of massed samples to check on regional variations (April).<sup>13</sup>
- (7) Two fairly quick surveys to check on changes in the profiles of support as well as on turnout intentions – quota samples of 1200 (May 19, May 25).
- (8) Fourteen quick surveys to monitor changes of attitude on key questions – quota samples of 500 (on most days from May 13 to June 3).
- (9) Two quick surveys to check on reactions to the previous night's official referendum broadcasts – quota samples of 840 (May 28, May 30).

The impact of these surveys (which cost £33,000) was firstly to reassure BIE that they were in a dominant position in general, as well as on particular issues and personalities. Through Humphrey Taylor's commentaries on his findings ran various warnings – the public's overriding association of the EEC with high food prices, the unintelligibility of most reports about the EEC, the need for simple language and clear storylines, and the potential volatility of the public.<sup>14</sup> He could point out that the public hadn't taken in the news that Commonwealth leaders wanted Britain to stay in, and that a remarkable number were unclear about Enoch Powell's position. Nor had they realised that various 'goodies' were in favour and various 'baddies' against Market membership. He could press the case for appealing to the wobbling Labour voters on their own terms.

The anti-Marketeers had little money to spare for polling and it was not till they were sure of the government grant in mid-April that they felt able to commission any independent surveys. GBO had sponsored a couple of questions in the NOP

<sup>13</sup> By adding together the results of several surveys over a number of weeks, Louis Harris were able to provide more detailed regional figures than were available from any other source. Humphrey Taylor reported to a somewhat sceptical BIE Steering Group, on April 20 that there were pro-European majorities in every region, including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

<sup>14</sup> A classic comment comes in his report of May 7: 'We have a strange paradox. On the one hand apathy and very little strong commitment to either side and therefore great potential for opinion to swing either way. On the other hand we are getting almost exactly the same figures week after week. It's as though nobody is listening.'

omnibus survey in February, and the NRC's advertising agents, Boase, Massini and Pollitt, had conducted ten group discussions in April to elicit attitudes and beliefs about the EEC. However in May NRC did commission four surveys from NOP.<sup>15</sup> These were four quick polls, the first on May 13 and the last on May 27, each with a quota sample of 500. Each confirmed the depressing message of the public opinion polls. Particularly lowering to morale was the indication in the first survey that 22% of anti-Market voters but only 10% of pro-Market voters 'might change their mind'. Moreover the May 23 poll showed that 80% of pros but only 60% of antis felt certain they would go to vote. The first poll showed that high prices were easily the anti-Marketeers' most powerful issue – 39% of all voters cited it as a reason why people would vote No, while only 17% mentioned British independence. When asked on May 20 what issue affected their own vote most, British independence drew only 7% of electors responses.

Granted the caution of BIE on giving voice to strong federalist sentiment, one of their opponent's private polls is significant. On May 27 NOP asked the question, 'The ultimate aim of the Common Market is to merge the member countries into a single state. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?' 43% said 'good idea' and 37% said 'bad idea' – and the pro's favoured it by 58% to 24%.

The most comforting finding for anti-Marketeers offered by the NRC polls was that when asked whether it was right or wrong for Britain to have joined the Common Market in the first place 51% said that it was wrong and only 40% said that it was right. As many as 32% of those intending to vote for Britain staying in thought that the country should not have joined three years earlier. The explanation for the paradox lay perhaps in another question: 53% of respondents (71% of Yes voters and 25% No's) believed that a No verdict in the referendum would lead to an immediate political and economic crisis.

NOP was only brought in by NRC late in the day and their budget was very limited. Attitude studies in depth were impossible in 'quickie' surveys that could only include a dozen or so questions, and so their effort was concentrated on giving guidance on those issues and personalities on which NRC should concentrate. But the polls were started so late that it was not

<sup>15</sup> For one other polling enterprise of NRC see p. 162.

possible for the NOP findings to have much effect on actions. They were important in sustaining the reluctant decision to focus the anti-Market campaign on economic issues rather than on sovereignty: those in NRC whose main interest was in the latter insisted to the end on putting in questions which might justify a switch in emphasis towards the theme of national independence. The private polls may also have done something to reassure the campaigners that Mr Benn and Mr Powell were not quite so counter-productive as some people feared. But it is hard to trace any positive decisions of NRC that flowed from their expenditure of £5,030 on polling. The main message of the surveys was their depressing reiteration that there would be a landslide. 'They wasted all that money just to confirm that they were beaten,' observed one cynical insider.

Mr Wilson was uneasy about the possibility of things going wrong with the referendum, as they had done in Norway. He encouraged Mr Callaghan to set up the Referendum Steering Group (see p. 95) and he arranged to get polls from Robert Worcester, the Managing Director of MORI (Market Opinion Research International, an affiliate of NOP), in order to get early warning and analysis of any political tremors. Bob Worcester had conducted private polls for the Labour party and Mr Wilson since 1970 and his record as a forecaster, and as an expositor of his findings, was well-regarded.

He only moved into action at the beginning of May and he conducted nine polls<sup>16</sup> which he normally reported briefly on the day after the interviews and then followed up with fuller analysis a few days later. His reports went to the Prime Minister and to the Referendum Steering Group whose daily meetings he attended. He also conducted three recall surveys to see how individuals had moved since early May. The total cost of his efforts could not have been less than £15,000.

Table 11. Perceptions of Mr Wilson's Attitude to EEC

	May 5	May 22	May 30
Mr Wilson is for staying in	74	78	84
getting out	15	9	8
Don't know	11	13	8

Source: MORI

<sup>16</sup> On May 5, 12, 16, 22, 27, 30, June 1, 2, 3.

His basic quota sample of 500 gave remarkably stable results. Each of the nine surveys showed a Yes vote between 66% and 70%. His more general findings on issues and regional trends matched closely those of Humphrey Taylor and the public polls.

But he had one special function – to explore the proper role for Mr Wilson and the impact he was making. Did the public know his position? Reports of their increasing awareness (see Table 11) were reassuring. From the start the poll showed a view that the Prime Minister ought to take an active part in the campaign, 78% of respondents saying that it was very or fairly important that he should. The fact that Mr Wilson was more highly regarded by anti-Marketeers than by pro-Marketeers (because of the party balance in the two groups) provided an extra argument for his intervention, particularly through the columns of the *Sun* and *Daily Mirror*, whose readers included so large a proportion of the waverers.

Bob Worcester asked questions on the standing of ministers which were kept separate from his other findings and given very limited circulation (though they were referred to in an *Observer* leading article of June 8).

The private polls were very different in design. BIE started early, and with a large bulk of findings at their disposal by April were able to bring them to bear on their campaign planning. The government's operation and the NOP work for NRC were only undertaken in May when it was too late to do very much with the findings. They both focused more on voting intention than the BIE surveys (Humphrey Taylor worked on the assumption that the published polls were based on larger samples and could provide quite adequate monitoring of the broad tide).

It seems probable that the main achievements of the private polls were negative, confirming that the public polls were not in error; that there were no important issues being neglected; that prices were more important than sovereignty; and that the whole country was reacting very uniformly. The most specific action that flowed from a private poll may have been the arranging of special interviews with the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* for Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan after Bob Worcester had pointed out how large a proportion of the uncommitted were among Labour readers of these papers and how many of them were confused about the Prime Minister's stand.



The private polls must have cost well over £50,000 in all – a small sum in relation to the total cost of the campaign, yet probably a larger amount than was spent on all the published polls. The actual use made of these private polls was relatively limited. The lesson of the referendum campaign may be that party strategists should either spend less on polling or else that they should learn more about the art of integrating their poll findings with their campaign activities.

## 11 Outcome

Immediately the voting ended at 10 p.m. on June 5 Independent Television News announced that their survey at representative polling booths showed a 68.3% Yes vote. But no confirmation was available that night when the number of ballot papers were checked (but the Yes and No votes not counted) at district level. The count proper – on a county basis in England and Wales and on a regional basis in Scotland – began at 9 a.m. on June 6. At 11 a.m. the Scilly Isles reported a 74.5% Yes, followed by 71.9% in Cumbria and 70.6% in Gwynedd. As the day advanced the landslide was confirmed. In the course of the afternoon, the results from the conurbations and industrial counties showed Yes votes within 10% of the rural and suburban areas that had reported first. The pattern was broken only by the 56% No from the Shetlands at 4 p.m. and the 71% No from the Western Isles in almost the final result. When all the votes were in at 11 p.m.<sup>1</sup> 67.2% had voted Yes and 32.8% No. The turnout was reported as 65.0% by the National Counting Office but as 64.5% by *The Times*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some counts took longer than was expected because some of the scrutineers appointed by the umbrella organisations, being inexperienced, were overzealous in their checking. On the other hand there were reports that when the results were plain on the Friday afternoon some corners were cut and that in a few cases quite measurable inaccuracies may have resulted from the casual handling of the bundles of counted votes. It would be wrong to stress such stories. Sir Philip Allen, the Chief Counting Officer, in an article in *The Times* (June 23, 1975) stressed how smoothly everything had run and pointed out, 'There had been no previous experience of counting on the scale now required. In four areas at least a million votes [had] to be counted – and in London more than three million. One problem was to find big enough premises. The addresses finally chosen... [included] a race-course, a supermarket and a music-hall.'

<sup>2</sup> There were difficulties in arriving at a figure strictly comparable to the usual general election computation because of the service vote. The National Counting Office also decided to make a guess at the number on the electoral register who had died and (though this has never been done at general elections) adapted their turnout figures accordingly. If we exclude the service vote and consider the electorate as the names on the electoral register when it came into force on February 16 plus those who had reached eighteen between then and June 5 the turnout was 64.5% compared to 72.8% in October 1974.

No central record of the number of postal votes is available. Estimates from returning officers suggest that it must have been nearer to the 619,000 (2.0%) of February 1974 than the 835,000 (3.0%) of October 1974.

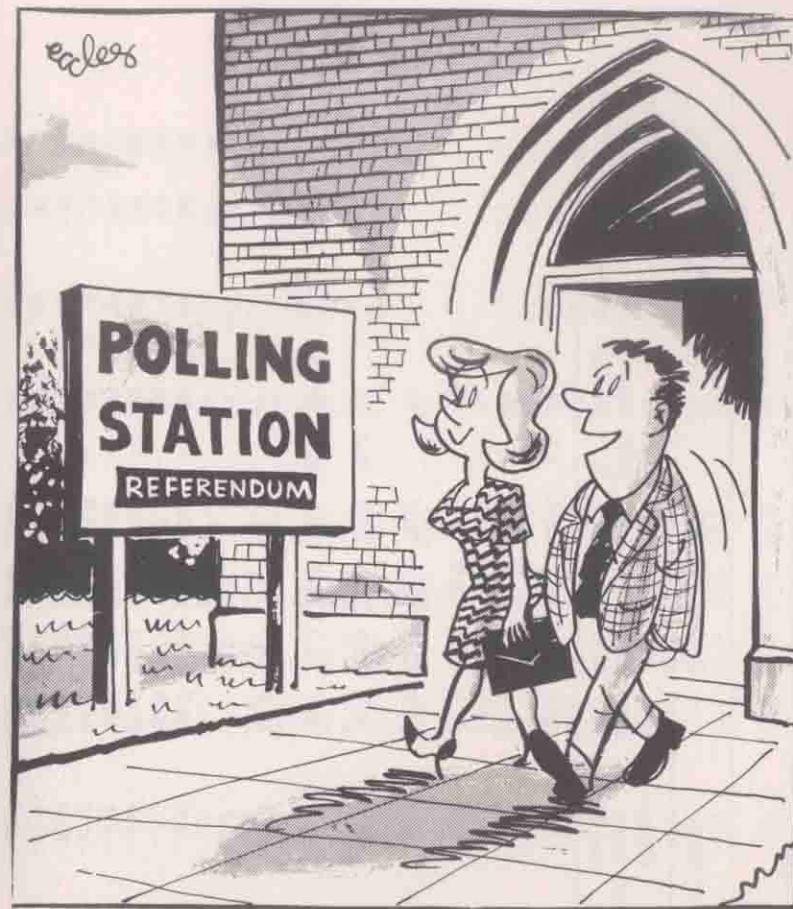
In absolute terms the vote was

Yes	17,378,581
No	8,470,073
Majority	8,908,508
Spoilt papers <sup>3</sup>	54,540
Total voting	25,903,194
Civilian electorate	40,086,677
Service electorate	370,200 <sup>4</sup>
Total electorate	40,456,877

The anti-Marketeers could say that only 43.0% of the registered electorate had bothered to vote Yes to membership of the Community – but on that basis only 20.9% had bothered to vote No.

The fact that the count was confined to sixty-eight areas which behaved so much alike means that the actual results added little to the evidence on public attitudes available from the opinion polls.

The table on p. 266–269 shows for each counting area the



"That's the first time I've had a chance of voting against Heath, Thorpe and Harold Wilson all in one go!"

*Morning Star*, June 5, 1975.

turnout, the change in turnout compared to October 1974, the Yes percentage and the party pattern in October 1974.

The main lesson is one of uniformity as the map on p. 270 shows. In English counties the turnout only ranged between 61% and 70% and the Yes vote between 63% and 76%. Mainland Scotland had a turnout between 57% and 64% and, apart from its two most southern Regions, a Yes vote between 55% and 60%.

<sup>3</sup> 54,540 ballots (2.1%) were declared invalid. The decision was at the absolute discretion of the local counting officer and varied from 0.09% in Tyne and Wear to 0.45% in Shetland. In some counting areas many spoilt papers were attributed to the advertisements which had suggested that a tick rather than a cross was the appropriate way of marking the ballot. In London a majority of the disallowed votes had a tick in one box and a cross in the other. The total number of spoiled ballots was higher than in any general election for which figures are available, despite the greater simplicity of the referendum ballot paper.

<sup>4</sup> Of these 370,200 on the hastily constructed service voters' roll (service personnel everywhere and wives overseas), 231,194 (62.4%) returned ballots for inclusion in the count (0.9% of the total). The only counting areas where they amounted to 2% of the vote were Greater London (3.5%), Wiltshire (3.2%), Hampshire (2.9%), Lincolnshire (2.5%), Western Isles (2.6%), Shetland (2.5%), and Northern Ireland (2.1%). The high figure in Greater London was due to the inclusion of all votes from service units overseas, on the ground that London being three times larger than any other counting area, the votes would cause least distortion to the results. (It was thought undesirable to have a separate count which would reveal how the servicemen and their wives had voted – though there is reason to believe that it was very heavily Yes).

Table 1 The Referendum Results

	Referendum		General Election Oct 74 votes <sup>b</sup>				Rank order of areas <sup>d</sup>						
	Electorate <sup>a</sup> '000s	Turnout %	Change from Oct 74	Yes %	General Election		Turnout	Yes					
					Con. %	Lib. %							
UK	40,087	64.5	-8.3	67.2	35.8	39.2	18.3	3.5	35				
South	16,504	66.4	-7.8	71.6	44.2	30.3	25.1	-	41				
Midlands	6,348	64.5	-9.7	70.0	39.0	40.5	19.5	-	34				
North	10,504	63.4	-8.9	67.4	34.4	46.6	18.5	-	34				
England	33,164	64.6	-7.9	68.7	38.9	40.1	20.2	-	37				
Wales	2,011	66.7	-9.1	66.5	23.9	49.5	15.5	10.8	33				
Scotland	3,689	61.7	-13.1	58.4	24.7	36.3	18.3	30.7	34				
N. Ireland	1,031	47.4	-20.3	52.1	-	-	-	-	-				
<i>South</i>													
Greater London	5,250	60.8	-5.6	66.7	37.4	43.8	17.1	-	46	60	46	43	
Avon	665	68.7	-7.5	67.8	39.3	38.2	22.2	-	42	4	40	36	
Bedfordshire	327	67.9	-8.6	69.4	40.4	37.3	22.2	-	48	13	32	32	
Berkshire	443	66.4	-7.4	72.6	42.0	30.5	26.9	-	35	27	13	17	
Buckinghamshire	346	69.5	-6.0	74.3	46.6	29.4	23.3	-	44	3	7	10	
Cambridgeshire	376	62.2	-12.8	74.1	42.6	31.5	25.6	-	38	55	8	18	
Cornwall	299	66.8	-11.4	68.5	43.6	20.0	36.2	-	35	23	37	6	
Devon	676	68.0	-8.6	72.1	45.0	24.9	30.0	-	38	10	17	8	
Dorset	430	68.3	-6.4	73.5	49.4	23.2	27.1	-	41	7	10	5	
E. Sussex	511	65.8	-6.7	74.3	51.5	24.6	23.9	-	44	30	6	4	
Essex	1,010	67.7	-6.8	67.6	40.9	35.3	23.8	-	43	15	41	28	
Gloucestershire	347	68.4	-9.8	71.7	44.8	31.9	23.3	-	39	6	20	16	
Hampshire	975	68.0	-6.6	71.0	45.2	30.4	23.9	-	39	9	22	13	
Hertfordshire	662	70.2	-7.7	70.4	41.3	38.5	19.8	-	48	1	24	33	
Scilly Isles	1	75.0	-	74.5	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	
Isle of Wight	86	67.5	-9.3	70.2	42.0	13.0	45.0	-	41	18	21	2	
Kent	1,035	67.4	-7.2	70.4	44.0	33.4	21.8	-	41	21	25	20	
Norfolk	485	63.8	-13.3	70.1	43.3	39.0	17.7	-	34	42	26	30	
Oxfordshire	356	67.7	-6.7	73.6	45.9	32.9	20.8	-	41	16	9	15	
Somerset	293	67.7	-10.9	69.6	44.0	29.4	26.6	-	37	17	29	14	
Suffolk	398	64.9	-11.7	72.2	45.5	35.0	19.5	-	34	34	16	21	
Surrey	720	70.1	-3.9	76.2	50.5	23.5	25.6	-	52	2	2	3	
W. Sussex	464	68.6	-5.9	76.2	51.9	22.0	25.8	-	46	5	3	1	
Wiltshire	345	67.8	-8.5	71.7	40.4	29.3	30.2	-	35	14	19	8	
TOTAL	16,504	67.5	-7.8	71.6	44.2	30.3	25.1	-	41				
<i>Midlands</i>													
W. Midlands	1,973	62.5	-7.0	65.1	34.7	48.2	15.8	-	33	52	48	48	
Derbyshire	653	64.1	-11.7	68.6	33.9	48.5	17.5	-	33	39	35	54	
Hereford & Worcs.	420	66.4	-9.9	72.8	44.5	29.4	26.1	-	38	29	12	12	
Leicestershire	591	67.2	-8.3	73.3	42.6	36.8	18.7	-	35	22	11	26	
Lincolnshire	371	63.7	-9.8	74.7	43.4	33.0	23.6	-	33	44	4	22	
Northamptonshire	352	66.7	-9.7	69.5	40.6	41.3	18.1	-	33	25	30	38	
Nottinghamshire	705	63.1	-10.5	66.8	35.7	47.4	16.3	-	32	49	45	46	
Shropshire	249	62.0	-12.0	72.3	43.0	33.2	23.7	-	34	56	15	23	
Staffordshire	706	64.3	-10.4	67.4	38.0	46.8	15.2	-	33	38	43	49	
Warwickshire	328	68.0	-7.4	69.9	39.5	40.8	19.8	-	38	11	28	39	
TOTAL	6,348	64.8	-9.7	70.0	39.0	40.5	19.5	-	34				

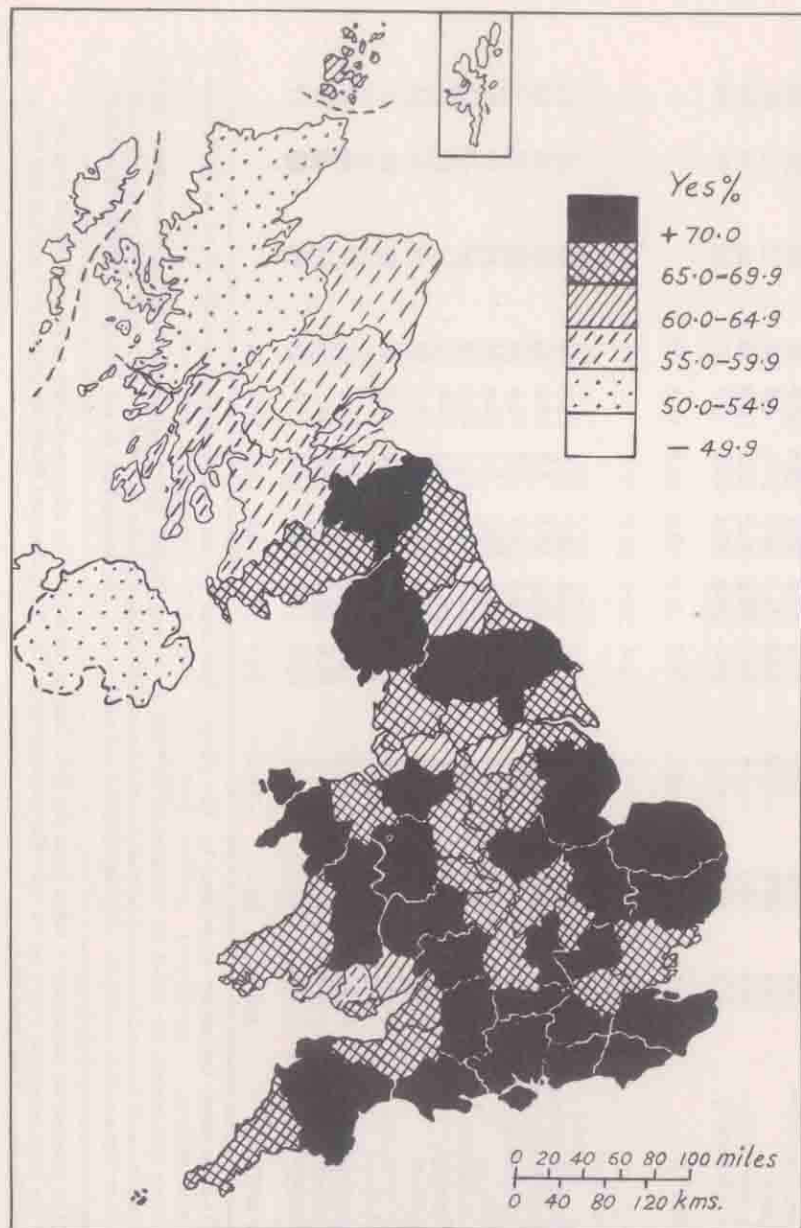
Table 1 (continued)

	Referendum		General Election Oct 74 votes <sup>b</sup>				Rank order of areas <sup>d</sup>		
	Electorate <sup>a</sup> '000s	Turnout %	Change from Oct 74	Yes		PC		Turnout %	Rank order of areas <sup>d</sup> minus Lab. % Oct 74
				%	Con. %	Lab. %	SNP %		
<i>North</i>									
Greater Manchester	1,933	64.1	-8.9	64.5	33.4	46.8	19.4	40	50
Merseyside	1,148	62.7	-7.3	64.8	34.6	49.5	15.4	50	49
S. Yorkshire	955	62.4	-7.4	63.4	22.9	61.8	15.1	30	52
Tyne & Wear	872	62.7	-6.9	62.9	27.4	54.4	16.1	35	53
W. Yorkshire	1,486	63.6	-8.5	65.4	32.2	47.1	20.4	33	45
Cheshire	634	65.5	-10.4	70.1	41.6	39.5	19.0	32	27
Cleveland	393	60.2	-9.4	67.3	33.7	52.6	13.8	32	61
Cumbria	350	64.8	-10.7	71.9	40.9	41.3	17.7	35	18
Durham	445	61.5	-9.9	64.2	23.7	60.0	16.3	31	58
Humber-side	608	62.4	-7.3	67.8	36.0	40.6	23.2	34	54
Lancashire	1,001	66.4	-9.1	68.6	43.0	38.1	18.5	35	28
Northumberland	213	65.0	-11.4	69.2	29.5	48.2	22.3	33	33
N. Yorkshire	469	64.3	-8.5	76.3	49.3	26.4	24.0	37	1
TOTAL	10,504	63.5	-8.9	67.4	34.4	46.6	18.5	34	
<i>Wales</i>									
Clwyd	273	65.8	-10.7	69.1	32.7	39.1	21.9	6.3	34
Dyfed	241	67.5	-13.0	67.6	18.4	43.4	18.8	19.3	30
Gwent	314	68.2	-8.1	62.1	23.7	58.1	13.6	4.6	31
Gwynedd	168	64.3	-14.2	70.6	23.7	34.6	15.1	26.6	35
TOTAL	2,011	66.7	-9.1	66.5	23.9	49.5	15.5	10.8	33
<i>Mid Glamorgan</i>									
Powys	390	66.6	-9.3	56.9	12.8	63.7	9.5	12.9	28
S. Glamorgan	77	67.9	-12.0	74.3	34.0	30.3	28.8	6.9	31
W. Glamorgan	273	66.7	-7.4	69.5	37.4	41.8	16.8	3.9	43
TOTAL	2,011	66.7	-9.1	61.6	19.8	58.4	11.9	9.7	33
<i>Scotland</i>									
Borders	75	63.2	-16.7	72.3	31.4	16.1	33.2	19.3	34
Central Scotland	189	64.1	-16.2	59.7	14.2	39.1	3.2	43.5	34
Dumfries & Galloway	102	61.5	-15.4	68.2	39.3	19.7	9.2	31.8	34
Fife	235	63.3	-11.3	56.3	22.4	38.9	6.7	31.4	34
Grampian	321	57.4	-16.0	58.2	32.4	23.5	12.4	32.0	35
Highland	128	58.7	-13.5	54.6	26.3	20.5	22.6	30.6	35
Lothian	548	63.6	-12.0	59.5	26.9	37.4	8.8	26.9	44
Orkney	13	48.2	-18.6	61.8	14.2	12.4	56.2	17.2	30
Shetland	13	47.1	-19.7	43.7	14.2	12.4	56.2	17.2	30
Strathclyde	1,760	61.7	-12.8	57.7	22.3	43.2	5.7	28.7	37
Tayside	282	63.8	-10.2	58.6	30.1	22.7	5.8	41.2	36
Western Isles	22	50.1	-13.3	29.5	8.3	24.7	5.5	61.5	22
TOTAL	3,689	61.7	-13.1	58.4	24.7	36.3	18.3	30.7	34

<sup>a</sup>The electorate figures are those used by *The Times*. These and the turnout percentages exclude those on the special service register.

<sup>b</sup>Party percentages are based on calculations by Clive Payne and Michael Steed. Careful estimates have been made for constituencies bisected by county boundaries and reasonable adjustments are included for areas such as Blyth and Lincoln where independent candidates seriously affected the percentages. The percentages do not add up to 100% because minor parties are not included.

<sup>c</sup>The non-manual percentage is taken from the 1971 Census and is based on all economically active and retired persons. The rank orders are based on 65 (not 68) counting areas. The Scilly Isles and Northern Ireland are excluded and Orkney and Shetland are counted as one.



There was some indication that the periphery was less pro-Market. The overall vote in Scotland was 10% less favourable than in England. The Western Isles, Shetland and Northern Ireland gave the lowest Yes answers, but Cornwall and the Isle of Wight (68% and 70% Yes) were less affirmative than any counties with so low a Labour vote.<sup>5</sup> Wales however at 65% Yes (with its more Welsh-speaking areas about 70%) gave no sign of a different pattern from England, except in mid-Glamorgan which at 57% was the only county south of the Scottish border to fall below a 61% Yes vote. On the other hand Northern Ireland, while surprising itself by being pro-Europe, only voted 52% Yes on a 47% turnout.

In so far as there was variation in the outcome it seems to have been associated much less with regionalism than with party support. The five most Conservative counties in England recorded a 75% Yes on a 68% turnout, and the five most Labour counties a 64% Yes on a 62% turnout. In an interesting exercise in the *Economist* of June 14, 1975, Michael Steed showed that, with certain uniform assumptions about how the October 1974 supporters of each party divided, the variations in the Yes vote could be almost entirely explained. He assumed that turnout was the same for all parties and that Conservatives everywhere went Yes by 85 to 15, Liberals and Plaid Cymru by 70 to 30 and Labour by 52½ to 47½, while SNP supporters went No by 60 to 40.<sup>6</sup> On that basis, the Yes vote in every one of the fifty-five English and Welsh counties was within 5% of the expected figure and in forty-five of them within 3%.<sup>7</sup> In Scotland the variation was greater: the two most southern regions, together with Central Scotland, were much more pro-Market than expected, and the Highlands and Islands were

<sup>5</sup> This may be explained because in Cornwall and the Isle of Wight so many 'natural' Labour supporters vote Liberal for tactical reasons.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Harris (*Tribune*, June 20, 1975) made an ingenious attempt to prove that a majority of Labour supporters must have voted No. But his arguments assumed that all or that four-fifths of Liberals voted Yes which, like other of his assumptions, went flatly against the evidence of opinion polls (see p. 252).

<sup>7</sup> The ten most deviant counties were: *Below expectation*: Cornwall (-4.5%), Isle of Wight (-3.8%); *Above expectation*: Powys (+4.5%), Lincolnshire (+4.0%), North Yorkshire (+3.5%), Leicestershire (+3.3%), Cambridgeshire (+3.2%), Northumberland (+3.2%), Gwynedd (+3.1%). The assumption of uniform turnout may be a source of error. If Conservatives voted in greater numbers than Labour supporters, it seems that an even lower level of regional deviation could be found on the assumption that slightly fewer than 15% of Conservatives voted No and slightly fewer than 52½% of Labour supporters voted Yes.

In terms of political logistics, June 5 demonstrated once and for all the feasibility of a referendum. Nothing went wrong with the administrative machinery. The *ad hoc* campaign arrangements succeeded in offering people over most of the country a chance to hear the arguments from a public platform, while on radio and television (if not in the press) there was a balanced presentation of the rival cases.<sup>2</sup>

The referendum also showed itself to be a less revolutionary constitutional innovation than many had feared. For one moment on one issue Parliament in a partial way abjured its sovereignty. The referendum was only advisory in that Parliament would have had to give effect to a No vote, but the government had promised to abide by the popular decision. There was however no evidence during or after the referendum that MPs felt their status diminished by referring this one issue to the people.

The referendum had for the first time seen the official acceptance of a public cabinet split within a one-party government. But ministers showed restraint in taking advantage of the permission to differ on this one issue and, as Mr Wilson made plain, cabinet solidarity was re-established on June 6. Cabinet solidarity, of course, has never been and never will be complete. Twenty alert politicians are bound to differ and some of their differences are bound to leak to the press. But it is arguable that the debate over the Crossman diaries that reverberated throughout 1975 put as much strain on the understandings on which cabinet government is based as the agreement to differ publicly on Europe between March 20 and June 5.

Just how the public saw the European issue is not fully clear. It is certain that few electors regarded themselves as recording a judgement on the success or otherwise of renegotiation. If quite different figures had emerged on the budget contribution or on New Zealand butter, with everything else held constant, hardly a

<sup>2</sup> Various basic problems of referenda were left undecided. The broadcasting authorities worked broadly on a principle of equal time for the two sides. But the principle of equality is not self-evident: if there were a referendum on an issue where all parties were agreed but on which the endorsement of the people was thought necessary would political justice require that the 10% who were on one side should have equality on the air or in the press or on the platform with the 90% who were on the other? And should the political parties abjure their role as the prime organisers of mass opinion when a referendum is called on an issue that cuts across normal party lines?

vote would have been cast differently. The polls showed that the public lacked information and interest in such matters. The issue — as questions at meetings and in the 'phone-in' broadcasts all testified — was not how much the terms had been altered, but whether Britain should stay in or get out.

The way in which the issue of EEC membership was resolved may have had a fair amount to do with the advocates on both sides — but that was inevitable in this referendum, and would no doubt be inevitable in any future referendum on as complex an issue in which a good deal of the facts and the figures, the logic and the probabilities had to be taken on trust. Yet there was also a further element underlying the vote. There were echoes in the referendum of the same theme that had been at the root of the February 1974 election: 'Who governs?'. And to that extent the referendum could not be divorced from the right-left dimension of the normal political battle. As one Conservative who had been in the thick of it wrote afterwards:

What was notable was the extent to which the Referendum, certainly in its later stages, was not really about Europe at all. It became a straight right versus left battle with the normal dividing line shifting further over than in general elections — hence the Labour party split and their discomfort. In all the speeches I made to Conservative audiences the trump card was always — 'beware of Benn, Foot and Castle'. It was this, more than anything else which solidified the Conservative vote and increasingly negated the efforts of anti-EEC Conservatives.

And to that extent, though in many ways the referendum might be said to have set a successful precedent, it was a precedent that exhibited distinct limitations on the extent to which a single issue can be isolated for popular decision independently of the party political context.

In the country at large, the referendum did seem popular. In the final week an ORC poll found that 58% of people thought it right to hold a referendum and only 35% thought it wrong. Almost every other poll on the subject found a similar or greater majority for putting the EEC issue to a popular vote. But was the EEC issue in their view unique? A *New Society* survey on popular control found majority support for referenda on hanging, on taking troops out of Northern Ireland, and on legally limiting pay increases, but not on comprehensive

much more anti-Market; however Strathclyde, Lothian, Fife and Tayside (containing four-fifths of Scotland's population) all came within 1% of the Steed expectation.

It was a national argument, a national campaign in the national media, and a national result. Except in Scotland it was hard to detect any local nuances in the figures. Certainly there was little indication of personal influence. The exceptionally high Yes votes in Cumbria (72%) and Borders (72%) were attributed by some to the conspicuous local pro-Europeans William Whitelaw and David Steel, and the resounding No in the Western Isles (70%) to the local member, the SNP leader Donald Stewart. There were suggestions that 1% or 2% might have been knocked off the Yes vote in Somerset (70%) by the example of Mr du Cann and even in Avon (68%) by that of Mr Benn.<sup>8</sup> The idea was also floated that behind the variations in district turnout there could be traced some influence of local pro and anti MPs. In Shropshire, where two out of the three Conservative MPs were anti-Market, the turnout and the Yes vote seemed low. But all such effects are unproven and, if they existed, they were very limited in scale.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the turnout was higher in the Yes and the non-Labour areas seems to have been more a reflection of traditional voting habits than of differences due to the European issue. A comparison with the turnout in October 1974 shows that the falling off was virtually uncorrelated with Yes voting or partisanship. In forty-five of the forty-six English counties turnout fell by between 5% and 11% (Surrey with a 4% fall was the only exception). The decline was just greater than average in the more rural counties and just less than average in the conurbations, but the differences were hardly significant.

The uniformity of behaviour does not appear to be attributable to the cancelling out of diversity in the large counting areas. Turnout figures district by district were released by the

<sup>8</sup>On the Steed assumptions (see p. 271). Somerset recorded a vote 1.8% below expectations and Avon 1.4%.

<sup>9</sup>Only three MPs (none of them from the two main parties) could know exactly how their constituents divided. None were embarrassed by the result. Donald Stewart (SNP) had his No endorsed by 70% of the voters in the Western Isles. Stephen Ross (Lib., Isle of Wight) obtained 70% Yes support. Jo Grimond (Lib.) had a divided constituency (Orkney 62% Yes and Shetland 56% No) but its combined vote was 53% Yes.

Home Office in August and they showed little more variation than the larger counting areas.

District turnout figures were not available for Scotland and Northern Ireland but over 80% of the 377 districts in England and Wales (outside London) were less than 2% off the average for their county; only three districts recorded a turnout over 71% and only six districts fell below 58%.<sup>10</sup> Nine out of ten of all districts in England and Wales outside London had turnouts between 60% and 70%.

London was the only place to show a really significant variation. Ten of the thirty boroughs had a turnout below any district in the rest of England and only 49% of the electors in the five most Labour boroughs recorded their votes; for the five most Conservative boroughs the figure was 69%.<sup>11</sup>

But the fact that the turnout overall was only 8% lower than in October 1974 led to rueful comment by party organisers. Some professionals had been suggesting that without conventional party electioneering, the turnout could not reach 50%.

It was high summer, the contest was unfamiliar in nature and the result was patently a foregone conclusion. The rituals of canvassing, tellers at the booths, and knocking up were almost completely absent and yet people voted almost in general election numbers: it certainly said little for the effectiveness of normal party electioneering.

As the results came in, many of the leading campaigners appeared on television to express their delight, or to accept their defeat with as good a grace as possible. Tony Benn came to his doorstep to say

I have just been in receipt of a very big message from the British people. I read it loud and clear ... By an overwhelming majority the British people have voted to stay in and I am sure that everybody would want to accept that. That has been the principle of all of us who have advocated the Referendum.

<sup>10</sup>Scilly Isles (74%), Kingswood (73%), Mole Valley (72%); Fenland (57%), Richmondshire (57%), Easington (56%), Manchester (56%), Middlesbrough (56%), Scunthorpe (55%).

<sup>11</sup>Similar variations might have been evident if the turnout for areas in the centres of other big cities had been available, London boroughs tend to be appreciably smaller in population and more homogeneous in character than most other urban districts.

Neil Marten observed, 'We, the anti-Marketeers, pressed for this Referendum. We had it and we've got the result. And I think we've got to accept that that is the wish of the British people.' Clive Jenkins struck a dissenting note, saying that his reaction to the outcome was one of total defiance, while Enoch Powell restated his position: the country had voted to confirm that the United Kingdom was no longer a state but had become a province.

Never again, by the necessity of an axiom, will an Englishman live for his country or die for his country: the country for which people live and die was obsolete and we have abolished it. Or not quite yet. No, not yet. The Referendum is not a 'verdict' after which the prisoner is hanged forthwith. It is no more than provisional... This will be so as long as one Parliament can alter or undo whatever that or any other Parliament has done. Hence those golden words in the Government's Referendum pamphlet: 'Our continued membership will depend on the continuing assent of Parliament.' (*Daily Telegraph*, June 9, 1975.)

Ian Mikardo managed a cynical note in his acceptance of the result:

Ted Heath and his friends have been breaking their necks to provide the greatest triumph for a Labour Prime Minister that any Prime Minister has had in years. And one consolation that I have from my defeat in the Referendum is that it has enormously increased the power of the Labour government.

On the other side Roy Jenkins could legitimately boast of 'a massive and heartening majority, and for all who have worked in this European campaign in bad days as well as good it is a day of satisfaction and jubilation.' Shirley Williams pointed to the majority of Yes among the supporters of each party and among trade unionists but she was quick to temper suggestions of a continuing coalition: 'I have never believed a coalition to be possible except in war. But I feel there is a need to be more sensible — not always to go in for the most slam-bang kind of politics.'

The press reaction was predictably enthusiastic:

Full hearted, whole hearted and cheerful hearted: There is no doubt about the 'Yes'... It is a tonic for Britain and a tonic for Europe.' (*Guardian*, June 7)

... The Common Market issue is settled. By their unambiguous vote — the most overwhelming expression of popular will, certainly since 1931 — the voters have solved the politicians' dilemmas for them and banished the issue from the centre of British politics... Secession is now politically inconceivable in this generation... But the Referendum victory does not solve Britain's political and economic problems.' (David Watt, *Financial Times*, June 7)

Britain's first referendum has worked out well. There has neither been a derisory turnout nor only a feeble majority one way or the other... The result of the Referendum is, quite frankly a triumph for Mr. Wilson... His gamble has paid off handsomely, perhaps even better than he had ever dared hope... (*Daily Telegraph*, June 7)

This is the most crushing victory in British political history. The effect of this thunderous YES will echo down the years... The British people are not ungovernable — just ungoverned. This result shows that the voters are quite ready to support their government's lead — provided it is sensible. (*Daily Mail*, June 7)

... The true victor is Mr. Edward Heath... Britain in Europe is Edward Heath's achievement. Twice rejected by the electors and finally disowned by his party, Mr. Heath has known the cruelty of public life. But he has the richest of consolations, that he has left an abiding mark on his country's destiny. (*Sunday Express*, June 8)

Now that the Prime Minister has won his splendid victory in the Referendum, he and his colleagues must direct their minds to the all-important job of tackling our major enemy: inflation... It would be wrong, however, to interpret the referendum result as a direct repudiation of those Labour left-wingers who opposed EEC membership because they want to tackle our economic problems by collectivist State controls. People voted 'No' for a whole variety of reasons, though few can have voted in support of a left-wing socialist thesis. (*Observer*, June 8)



... The referendum result is the most exhilarating event in British politics since the war. By a clear majority, uncomplicated by a bad electoral system, the British people have declared themselves to be Europeans... Nothing, however, is more immediately significant than the discrediting of populism. Not only has Mr. Powell been left high and dry on the wilder shores of absurdity, claiming that Britain is somehow still not 'in' the Common Market. The claim of Mr. Benn and the trade union Left to speak for the Labour Party and working people has been exposed as a fraud. They seized the initiative during the Heath Government and have held it since. Mr. Jack Jones was still insisting on it after the result. Yet now the Labour centre and Right is obliged, almost despite itself, to reconsider the timid position it has hitherto occupied. The referendum makes clear that the Right speaks not merely for itself, or for the 'moderate centre', or for what some Tories also favour – but for a majority of the Labour Party itself. (*Sunday Times*, June 8)

It was left to the *Morning Star* to strike a firm dissenting note:

... None of the serious problems facing Britain has been resolved by the referendum vote. On the contrary, as campaigners for a 'No' vote rightly emphasised, continued Common Market membership only intensifies them. Millions who voted 'Yes' will discover that the pro-Marketters made false claims when they said that membership does not involve an attack on the rights of the British people and of Parliament. (*Morning Star*, June 7)

But the sourness was not confined to the anti-Marketters:

The referendum has been a luxury we can ill afford. For three weeks, Britain has been effectively (or more properly, ineffectively) ungoverned... The one merit of the referendum, and its firm result, is that it leaves the Government better placed and with better authority to cope with the economic mess. (Charles Warden, *Birmingham Post*, June 9)

The sequel to the count was brief. On Monday, June 8 (which happened to be the first day on which the proceedings of



"Right, lads, now you've finished playing with the mouse..."

Sun, June 7, 1975.

Parliament were broadcast) Mr Wilson formally announced the result of the referendum. The next day he reshuffled his Cabinet. He switched Tony Benn from the key Industry Department to Energy (though replacing him with another anti-Marketeer, Eric Varley) and he demoted Reg Prentice from Education to Overseas Development, though leaving him in the cabinet and replacing him with a pro-Marketeer, Fred Mulley. Judith Hart was left out of the government.

The verdict of the Referendum was accepted. The TUC sent representatives to Brussels forthwith and the Labour party took up its vacant places in the European Parliament. The government turned its attention to the economic crisis which had been put on one side for the duration of the referendum. And as the summer advanced into autumn it became very hard to find in the media any allusion to the events that had culminated on June 5.

## 12 Conclusion

This book set out to tell the story of the referendum from three perspectives — as a crucial turning point in Britain's relations with Europe, as an episode in the continuing processes of British political life, and as a constitutional innovation.

It is too early to offer a final verdict under any of these three heads. But it is least difficult to do so where the first is concerned; what happened on June 5, 1975 does appear as an unequivocal decision to confirm Britain's membership of the European Community.

One dedicated Labour pro-Marketeer said that he, unlike his colleagues, had always wanted a referendum: he saw it as a marriage service, a necessary legitimation before moving on towards closer integration, let alone European Union. On the continent, too, as the referendum approached, there were those who echoed Ted Heath's 1970 sentiment that it could not be in the interests of the Community to have within it a country which lacked the full-hearted consent of its people to participate in the joint enterprise of Community-building. That consent had not been convincingly expressed and there was evidence that it was missing. As Mr Short put it to the House of Commons in March 1975, 'The issue continues to divide the country. The decision to go in has not been accepted. That is the essence of the case for having a referendum' (*Hansard*, Mar 11, 1975, col. 292). When the referendum was over, the issue ceased to divide the country. The decision to stay in the EEC was accepted; and to that extent, the device fulfilled precisely the purpose it had been assigned.

The decision was, of course, of most importance to Britain herself but it also mattered to the Community as such and to all its member countries—not least to Ireland and Denmark who had joined simultaneously with the United Kingdom — and to Commonwealth and other countries. In Britain and on the continent politicians and public, businessmen and trade unionists, farmers and consumers, were now freed from nagging

uncertainties about Britain's continuing commitment to the EEC. Investment decisions, rendered difficult anyway by the general doubts about the British economy, could at last be made on the assumption that customs barriers on both sides of the channel would not rise again but would be totally abolished by July 1977. British trade unions could now field a strong team at the Economic and Social Council, and Labour MPs could make their mark in Strasbourg and Luxembourg — with former anti-Marketees free to pursue the logic of their criticisms of the undemocratic nature of the Community by demanding more powers and direct elections for the European Parliament.

Yet the verdict of the referendum must be kept in perspective. It was unequivocal but it was also unenthusiastic. Support for membership was wide but it did not run deep. The week after the vote the European Movement launched a new campaign to push on with the integration of the Nine; but it remained a tiny minority. The referendum was not a vote cast for new departures or bold initiatives. It was a vote for the *status quo*. Those who had denounced referenda as instruments of conservatism may have been right. The public is usually slow to authorise change; the anti-Marketees would have had a far better chance of winning a referendum on whether to go in than one on whether to stay in. Before entry, to vote for going in would have been to vote radically. But after entry, it was at least as radical and unsettling to vote for leaving. To come out a few years after joining would be yet another disruption in the country's life. So the verdict was not even necessarily a vote of confidence that things would be better in than out; it may have been no more than an expression of fear that things would be worse out than in. So far from reflecting high-minded idealism about European fraternity most electors seem to have voted Yes in the spirit caught by Sir Christopher Soames, 'This is no time for Britain to consider leaving a Christmas club, let alone the Common Market.' To that extent, though it may have been a marriage service, it had elements of a shotgun wedding.

Nor should the psychological impact of the referendum result in Britain be over-estimated. It did not result in a girding of the loins for a great new European adventure. For the rest of 1975 there was little evidence that the British government had become more Community-minded than it was before. Mr Wilson and Mr Callaghan might have claimed that the referendum had

given them a mandate to advance towards further integration. But they signally failed to exploit the opportunity. Over a whole range of issues, from energy policy and the direct election of the European Parliament to pollution control and lorry-drivers' hours, they showed themselves as nationalist as ever and perfectly ready to take over France's old role as the recalcitrant of the Community. The logic of the argument that Britain needed a strong Community was not carried over into any obvious efforts to speed up the strengthening of the Community.

As far as the ongoing processes of British party politics were concerned, the effects of the referendum seemed by the end of 1975 to be much smaller than most observers had expected. Certainly in the months that followed the vote there was no movement towards the coalition that some thought they had discerned taking shape under the BIE umbrella. There is no doubt that the inter-party co-operation both at the national and the local level left a legacy of understanding and trust between individuals. For occasional crusades on local or non-partisan issues the associations built up in 1975 would certainly be invoked, and in some future crises the cross-party links forged at the top might prove important. But otherwise the unexpected and enjoyable camaraderie of the campaign seemed unlikely to leave a major mark on the British political scene.

The Conservative party emerged virtually unaffected by the referendum. None of the anti-Market MPs encountered serious trouble with their constituency associations and in November Edward du Cann was re-elected unopposed to the chairmanship of the 1922 Committee. The frontbench pecking order seemed uninfluenced by campaign performance. Mr Heath's personal standing was no doubt enhanced but he remained, by choice, in his isolated position as an ex-Leader. There was no echo of the criticisms of Margaret Thatcher's inactivity in May when she faced her first Party Conference as Leader at Blackpool four months later.

Only the Conservative party machine was left with a somewhat ambiguous lesson. On the one hand it could feel mildly reassured as to its efficiency; BIE had had to turn to it for an enormous amount of help, for it was the only available organisation with an effective nationwide field force, able to arrange meetings and conduct other basic administration. Yet

on the other hand the evenness of the results in spite of the unevenness of the efforts could not but cast doubt on the ultimate effectiveness of much of their traditional electioneering activities.

For the Labour Party the referendum was of course of far greater importance. The party comprises so wide a range of views that the possibility of a split must always be there – but somehow for forty-five years there had been no major break-away whether to the right or to the left. But by 1975 the European issue had divided Labour politicians for thirteen years, and though it never entirely coincided with the basic division between right and left in the party, it had for much of the time helped to crystallise and exacerbate the normal conflicts of ideology and struggles for power. In the 1970s, as the NEC and the Party Conference became more clearly dominated by forces opposed to the parliamentary leadership, schism was seen as a growing hazard, and Europe as the issue that could most easily precipitate a split: too many Labour politicians had taken up irreconcilable positions from which they could not simply withdraw in the interests of party unity. Indeed there had been times when the pro-Marketees felt they were a fiercely beleaguered minority in danger of being driven out of the Movement altogether. The referendum thus removed a serious threat to the party's future. Once the decision on the issue was, by common agreement in the party, transferred to the electorate at large, agreements to differ within the party could ease the tension. And while the result could not obliterate all memories of past conflicts, its finality did a lot to clear the air and remove that issue, at least, from intra-party strife. The referendum thus provided a lifeboat, as Jim Callaghan had suggested it might, into which both sides could climb. Thanks to it both pro- and anti-Marketees in the party were brought safe and relatively united to shore.

Moreover, the fact that the verdict was Yes, and Yes by a majority that must have included more than half of the Labour party's own voters, meant that in intra-party terms the moderates, a minority among the activists, were seen to represent the majority of the party's supporters in the country. The result was thus a major boost to the morale of the centre and the right of the Labour Movement in the face of the left's perennial claim to be the true and ideologically pure voice of the working people of the country: and to some of the most

powerful trade union leaders the vote came as a sharp warning that they might be out of tune with the real concerns of their own rank and file. The centre and right could now claim equal authenticity with the left and work with greater self-confidence to redress the balance in the movement. For the past three years the European issue had been used as a test of faith at selection conferences and a number of potential MPs (and ex-MPs) had been denied selection because of their pro-Market stand. There was thus lost ground to be made up in the composition of the parliamentary party as well as other party bodies, notably of course the National Executive – though as it happened at the autumn 1975 Party Conference Denis Healey (the only member of the constituency section of the NEC who had voted for continued Market membership) lost his seat to Eric Heffer.

For the Liberals the referendum provided a brief period of cross-party prominence. But the alliances of the campaign did nothing to help the party out of a bad period. Their dilemmas of leadership, finance and active membership were, if anything, worse at the end of 1975 than at the beginning.

As far as the other parties were concerned, the referendum results were of course a defeat for the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Ulster Unionists. But the referendum did not significantly change the position of these parties in their own segments of the United Kingdom. Despite their public stand none of them was really deeply committed on the issue and each was well known to have pro-Marketees among its leading figures. In Scotland there were speedy warnings against interpreting the result as a repudiation of the SNP and opinion polls and local elections soon confirmed that the SNP had not declined. In the short run some Conservative and Labour sceptics about devolution may have been lured into a harder line of opposition because of the apparent repudiation of the Nationalist lead. Yet by the time Mrs Ewing took her seat as the first Nationalist representative on the British delegation to the European Parliament, the SNP's stand in the referendum no longer seemed important. The Welsh Nationalists, too, soon reconciled themselves to the situation and joined with the SNP in opening an office in Brussels to monitor Community developments and lobby the Commission.

In Ulster divisions over Europe may have contributed to Mr Craig's split with the main body of the Ulster Unionists in September 1975. But perhaps the chief casualty of the

referendum was Enoch Powell, who had so linked his career both to Ulster and to the referendum. Already in an isolated position among his new Unionist colleagues (because of his lonely belief in the total integration of Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom), he had failed to carry even the Province to a No vote on Europe. In 1974 he had twice committed the ultimate sin in the eyes of his old Conservative friends by telling the British electorate to vote Labour in order to secure a referendum which could save the nation's sovereignty from sacrifice to the Treaty of Rome. His interventions may well have been decisive in bringing Labour to power in February and even in giving it its narrow majority in October. He got his referendum – and it turned to dust in his hands.

The referendum gave attractive demonstrations of spontaneous voluntary endeavour, on both sides, at the centre and in the localities. Individuals discovered unsuspected talents of organisation and oratory and some amateur enterprises showed brilliant improvisation. Yet the lesson drawn by many was the need for professionalism and the dominance of central, national persuasion through the media. In BIE hard-headed top politicians moved in and largely took over from the European Movement; for good or ill, publicity was placed in the hands of highly experienced technicians; in the field increasing reliance had to be put on the nationwide Conservative machine. The anti-Marketeters suffered not only from lack of money but also from lack of the professionalism that money can buy: the real impact of their campaign came essentially from their leading politicians as they deployed the skills acquired over the years in making their case on the platform and on radio and television.

To say this is not to endorse all the professional activities. Indeed if the polls were right in detecting an anti-Market movement in the last days of the campaign, it would suggest that the expensive and expert planning of BIE reaped less reward than the more ramshackle and restricted efforts of NRC. But the point can never be proved. Without the BIE efforts the last minute slippage in Yes support might have been much greater. The effectiveness of the £400,000 spent by BIE on advertising, and still more of the £105,000 spent on the four Guggenheim television programmes, will long be argued over by those who have to plan campaigns – and they will probably learn from some of BIE's endeavours certain things to avoid. But they will no doubt use the relatively high referendum

turnout as an argument for spending money on central publicity activities rather than on traditional local campaigning.

Looking back, there were a number of fears and expectations which, in the event, were not fulfilled. Many had feared public apathy. Yet the evidence of the opinion polls, the audiences for meetings and broadcasts, the voluntary work in many places and the final turnout on June 5, almost everywhere tell a different story. Nor did the behaviour of the electorate reflect any general alienation. There was no anti-Establishment backlash, nor was the nation in the mood expressed by A. J. P. Taylor: 'I do not like the advocates of EEC and can imagine no circumstances in which I should be happy in the company of Heath, Thatcher and Jenkins.' On the contrary, surveys gave clear evidence that the public much preferred the personalities on the pro-Market side. Indeed it proved to be one of the greatest handicaps of the anti-Marketeters that they lacked national leaders with whom the public was happy to identify. What is more, no new faces emerged during the campaign (on either side) to establish themselves in national consciousness.

Many had expected the campaign to get dirtier as it went along. Yet, though Tony Benn might justly complain of the vilification which he suffered, there was no general blackening of characters. The argument over 500,000 jobs was conducted mildly by the standards familiar in some other genuinely democratic countries. The guilt by association propaganda which some pro-Marketeters were at least contemplating was never used. The immoderation and bitterness which characterised the Norwegian referendum in 1972 stayed mercifully absent.

Nor did any clear sub-groups emerge with an economic interest which made them dissent almost unanimously, like the fishermen of Norway.<sup>1</sup> The solidarity of the business community and the farmers' organisations was notable and the uniform results across the nation showed how little sectional appeals would probably have achieved had either side really sought to use them.

The final perspective on the referendum, its importance as a constitutional innovation, leaves the biggest question-marks.

<sup>1</sup>The fishermen of Shetland in fact seem to provide the one clear-cut but minute exception to this generalisation.

schooling, on abortion or on further nationalisation.<sup>3</sup> In fact in the months after the referendum, suggestions were voiced for putting other issues, notably devolution, to the people.

On the other hand at the centre there was no enthusiasm for repeating the experience. Immediately after the referendum, the myths of parliamentary sovereignty resumed their sway. What would have happened if the people had taken a decision contrary to the government's and Parliament's recommendation remained an untested dilemma. All had been well this time, but that was no reason to take the same risks again. At the first sitting of Parliament after the referendum Sir John Eden asked Mr Wilson: 'Will the Prime Minister keep to his determination not to repeat the constitutional experiment of the Referendum?', and the reply was unequivocal: 'I can certainly give the Right Honourable Member the assurance he seeks.'<sup>4</sup> As John Mackintosh put it, it was in order to strike a 'balance between expertise and public acceptability that parliamentary democracy was developed. It is this balance that will be undermined by referenda.'<sup>5</sup> Few politicians want the balance upset permanently to the detriment of their own role. They may publicly pay their respects to the common sense and good judgement of their electors, but they have dismal memories of the demagogic exploitation of plebiscites in other countries, and they know full well the complexities of modern government, the interrelationships between issues, and the need for clearly defined responsibility in the political management of economic and social change. The 1975 referendum may have removed one barrier to future referenda — the argument that 'we've never had one here'; but it engendered no enthusiasm for the innovation, certainly not among Britain's political leaders. Moreover once the referendum was over the country returned not only to yet another incomes policy crisis but also to a constitutional dilemma that might be more disturbing than any question of EEC membership. The unresolved arguments over

<sup>3</sup> *New Society*, May 29, June 5, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, June 9, 1975, col. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Observer*, Sep 15, 1974. For a fuller discussion of the Referendum in constitutional terms see E. Wright, 'The British Referendum: Its Constitutional Significance', *The Parliamentarian* July 1975 pp. 250–60; R. J. Williams and J. Greenaway, 'The Referendum in British Politics — a Dissenting View', *Parliamentary Affairs* Summer 1975 pp. 250–60; J. Mackintosh, 'The Case Against the Referendum', *Political Quarterly*, Jan–Mar 1975; S. Bristow, 'Partisanship, Participation and Legitimacy in Britain's EEC Referendum', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, June 1976, pp. 297–310.

devolution played little part in the story of the referendum, even in Scotland. But they could pose a greater threat to the traditional rules of government in the United Kingdom than anything devised under the Treaty of Rome.

## Appendix: The Official Referendum Leaflets



Three pamphlets were prepared for general distribution at government expense. For their preparation see pp. 94, 110 and 163. Their contents leaked to the press on May 1 (see p. 164). They were distributed by the Post Office in the last ten days of May. The main body of their texts are printed in full here.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The final Harris poll, based on interviews between May 31 and June 2, asked voters which of the leaflets they had seen, which they had read from cover to cover, and which they had found helpful.

	Seen	Read from cover to cover	Helped understanding
'Yes' leaflet	82%	30%	10%
'No' leaflet	73	28	8
Government leaflet	71	24	6
None of them	16	68	—

## Why You Should Vote Yes

*Why we should stay in the European Community* On Wednesday, 9th April 1975, the House of Commons approved, by 396 votes to 170, the Government's recommendation that we should stay in the European Community. For years we argued: should Britain join or not? At last we did. The question now is whether, after years of striving to get in, under both Conservative and Labour Governments, we should go through the agony of pulling out. This tearing apart would be a major upheaval. The main brunt of it would fall on Britain, but it would also damage the whole of the West, at a dangerous time in a dangerous world. So the arguments against coming out are even stronger than were those for going in; that's why many people say 'Yes' now who were doubtful in 1971. And hardly anyone has moved the other way. Our case is not just a negative one—stay where we are for fear of something worse. It is based on the real advantages for Britain and Britain's friends of our staying in.

*It makes good sense for our jobs and prosperity. It makes good sense for world peace. It makes good sense for the Commonwealth. It makes good sense for our children's future.* Being in does not in itself solve our problems. No one pretends it could. It doesn't guarantee us a prosperous future. Only our own efforts will do that. *But it offers the best framework for success, the best protection for our standard of living, the best foundation for greater prosperity.* All the original six members have found that. They have done well — much better than we have — over the past 15 years.

'I believe that both the security and the prosperity of the country depend upon a Yes vote. Not to have gone into Europe would have been a misfortune. But to come out would be on an altogether greater scale of self-inflicted injury. It would be a catastrophe. It would leave us weak and unregarded, both economically and politically.' Roy Jenkins, 26th March 1975

*Our friends want us to stay in* If we left we would not go back to the world as it was when we joined, still less to the old world of Britain's imperial heyday. The world has been changing fast. And the changes have made things more difficult and more dangerous for this country. It is a time when we need friends. What do our friends think? *The old Commonwealth wants us to stay in.* Australia does, Canada does, New Zealand does. *The new Commonwealth wants us to stay in.* Not a single one of their 34 governments wants us to leave. *The United States wants us to stay in.* They want a close Atlantic relationship (upon which our whole security depends) with a Europe of which we are part; but not with us alone. *The other members of the European Community want us to stay in.* That is

why they have been flexible in the recent re-negotiations and so made possible the improved terms which have converted many former doubters. Outside, we should be alone in a harsh, cold world, with none of our friends offering to revive old partnerships.

'I do not want to give any impression that the present Australian Government sees any advantage for Australia, for Europe or for the world in Britain leaving the Community — we regard European economic and political integration as one of the great historic forward movements of this century.' Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, 18th December 1974

'Our government recognizes the emerging fact (of Europe) and we applaud. We applauded last week in Brussels just as we applauded two years ago on the occasion of the entry into the Community of Britain, Ireland and Denmark.' Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, 13th November 1974

*Question* 'Would you agree that if Britain does decide to withdraw from the Common Market it would be very much in the long-term interests of New Zealand?' *Answer* 'No.' *Question* 'Why do you say that?' *Answer* 'I think that New Zealand's interest must in the long-term be in the strongest possible Europe and the strongest possible U.K.' Wallace Rowling, Prime Minister of New Zealand, answering questions on 22nd February 1975

*Why can't we go it alone?* To some this sounds attractive. Mind our own business. Make our own decisions. Pull up the drawbridge. In the modern world it just is not practicable. It wasn't so even 40 or 60 years ago. The world's troubles, the world's wars inevitably dragged us in. Much better to work together to prevent them happening. Today we are even more dependent on what happens outside. Our trade, our jobs, our food, our defence cannot be wholly within our own control. That is why so much of the argument about *sovereignty* is a false one. It's not a matter of dry legal theory. The real test is how we can protect our own interests and exercise British influence in the world. The best way is to work with our friends and neighbours. If we came out, the Community would go on taking decisions which affect us vitally — but we should have no say in them. *We would be clinging to the shadow of British sovereignty while its substance flies out of the window.* The European Community does not pretend that each member nation is not different. It strikes a balance between the wish to express our own national personalities and the need for common action. *All decisions of any importance must be agreed by every member.*

*Our traditions are safe* We can work together and still stay British. The Community does not mean dull uniformity. It hasn't made the French eat German food or the Dutch drink Italian beer. Nor will it damage our British traditions and way of life. The position of the Queen is not affected. She will remain Sovereign of the United Kingdom and Head of the Commonwealth. Four of the other Community countries have monarchies of their own.

*English Common Law is not affected.* For a few commercial and industrial purposes there is need for Community Law. But our criminal

law, trial by jury, presumption of innocence remain unaltered. So do our civil rights. Scotland, after 250 years of much closer union with England, still keeps its own legal system.

'I am proud to have been a member of the Cabinet that took Britain into Europe. At that time there were those who did not want us to join. I believe that many of them today have changed and now consider that once we are in, it would be catastrophic to withdraw.' William Whitelaw, 26th March 1975

*Staying in protects our jobs* Jobs depend upon our industries investing more and being able to sell in the world. If we came out, our industry would be based on the smallest home market of any major exporting country in the world, instead of on the Community market of 250 million people. It is very doubtful if we could then negotiate a free trade agreement with the Community. Even if we could it would have damaging limitations and we would have to accept many Community rules without having the say we now have in their making. So we could lose free access not only to the Community market itself but to the 60 or more other countries with which the Community has trade agreements. *The immediate effect on trade, on industrial confidence, on investment prospects, and hence on jobs, could well be disastrous.*

'If we were to come out of Europe this summer I can see no other result except even fiercer inflation and even higher unemployment.' Jo Grimond, 26th March 1975.

Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the less prosperous English regions will benefit if we stay in. We shall pursue our own national development area policies and continue to receive aid from the Community's Regional Fund.

*Secure food at fair prices* Before we joined the Community everyone feared that membership would mean paying more for our food than if we were outside. This fear has proved wrong. *If anything, the Community has saved us money on food in the past two years.* Why? Not just by accident, but because stronger world demand has meant that the days when there were big surpluses of cheap food to be bought around the world have gone, and almost certainly gone for good. Sometimes Community prices may be a little above world prices, sometimes a little below. *But Britain, as a country which cannot feed itself, will be safer in the Community which is almost self-sufficient in food.* Otherwise we may find ourselves standing at the end of a world food queue. It also makes sense to grow more of our food. That we can do in the Community, and it's one reason why most British farmers want to stay in.

'If we left the European Community tomorrow, we could not expect any reduction in the overall cost of our food as a result.' Shirley Williams, 27th March 1975

*Britain's choice: the alternatives* The Community is not perfect. Far from it. It makes mistakes and needs improvement. But that's no reason for contracting out. *What are the alternatives? Those who want us to come out are deeply divided.* Some want an isolationist Britain with a 'siege



economy' – controls and rationing. Some want a Communist Britain – part of the Soviet bloc. Some want us even closer to the United States than to Europe – but America itself doesn't want that. Some want us to fall back on the Commonwealth – but the Commonwealth itself doesn't want that. Some want us to be half linked to Europe, as part of a free trade area – but the European Community itself doesn't want that. So when people say we should leave, ask them what *positive* way ahead they propose for Britain. You will get some very confusing answers. There are also differences amongst those of us who say 'stay in'. Some of us are Labour, some are Conservative, some are Liberal, some are non-party. But we all agree on the fundamental question before us. The safety and prosperity of this country demand that we stay in the European Community. So do our duty to the world and our hope for the new greatness of Britain. We believe in Britain – in Britain in Europe. For your own and your children's future it makes good sense to stay in.

'Are we going to stay on the centre of the stage where we belong, or are we going to shuffle off into the dusty wings of history?' Edward Heath, 5th April 1975

## Britain's New Deal in Europe

### *Dear Voter*

This pamphlet is being sent by the Government to every household in Britain. We hope that it will help you to decide how to cast your vote in the coming Referendum on the European Community (Common Market).

Please read it. Please discuss it with your family and your friends.

We have tried here to answer some of the important questions you may be asking, with natural anxiety, about the historic choice that now faces all of us.

We explain why the Government, after long, hard negotiations, are recommending to the British people that we should remain a member of the European Community.

We do not pretend, and have never pretended, that we got everything we wanted in those negotiations. But we did get big and significant improvements on the previous terms.

We confidently believe that these better terms can give Britain a New Deal in Europe. A Deal that will help us, help the Commonwealth, and help our partners in Europe.

That is why we are asking you to vote in favour of remaining in the Community.

I ask you again to read and discuss this pamphlet.

Above all, I urge all of you to use your vote.

For it is *your* vote that will now decide. The Government will accept *your* verdict.

Harold Wilson

### *Your Right to Choose*

The coming Referendum fulfils a pledge made to the British electorate in the general election of February 1974.

The Labour Party manifesto in the election made it clear that Labour rejected the terms under which Britain's entry into the Common Market had been negotiated, and promised that, if returned to power, they would set out to get better terms.

The British people were promised the right to decide through the ballot box whether or not we should stay in the Common Market on the new terms.

And that the Government would abide by the result.

That is why the Referendum is to be held. Everyone who has a vote for a Parliamentary election – that is, everyone on the Parliamentary election register which came into force in February 1975 – will be entitled to vote. . . .

The Government have recommended that Britain should stay in on the new terms which have been agreed with the other members of the Common Market.

But you have the right to choose.

#### *Our Partners in Europe*

With Britain, there are nine members of the Common Market. The others are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands.

Their combined population is over 250 million.

The Market is one of the biggest concentrations of industrial and trading power in the world. It has vast resources of skill, experience and inventiveness.

The aims of the Common Market are: To bring together the peoples of Europe. To raise living standards and improve working conditions. To promote growth and boost world trade. To help the poorer regions of Europe and the rest of the world. To help maintain peace and freedom.

#### *The New Deal*

The better terms which Britain will enjoy if we stay in the Common Market were secured only after long and tough negotiations.

These started in April 1974 and did not end until March of this year.

On March 10 and 11 the Heads of Government met in Dublin and clinched the bargain. On March 18 the Prime Minister was able to make this announcement:

*'I believe that our renegotiation objectives have been substantially though not completely achieved.'*

What were the main objectives to which Mr. Wilson referred? The most important were FOOD and MONEY and JOBS.

*Food* Britain had to ensure that shoppers could get secure supplies of food at fair prices.

As a result of these negotiations the Common Market's agricultural policy (known as CAP) now works more flexibly to the benefit of both housewives and farmers in Britain. The special arrangements made for sugar and beef are a good example.

At the same time many food prices in the rest of the world have shot up, and our food prices are now no higher because Britain is in the Market than if we were outside.

The Government also won a better deal on food imports from countries outside the Common Market, particularly for Commonwealth sugar and for New Zealand dairy products. These will continue to be on sale in our shops.

This is not the end of improvements in the Market's food policy. There will be further reviews. Britain, as a member, will be able to seek further changes to our advantage. And we shall be more sure of our supplies when food is scarce in the world.

*Money and Jobs* Under the previous terms, Britain's contribution to the Common Market budget imposed too heavy a burden on us. The new

terms ensure that Britain will pay a fairer share. We now stand, under the Dublin agreement, to get back from Market funds up to £125 million a year.

There was a threat to employment in Britain from the movement in the Common Market towards an Economic and Monetary Union. This could have forced us to accept fixed exchange rates for the pound, restricting industrial growth and so putting jobs at risk. This threat has been removed.

Britain will not have to put VAT on necessities like food.

We have also maintained our freedom to pursue our own policies on taxation and on industry, and to develop Scotland and Wales and the Regions where unemployment is high.

#### *Helping the Commonwealth*

It has been said that the Commonwealth countries would like to see us come out.

This is not so. The reverse is true.

Commonwealth Governments want Britain to stay in the Community.

The new Market terms include a better deal for our Commonwealth partners as well as for Britain. Twenty-two members of the Commonwealth are among the 46 countries who signed a new trade and aid agreement with the Market earlier this year.

Britain is insisting that Market aid for the poorer areas of the world must go to those in most need.

Here is what Commonwealth leaders have said about Britain's role in the Market:

Mr Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, speaking in Brussels on December 18, 1974: I do not want to give any impression that the present Australian Government sees any advantages for Australia, for Europe or for the world in Britain leaving the Community.

Mr. Wallace Rowling, Prime Minister of New Zealand, said in Paris on February 22, 1975, that it would not be in the long-term interest of the New Zealand economy if Britain were to withdraw from the Common Market.

Mr. Donald Owen Mills, Jamaican Ambassador to the U.N., New York, February 28, 1975, talking about the Lomé Convention for trade and aid between the Common Market, including Britain, and 46 developing countries: The Convention is a major move towards the establishment of a new international economic order and demonstrates the considerable scope which exists for the creation of a more just and equitable world.

#### *Will Parliament Lose its Power?*

Another anxiety expressed about Britain's membership of the Common Market is that Parliament could lose its supremacy, and we would have to obey laws passed by unelected 'faceless bureaucrats' sitting in their headquarters in Brussels.

What are the facts?

*Fact No. 1* is that in the modern world even the Super Powers like

America and Russia do not have complete freedom of action. Medium-sized nations like Britain are more and more subject to economic and political forces which we cannot control on our own.

A striking recent example of the impact of such forces is the way the Arab oil-producing nations brought about an energy and financial crisis not only in Britain but throughout a great part of the world.

Since we cannot go it alone in the modern world, Britain has for years been a member of international groupings like the United Nations, NATO and the International Monetary Fund.

Membership of such groupings imposes both rights and duties, but has not deprived us of our national identity, or changed our way of life.

Membership of the Common Market also imposes new rights and duties on Britain, but does not deprive us of our national identity. To say that membership could force Britain to eat Euro-bread or drink Euro-beer is nonsense.

*Fact No. 2.* No important new policy can be decided in Brussels or anywhere else without the consent of a British Minister answerable to a British Government and British Parliament.

The top decision-making body in the Market is the Council of Ministers, which is composed of senior Ministers representing each of the nine member Governments.

It is the Council of Ministers, and not the Market's officials, who take the important decisions. These decisions can be taken only if all the members of the Council agree. The Minister representing Britain can veto any proposal for a new law or a new tax if he considers it to be against British interests. Ministers from the other Governments have the same right to veto.

All the nine member countries also agree that any changes or additions to the Market Treaties must be acceptable to their own Governments and Parliaments.

Remember: All the other countries in the Market enjoy, like us, democratically elected Governments answerable to their own Parliaments and their own voters. They do not want to weaken their Parliaments any more than we would.

*Fact No. 3.* The British Parliament in Westminster retains the final right to repeal the Act which took us into the Market on January 1, 1973. Thus our continued membership will depend on the continuing assent of Parliament.

The White Paper on the new Market terms recently presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister declares that through membership of the Market we are better able to advance and protect our national interests. This is the essence of sovereignty.

*Fact No. 4.* On April 9, 1975, the House of Commons voted by 396 to 170 in favour of staying in on the new terms.

#### *If We Say 'No'*

What would be the effect on Britain if we gave up membership of the Common Market? In the Government's view, the effect could only be damaging.

Inevitably, there would be a period of uncertainty.

Businessmen who had made plans for investment and development on the basis of membership would have to start afresh.

Foreign firms might hesitate to continue investment in Britain. Foreign loans to help finance our trade deficit might be harder to get.

We would have to try to negotiate some special free trade arrangement, a new Treaty. We would be bound by that Treaty. Its conditions might be harsh. But unless and until it was in force, Britain's exports to the Common Market would be seriously handicapped;

We would no longer be inside the Common Market tariff wall — but outside.

For a time at least, there would be a risk of making unemployment and inflation worse.

Other countries have made these special arrangements with the Community. They might find Community decisions irksome, even an interference with their affairs.

But they have no part in making those decisions.

The Common Market will not go away if we say 'No'.

The countries of the Common Market would still be our nearest neighbours and our largest customers. Their policies would still be important to us. But Britain would no longer have a close and direct influence on those policies.

More than that, decisions taken in Brussels — in which Britain would have no voice — would affect British trade and therefore British jobs.

Britain would no longer have any say in the future economic and political development of the Common Market. Nor on its relations with the rest of the world — particularly on the help to be given to the poorer nations of the world.

We would just be outsiders looking in.

#### *If We Say 'Yes'*

Let us be clear about one thing: In or out of the Common Market, it will be tough going for Britain over the next few years.

In or out, we would still have been hit by the oil crisis, by rocketing world prices for food and raw materials.

But we will be in a much stronger position to face the future if we stay inside the Market than if we try to go it alone.

*Inside*, on the improved terms, we remain part of the world's most powerful trade bloc. We can help to fix the terms of world trade.

*Inside*, we can count on more secure supplies of food if world harvests turn out to be bad. And we can help to hold down Market food prices — as we have done since we joined in 1973.

*Inside* the Market we can work to get more European Community money spent in Britain:

More from the Social Fund for retraining workers in new jobs. Since we joined we have benefited from this Fund to the tune of over £20 million a year.

More from the Community's new Regional Fund, which already stands to bring us £60 million in the next three years.

More from the Farm Fund when world prices are high. For instance, up to now we have obtained £40 million from this Fund to bring down the price of sugar in the shops.

More from Coal & Steel funds and the European Investment Bank. Since we joined, arrangements have already been made for loans and grants of over £250 million.

The long period of negotiation between Britain and the other Market countries has proved that the Market is not a rigid organisation.

It is flexible. It is ready and able to adapt to changing world conditions.

It can, and does, respond to the differing needs of member states.

The Market is aware of the need to help the poorer nations of the world outside Europe.

Whether we are in the Market or not, Common Market policies are going to affect the lives of every family in the country.

Inside the Market, we can play a major part in deciding these policies.

Outside, we are on our own.

#### *And Now—the Time for YOU to Decide*

When the Government came to power in February 1974 they promised that you, the British voter, should have the right to decide — FOR continued membership of the European Community (Common Market) or AGAINST.

It is possibly the most important choice that the British people have ever been asked to make.

Your vote will not only affect your life and your neighbours' lives. It will affect your children's lives. It will chart — for better or for worse — Britain's future.

We are only at the start of our relationship with the Community. If we stay inside we can play a full part in helping it to develop the way we want it to develop. Already Britain's influence has produced changes for the better. That process can go on. The Common Market can be made better still.

The Government have made THEIR choice. They believe that the new terms of membership are good enough for us to carry on INSIDE the Community. Their advice is to vote for staying in.

Now the time has come for *you* to decide. The Government will accept your decision — whichever way it goes.

The choice is up to YOU. It is YOUR decision.

## Why You Should Vote No

*Re-negotiation* The present Government, though it tried, has on its own admission failed to achieve the 'fundamental re-negotiation' it promised at the last two General Elections. All it has gained are a few concessions for Britain, some of them only temporary. The real choice before the British peoples has been scarcely altered by re-negotiation.

*What did the pro-Marketeers say?* Before we joined the Common Market the Government forecast that we should enjoy — A rapid rise in our living standards; A trade surplus with the Common Market; Better productivity; Higher investment; More employment; Faster industrial growth.

In every case the opposite is now happening, according to the Government's figures. Can we rely upon the pro-Marketeers' prophecies this time? The anti-Marketeers' forecasts have turned out to be all too correct. When you are considering the pro-Marketeers' arguments, you should remember this. Remember also that before the referendum in Norway, the pro-Marketeers predicted, if Norway came out, just the same imaginary evils as our own pro-Marketeers are predicting now. The Norwegian people voted NO. And none of these evil results occurred.

*Our legal right to come out* It was agreed during the debates which took us into the Common Market that the British Parliament had the absolute right to repeal the European Communities Act and take us out. There is nothing in the Treaty of Rome which says a country cannot come out.

*The Right to Rule Ourselves* The fundamental question is whether or not we remain free to rule ourselves in our own way. For the British people, membership of the Common Market has already been a bad bargain. What is worse, it sets out by stages to merge Britain with France, Germany, Italy and other countries into a single nation. This will take away from us the right to rule ourselves which we have enjoyed for centuries. The Common Market increasingly does this by making our laws and by deciding our policies on food, prices, trade and employment — all matters which affect the lives of us all. Already, under the Treaty of Rome, policies are being decided, rules made, laws enacted and taxes raised, not by our own Parliament elected by the British people, but by the Common Market — often by the unelected Commissioners in Brussels. As this system tightens — and it will — our right, by our votes, to change policies and laws in Britain will steadily dwindle. Unlike British laws, those of the Common Market — which will take precedence over our own laws — can only be changed if all the other members of the Common Market agree. This is wholly contrary to the wishes of ordinary people who

everywhere want more, not less, control over their own lives. Those who want Britain in the Common Market are defeatists; they see no independent future for our country. Your vote will affect the future of your country for generations to come. We say: Let's rule ourselves, while trading and remaining friendly with other nations. We say: No rule from Brussels. We say: Vote No.

*Your food, your jobs, our trade: We cannot afford to remain in the Common Market because:* It must mean still higher food prices. Before we joined, we could buy our food at the lowest cost from the most efficient producers in the world. Since we joined, we are no longer allowed to buy all our food where it suits us best. Inside the Common Market, taxes are imposed on food imported from outside countries. For instance, we now have to pay a tax of over £300 a ton on butter imported from outside the Market and over £350 a ton on cheese. Our food is still cheaper than in the rest of the Common Market. But if we stay in, we will be forced by Common Market rules to bring our food prices up to Common Market levels. All of us, young and old alike, will have to pay. For example, the price of butter has to be almost doubled by 1978 if we stay in.

If the vote is Yes, your food must cost you more. Not merely do the Common Market authorities tax food imports or shut them out, but they also buy up home-produced food (through Intervention Boards) purely to keep the prices up. Then they store it in warehouses, thus creating mountains of beef, butter, grain, etc. Some of this food is deliberately made unfit for human consumption or even destroyed, and some is sold to countries like Russia, at prices well below what the housewife in the Common Market has to pay. The Common Market has already stored up a beef mountain of over 300,000 tons, and all beef imports from outside have been banned. If we come out of the Market, we could buy beef, veal, mutton, lamb, butter, cheese and other foods more cheaply than if we stay in. World food prices outside the Market are now falling. There is no doubt that the rise in food prices in Britain in the last three years has been partly due to joining the Common Market. For example, between 1971 and 1974, food prices rose in Britain and Ireland (which joined) by over 40%. In Norway and Sweden (which stayed out) they rose only by about 20%.

*Your jobs at risk* If we stay in the Common Market, a British Government can no longer prevent the drift of industry southwards and increasingly to the Continent. This is already happening.

If it went on, it would be particularly damaging to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and much of the North and West of England, which have suffered so much from unemployment already.

If we stay in the Common Market, our Government must increasingly abandon to them control over this drift of industry and employment. Far-reaching powers of interference in the control of British industry, particularly iron and steel, are possessed by the Market authorities.

Interference with the oil around our shores has already been threatened by the Brussels Commission.

*Huge trade deficit with Common Market* The Common Market pattern of trade was never designed to suit Britain. According to our Department of Trade, our trade deficit with the Common Market was running, in the early months of 1975, at nearly £2,600 million a year — a staggering figure, compared with a very small deficit in 1970 when we were free to trade in accordance with our own policies. Yet before entry, the pro-Marketeers said that the 'effect upon our balance of trade would be positive and substantial'. If you don't want this dangerous trade deficit to continue, vote No.

*Taxes to keep prices up* The Common Market's dear food policy is designed to prop up inefficient farmers on the Continent by keeping food prices high. If we stay in the Market, the British housewife will not only be paying more for her food but the British taxpayer will soon be paying many hundreds of millions of pounds a year to the Brussels budget, largely to subsidise Continental farmers. We are already paying into the Budget much more than we get out. This is entirely unreasonable and we cannot afford it.

*Agriculture* It would be far better for us if we had our own national agricultural policy suited to our own country, as we had before we joined. We could then guarantee prices for our farmers, and, at the same time, allow consumers to buy much more cheaply. In the Common Market, the British taxpayer is paying as much to keep food prices up as we used to pay under our own policy to keep them down. The Market also have their eyes on British fishing grounds because they have over-fished their own waters.

*Commonwealth links* Our Commonwealth links are bound to be weakened much further if we stay in the Common Market. We are being forced to tax imported Commonwealth goods. And as we lose our national independence, we shall cease, in practice, to be a member of the Commonwealth.

*Britain a mere province of the Common Market?* The real aim of the Market is, of course, to become one single country in which Britain would be reduced to a mere province. The plan is to have a Common Market Parliament by 1978 or shortly thereafter. Laws would be passed by that Parliament which would be binding on our country. No Parliament elected by the British people could change those laws. This may be acceptable to some Continental countries. In recent times, they have been ruled by dictators, or defeated or occupied. They are more used to abandoning their political institutions than we are. Unless you want to be ruled more and more by a Continental Parliament in which Britain would be in a small minority, you should vote NO.

*What is the alternative?* A far better course is open to us. If we withdraw from the Market, we could and should remain members of the wider Free Trade Area which now exists between the Common Market and

the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) — Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal and Iceland. These countries are now to enjoy free entry for their industrial exports into the Common Market without having to carry the burden of the Market's dear food policy or suffer rule from Brussels. Britain already enjoys industrial free trade with these countries. If we withdrew from the Common Market, we should remain members of the wider group and enjoy, as the EFTA countries do, free or low-tariff entry into the Common Market countries without the burden of dear food or the loss of the British people's democratic rights.

The Common Market countries would be most unlikely to oppose this arrangement, since this would neither be sensible nor in their own interests. They may well demand a free trade area with us. But even if they did not do so, their tariffs on British exports would be very low. It is scare-mongering to pretend that withdrawal from the Common Market would mean heavy unemployment or loss of trade. In a very few years we shall enjoy in North Sea oil a precious asset possessed by none of the Common Market countries. Our freedom to use this oil, and our vast coal reserves, unhampered by any threatened Brussels restrictions, will strengthen our national economy powerfully.

*For peace, stability and independence* Some say that the Common Market is a strong united group of countries, working closely together, and that membership would give us protection against an unfriendly world. There is no truth in this assertion. The defence of Britain and Western Europe depends not on the Common Market at all, but on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which includes other countries like the United States, Canada and Norway, which are not members of the Common Market. Any attempt to substitute the Common Market for NATO as a defence shield would be highly dangerous for Britain. Most anti-Marketeters rightly believe that we should remain members of NATO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, EFTA, and the Council of Europe, as well as of the UN and its agencies. In all these, we can work actively together as good internationalists, while preserving our own democratic rights.

*The choice is yours* It will be your decision that counts. Remember: you may never have the chance to decide this great issue again. If you want a rich and secure future for the British peoples, a free and democratic society, living in friendship with all nations — but governing ourselves: VOTE NO.

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