

The Brexit That Never Was: Spearhead and 1975

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Having come into power in 1974, the Labour government of Harold Wilson had promised the British people a referendum on the recent joining of the Common Market and a chance to leave if they so desired. This referendum was called for 1975. The Government and the opposition were divided, with parliamentarians from the parties campaigning on both sides of the aisle. Also campaigning against the Common Market were the forces of the National Front, a British extreme right street movement and political party, and its assorted publications, including the paper of its former neo-Nazi leading light, John Tyndall.

Using copies of Spearhead from the University of Northampton's Searchlight Archive, this poster tells the story of this Brexit that never was from the perspective of the Spearhead campaign, and examines how they engaged with the campaign. Though history never repeats itself exactly, there are trends, messages and themes which repeat themselves from 1975 through to the present, and challenge our perceptions on just how far we might have moved on.



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DO WE NEED EUROPE?



I project holds for Britain — dangers of which even some of its most staunch protagonists of the others. are fully aware - the British Government, and the official voice of the Opposition, seem A united W completely committed. Everywhere the Common-Marketeers are winning the day. separated by How is it that a case against which there is such an overwhelming weight of argument, and



the barrel



porary national decay the distinctions re-establish left and right within the established sovereignty of Great Britain. If we happen political spectrum have become scarcely for the moment to be placed in the same nore than academic. The Foots, the Benns camp as the left by reason of wanting withand the Joneses could not do any more drawal, so be it. That does not make our case arm to Britain than has been done by the wrong. We refuse to descend to this infantile level of argument now being pursued by the Heaths and the Wilsons. And there is always the fact that they more moronic apostles of Toryisn can quickly be got rid of once we so decide. whereas extrication from the Common Mar-

ket, though always possible, will become **Referendum folly** increasingly difficult as the noose of politic

This is the first part of a two-part article. NEIL FARNELL (T.G.W.U.) The writer is Secretary and Publicity Officer of the National Front Industrial Section.

WORKING PEOPLE in this country have always had to put up with the worst social conditions and the threat of unemployment, but since the war they have had to bear the additional burden of black immigration. Whereas on some other issues union

stand up for the working man, on the issue of immigration union leaders seem completely out of touch with the wishes of ordinary people. Consequently, union policies and esolutions on immigration and integration do not reflect their members' feelings and are dangerously against the interests of

majority of working people were opposed to to be expected: What constitutes the worst immigration from the start, and there is



they will have to make their voices heard at because far from wanting more power for union meetings

bosses like the immigrants, the vast majority of trade Ex-communist union Jenkins, Jones, Scanlon, Daly, etc., openly unionists must be thinking, British trade unionists. The overwhelming give priority to immigrants and this is only the white workers?



The cover of Spearhead, February/March 1968. The campaign for the long awaited referendum on membership of the Common Market in 1975 had been running for years by the time of the vote, and *Spearhead* and its associated movements were constant commentators and campaigners.

Established by John Tyndall in 1964, *Spearhead* was closely associated to the Greater British Movement, National Front and British National Party, all of which Tyndall had a part in founding and leading at various points. It finally ceased publication after Tyndall's death in 2005, after 41 years of continuous publication.

small group which is based on vague speculations over which just about everyone has doubts, is coming to prevail? It seems almost as if the nation is saying: "we don't really know what we're jumping into, but we've just got to jump!"

I have spoken to many hundreds of people on this issue. Some have been woolly left-wing internationalists whom one might expect to support E. C. M. as a step towards their one-world dream. But others have been sincere patriots, with the soundest views over most other issues of the day. A distressing number of the latter have fallen for the Common Market line. Unwittingly and innocently, they are aiding Britain's enemies. Why?

Tyndall saw the White Commonwealth as a positive message, one that preexisted the European debate in his thinking, that could be used to sell the idea. In turn he hoped the campaign would give a wider audience to his specific ideology, which saw a rebirth of Britain based around this new rebirth of Empire and a return to Africa to explicitly take wealth and resources to fuel the white commonwealth. A typical part of extreme right rhetoric, Tyndall did face some opposition—Oswald Mosley strongly campaigned for Europe, viewing it as a new bastion of white Christian culture that could be harnessed to provide a competing power bloc to the Soviets and to America.

Top: *Action*, No. 190, 1st March 1975 p. 1. Bottom: Spearhead, June 1967, p. 4.

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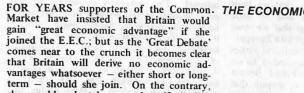
increasing friction between British workers are the designs of the Communist Party BLACKS HIRED – WHITES FIRED and immigrants at shop-floor level. Whether itself and the race relations bodies. Both are this appears in the Press or not, it is evident "It is the working class of white clamouring for the Government to strengthen that white discontent is spreading and that the odious Race Relations Act, and both are workers who object to these coloured people black immigration is creating a growing race problem in British industry. bringing pressure on the T.U.C. to set up its not the bosses", a shop steward told The Guardian (Feb. 21st, 1970). The threat of own race relations department and include immigration and cheap immigrant labour is race relations propaganda in union courses. obvious to the vast majority of British That communists and race relations RACE-MIXING ON THE RAMPAGE organisations have the same aims is no workers. In such industries as textiles,

As well as Tyndall seeing this as an opportunity to widen his support within the extreme right, it was a chance to appeal beyond the nationalist movement and seek to draw more into his groups. Tony Benn and Michael Foot were even seen as possible allies, along with the extreme left, in combatting the existential threat of European dominance.

The problem for Tyndall came in the inability of his movements to avoid racist rhetoric that saw them isolated from the main campaigns. They blamed Europe for black migration and race mixing, even while trying to urge moderates to come and support them.

Top: *Spearhead*, May 1975, p. 2. Bottom: Spearhead, February 1975, p. 8.





remains wrong. In 21/2 years Britain has fared disastrously as a result of the Market. These facts are not altered by the result of a referendum, whichever way it goes.

misrepresentations, exaggerations and sheer untruths so significant is that most of the people who are perpetrating them are well aware that this is what they are. How is this extraordinary situation to be So far as the referendum is con explained? Part of the answer no doubt lies in Right from the start the so-called cerned, the odds were loaded in favour of the fact that the belief that elitism - and 'Referendum Campaign' ensured that i the pro-Marketeers right from the start. the pro-Marketeers right from the start. They had the entire national press and the always have the last say dies hard. But other very powerful factors are clearly also at work. Would dilute and enfeeble its ranks by its decision to have nothing to do with the ES PAR ONE N.F. MAN'S BE BRITISH PROTEST ARITIME POWERFOR ISLAND SURVIVAL THINK IN DCEANS. National Front member CONTINENTAL RULE Andrew Fountaine made ACT BRITISH his contribution to the MEANS THE WORLD IS OUR MARKET. STITISTICS. anti-Common Market cam-NATIONAL IMPOTENCE YOUVE NOTHING TO paign by erecting this large VOTE BRITISH RUIN, STARVATION & VAR 3-piece poster at the gates of his home, Narford Hall in Norfolk. It almost LOSE KEEP BRITAIN FREE ALLT OF FFA OF THE CONTINENTAL TRAP. JUNE BUT YOUR SHAME stopped the traffic. Of course, there were the more mainstream and familiar arguments to be about at the time.

harmful results of our being in the Marke have been brought home to the Britisl people. So for the pro-Marketeers to win the referendum so resoundingly the anti Marketeers were required to really 'fluff it in a big way. They did.

Certainly, the 'pro' side did not with because of any great enthusiasm for Europe They won because the man in the street wa persuaded that we had to remain in, as there was "nothing much else that we could do. For this state of affairs the anti-Marketeer were entirely to blame.

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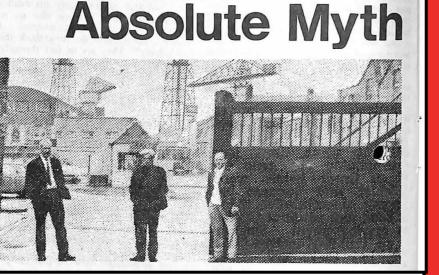
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present in *Spearhead* that we might expect, it did not exist in a vacuum. So there was debate over the economic arguments, and of course a large theme around the concept of sovereignty—it was clear to Spearhead that this was not just a vote on the economics, but on future political union, interesting when people now suggest what the 1975 vote was understood

she would only take upon herself steadil increasing burdens which would ultimately render her bankrupt.

It is of great significance that Prime Minister Edward Heath failed to include in his recent Government White Paper any estimate of the ultimate total cost of Market membership. The previous Labour Government suggested in its White Paper a maximum figure of £1,100 million per year. Mr. Heath's silence on the subject can only mean that the real cost would

be even higher. Tory Minister for Industry, Mr. John Davis, stated at a Press Conference in Stockholm last June that: "It is extraordinarily difficult to predict the growth of Britain's economy after entry into the E.E.C." (The Government employs 300 highly qualified economists in Whitehall to investigate just this sort of question!) Yet it is on the basis of promised growth that the Government insists that the cost - whatever it might be of membership will be met!



Britain an

The National Front, championed by Spearhead, engaged in street active campaigning in the years running up to 1975. They even dedicated their by-election campaigns in the years running up to 1975 to the anti-Common Market cause, such as in Marylebone in 1970.

Tyndall accepted however that the vote was already likely lost by the early 1970s, claiming that their exclusion meant there was no positive message from the anti-Common Market campaign in the referendum, which was all a sham anyway.

Top: *Spearhead*, September 1969, p. 12. Middle Left: Spearhead, August 1970, p. 15. Middle Right: Malcolm Skeggs, National Front Candidate for Marylebone. Bottom: *Spearhead*, August 1971, p. 4.

European nations into a single economic, military and political Third Force in the world, in order that European civilisation may effectively resist Russian military imperialism on the one hand and American economic imperialism on the other.

Conservative and Labour leaders have been at pains to try and pursuade the British people

that the European Economic Community (the Common Market) represents a natural coming

together of European peoples. They say the purpose of the Common Market is to weld the

Such pronouncements are deliberate lies The Common Market is nothing but a gigantic swindle, an incredible ramp, promoted by International Financiers, whereby the remaining tokens of European political independence may be neutralised and whereby Europe's industrial potential may be completely absorbed by the America based International Money Power. Those who have observed the development

of the Common Market closely have known this for some time. It has not gone unnoticed,

at the rate of £2 million a day

from \$32,000 million in 1950 to about \$146,000 million in 1969. In Europe United States direct investment has grown by an average annual rate of about 15 per cent . "The ultimate health of the international company and the world economy depends on the degree to which we see the world as an international economy instead of a group GEORGE BALL of national economies." "PRIVATE CITIZEN" Further evidence that the Common Market is simply a thing of the Money Power

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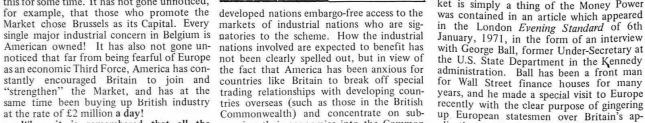
that has forged a world economy, incipient

still, but growing rapidly and probably ir-

"United States investment abroad has

national

revocably



Commonwealth) and concentrate on sub- up European states

These conspiracy theories ran rampant in the pieces from *Spearhead*. Similar to the need to create a 'stab in the back' myth for why Germany had failed in the interwar years, for British nationalists like Tyndall there must be a reason why Britain was suffering so much economically in the 60s, and that was International Money Power- a code for Jewish influence.

Spearhead, using a flawed Harris Poll, claimed to be representing the true will of the people against the political parties—striking a blow against the establishment. Meanwhile the Common Market was linked to Money Power and influence from states who already fell to its grasp, such as America.

Top: *Spearhead*, October 1969, p. 11. Bottom: Spearhead, February 1971, p. 12. In the end though, *Spearhead* was a voice in the wilderness. When it lost, it blamed its exclusion from the leave campaign, it blamed the dark shadowy hand of international finance, but also the fact the pro-Europe campaign was hysteria driven rather than fact driven, and played upon emotion. A claim familiar to us post-Brexit. They also clearly stated that it wasn't the end, and they would continue to fight to free Britain from Europe

Top: Spearhead, August 1971, p. 6. Middle: Spearhead, July 1975, p. 4. Bottom: Spearhead, July 1975, p. 4.

The Searchlight Archive opened to the public in the summer of 2013 at the University of Northampton. Collected over 50 years by Searchlight magazine, the archive is a unique collection of material on the extreme right and anti-fascist movements in the post-war period. With over 400 boxes on catalogue as of 2017, and a total collection of 1000-1200 boxes as well as oral histories and artefacts, it is a fantastic opportunity for researchers.

With a dedicated archivist, the Archive is located within the University of Northampton Archives and is open by appointment Mondays to Thursdays, 9.30 to 16.00.

For all enquiries, please contact our dedicated archivist, Daniel. Jones@Northampton.ac.uk, or check our online catalogue at http://library.northampton.ac.uk/archive