

CHAPTER 9

THE EUROPEAN POLICIES OF LEFT-WING PRESSURE GROUPS AND THINK TANKS

INTRODUCTION

While the right can unite around the relatively straightforward objective of safeguarding capitalism, the function of the left is to formulate alternative visions and strategies for achieving a better society; the battle over ideas is therefore critical. This chapter examines the European policies of left-wing pressure groups and think tanks, and assesses the impact of these organisations on the European policies of the wider British Left.

9.1 PRESSURE GROUPS

The Campaign Against Euro-Federalism

The Campaign Against Euro-Federalism (CAEF), set up in 1991, was opposed to continued membership, specific policies such as the CAP, the CFP, the CFSP, EMU and JHA, plus the European Constitution, on the basis that they undermined democracy and self-determination. It produced a number of pamphlets on these issues (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Campaign Against Euro-Federalism Publications on European Integration (1994-2004)

<p><i>European Union: Democracy and National Independence</i> (1994) <i>Britain and the European Union: Democracy or Superstate?</i> (1996) <i>Opposition to the European Union</i> (1998) <i>EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: Agreements or NATO-EU Diktats?</i> (1999) <i>EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: Military-Industrial Complex Costing the Earth</i> (1999) <i>EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: National Independence or Global War Policy?</i> (1999) <i>EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: Today, Target Yugoslavia – Tomorrow Russia?</i> (1999) <i>Euro Fallout</i> (1999) <i>European Union: Wants the Jury Out</i> (2000) <i>New Europe, New Century, Old Imperialism</i> (2000) <i>Politics of the Euro: Economics of the Madhouse</i> (2000) <i>African Resource Wars of the 21st Century</i> (2001) <i>Britain's Trading Figures with the European Union and the Net Costs of EU Membership</i> (2002) <i>Nazi Plans for European Union – Part 1: The Economic Face of the New European</i> (2002) <i>Spinning Europe: Pro-European Union Propaganda Campaigns in Britain</i> (2004)</p>
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Communists for Europe

Established during the 1975 Referendum by the European Movement, Communists for Europe advocated the transfer of power from member states to a directly elected European Parliament, plus the formation of working class organisations at the European level such as Europe-wide political parties and a European TUC. In 1977 it published *Common Sense on the Common Market*, which argued that the left's opposition to continued membership, and Direct Elections in particular, was damaging to both the EU and to the interests of the working class.

Labour Against the Euro

Labour Against the Euro (LATE), with a membership of 37 mainly Socialist Campaign Group MPs, plus figures such as Dennis Healey, was formed in 2002. LATE viewed euro entry as an assault on democracy and a monetarist threat to Labour's economic programme. It was critical of the potential impact of the SGP on public services, predicting cuts of £41 million, and warned that adopting the euro would result in 'Labour's ERM'. Such arguments were set out in two 2003 pamphlets: *Public Services Not the Euro* and *The Manufacturing Case against the Euro*.

Labour Against a Superstate

Labour Against a Superstate (LAS) was launched in 2004 following the announcement that New Labour would hold a referendum on the European Constitution. Led by Ian Davidson, the chair of LATE, LAS claimed the support of over 80 MPs who were opposed to the constitutional treaty on the basis that it would further centralise power at the EU level.

The Labour Common Market Committee/Labour Committee for Europe

The Labour Common Market Committee (LCMC) was inaugurated in 1961 with Roy Jenkins as chair and Colin Beever, from the engineers' union, as secretary. The LCMC had five objectives: to co-operate with European socialists and trade unionists, to act as an information centre, to rally Co-operative, Labour Party and trade union members, to ensure that the labour movement was well-informed about Europe, and to counter anti-EU propaganda. In 1962 the LCMC claimed the support of 21 MPs, 5 peers and 21 other party members, including members of NALGO and the NUM (Broad, 2001, p.44).

In 1963 the organisation was renamed the Labour Committee for Europe (LCE). Its journal, *Europe Left*, declared that the LCE was dedicated to a ‘Europe united, democratic, socialist, open, and aware of its responsibilities to the Third World’ (LCE, 1963, p.1). The LCE revised its objects in 1970 and agreed to ‘encourage the establishment of a democratic, socialist Europe by all political, economic and social means’ based ‘on the development of the existing European Communities’ (LCE, 1971c, p.7). During this period, the LCE published a number of pamphlets claiming that the EU was committed to the reform of the CAP, full employment, an environmental policy, a common foreign policy, a socialist industrial policy, greater control over MNCs, and the improvement of working conditions (see Figure 30).

Figure 30: Labour Committee for Europe Publications on European Integration (1969-1973)

<p><i>Britain and Europe</i> (1969) <i>Europe – The choice before us</i> (1970) <i>Britain and the European Community</i> (1970) <i>A Labour Britain in Europe</i> (1971) <i>Monetary and Economic Union in Europe</i> (1971) <i>The Socialist Case for Joining</i> (1971) <i>Common Sense about the Common Market</i> (1973)</p>

During the 1975 Referendum the LCE adopted the campaigning title of the Labour Campaign for Britain in Europe. With Shirley Williams as president, the membership of 88 MPs, 21 peers and 25 trade union leaders pledged their support for a Yes vote (Broad, 2001, pp.112-113).

In 1981 LCE supporters were asked whether membership should be limited to Labour members or whether it should be open to non-party members. Of the votes cast, 77 voted for the former and 102 the latter (Ibid. p.144). Following the formation of the SDP, the LCE divided over whether it should maintain its affiliation to the European Movement. Several members formed the Red Rose group, which disaffiliated, whilst the majority, renamed as the Labour Movement in Europe, maintained their affiliation. The two groups were reunited after the 1983 General Election.

The Labour Committee for the Five Safeguards on the Common Market/Labour Common Market Safeguards Committee/Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign

The purpose of the Labour Committee for the Five Safeguards on the Common Market was to defend official party policy, as agreed by the 1967 Labour Conference, against a party leadership intent on entry. It published several pamphlets opposed to entry and, once Britain had joined, advocated withdrawal on the basis that the EU was undemocratic, undermining parliamentary sovereignty, whilst damaging the British economy (see Figure 31).

Figure 31: Labour Safeguards Committee Publications on European Integration (1971-1987)

<p><i>The Labour Case against Entry into the Common Market</i> (1971) <i>What Labour should do about the Common Market</i> (1972) <i>Common Sense about the Common Market</i> (1973) <i>The Common Market: Promises and Reality</i> (1976) <i>The Common Market: The Costs of Membership</i> (1977) <i>The Common Market: Labour and the General Election</i> (1978) <i>The Common Market: Enough is Enough</i> (1980) <i>The Common Market: The Way Out</i> (1981) <i>The Common Market: A Guide to Withdrawal</i> (1982) <i>Jobs or the Treaty of Rome: The Choice for Labour</i> (1985) <i>Building a New Relationship with Europe</i> (1987)</p>
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In 1975 the organisation was renamed the Labour Common Market Safeguards Committee (LCMSC) and launched its regular *Bulletin*. The LCMSC had six objectives: reform of the CAP, opposition to Direct Elections, opposition to EMU, better control over the EU Budget, opposition to the free movement of capital and VAT harmonisation, and improved overseas aid (Benn, 1990, p.465).

In June 1980 the LCMSC argued that the next Labour government should be elected on a clear mandate to withdraw. In response, leading pro-EU figures issued a statement saying that they could not remain in the party if it decided to support withdrawal.

LCMSC membership peaked following the 1983 General Election to include 98 MPs, 8 MEPs and 3 peers.¹ Indeed, Bryan Gould recalled that ‘there was a period when it was the most significant pressure group in the Labour Party. Half the Cabinet were members, and even people I suspected were secretly pro-EU found it necessary to join.’²

¹ Correspondence from Edward Barber (Membership Secretary), 6th September 2002.

² Interview with Bryan Gould, 18th July 2003.

Re-launched in 1995 as the Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign (LESC), the organisation was opposed to the European Constitution, on the basis that it undermined democracy, and to euro entry, warning the left about the implications of the MCC/SGP for public services. However, by 2002 membership had declined significantly, to only 18 MPs and 10 peers.³

The Labour Movement for Europe

The Labour Movement in Europe (LME) was founded in 1981 to campaign in favour of continued membership, in opposition to official Labour policy at the time. It published two pamphlets in 1982 – *The European Community: The Economic Consequences of Withdrawal* and *The European Community: Labour Prejudices and Reality*. The organisation was revived in 1990, publishing the *Forward from Maastricht* (1992), which urged Labour not to support a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. In 2002 it published *Left Behind: Why the Labour Movement Backs the Euro*, sponsored by Amicus, whilst in 2003 it published *The Labour Movement Case for Europe*, with a Foreword by Kevin Curran, GMB General Secretary, which set out the case in favour of the European Constitution.

People's Europe Campaign

Claiming the support of 70 MEPs and MPs, the People's Europe Campaign was created in 1996 by Alan Simpson, a Socialist Campaign Group MP. It published *The Single Currency – Axing Labour's Programme* (1996), warning that the MCC would result in public spending cuts of £18 billion and that it would necessitate Bank of England independence. It also published *EMU and the NHS* (1998) which argued that the public expenditure constraints imposed by EMU posed a threat to the National Health Service.

Trade Unions Against the Common Market

Trade Unions Against the Common Market (TUACM) was established in the early 1970s by several trade unions. In 1971 it published *The Common Market*, written by Nicholas Kaldor, plus *The Common Market: The White Paper Answered*. In 1972 it published *The Common Market Versus The Common People*, which opposed Benn's campaign for a referendum in favour of a straightforward anti-EU campaign, whilst in 1975 it published *No to the Common Market: The Case for Coming Out, The Cost of Staying In*.

³ Correspondence from Edward Barber, 6th September 2002.

Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution

Trade Unionist Against the EU Constitution (TUAEUC) was launched in 2005 by several unions. It published *Trade Unionists Say No to the European Constitution* which argued that the constitutional treaty would produce a centralised, militaristic EU that would enforce privatisation and increase the exploitation of both the environment and workers across the EU. Rejecting the notion that opponents were ‘anti-European’, it warned that ‘any government that hands over power to a degree envisaged in this Constitution is in effect no longer a government’ (TUAEUC, 2005, p.2).

Trade Unionists Against the Single Currency

Trade Unionists Against the Single Currency (TASC), set up in 1997 by members of several trade union, including UNISON, published *Trade Unions, Public Services and the Euro* in 1999. It warned that euro entry would diminish democratic control over economic policy, risked an increase in unemployment, threatened public sector investment and would lead to the increased use of PFIs.

The Trades Union Committee for Europe/Trade Union Alliance for Europe

The European Movement organised the Trade Union Committee for Europe (TUCFE) in the late 1960s. In the early 1970s it published *European and the Trade Unions* which argued that entry would strengthen the trade union movement. Before the 1975 Referendum, Ernest Wistrich revealed that the ‘European Movement persuaded the CBI, other employers’ organisations and major companies to undertake studies of the effects of membership on their business and, if they found that it was a positive thing, to communicate that to their workers. We tried to highlight people’s individual stake in maintaining membership.’⁴ The general secretaries of the municipal workers’ union and the TUC organised the Trades Union Alliance for Europe for the purposes of the 1975 Referendum.

Trade Unionists for Europe

Trade Unionists for Europe (TUFÉ) was formed in 2000 to promote euro entry, and the EU more generally, within the trade union movement. It included representatives from Amicus, the GMB and several other unions. In 2003 it published *A Trade Union Reform Agenda for Europe* which advocated euro entry and the defence of the ‘European Social Model’.

⁴ Interview with Ernest Wistrich, 9th September 2002.

CROSS-PARTY PRESSURE GROUPS

In addition to the organisations discussed above, there were a number of cross-party pressure groups with significant input by the left.

Britain in Europe

Britain in Europe (BiE), founded in the late 1950s, set up a trade union affairs group composed of members of the engineers' union, the municipal workers' union and the TGWU, plus Shirley Williams of the Fabian Society. BiE, and its allied and/or related organisations, the European Movement, the Federal Union and ELEC, enjoyed the patronage of several Labour and trade union figures over the years. However, the left tended to organise its own campaigns, such as the LCE and the TUCFE.

The Common Market Campaign

Established in 1961, with Roy Jenkins as vice-chair, the launch of the Common Market Campaign (CMC) was attended by 15 Labour MPs, Ernest Jones and William Lawther from the National Union of Miners and Shirley Williams from the Fabian Society. Furthermore, William Rogers was the editor of its *Common Market Broadsheet*.

Forward Britain Movement

The Forward Britain Movement (FBM), which favoured a British-Commonwealth-EFTA association as an alternative to the EU, was set up in 1961. In 1962 it published *After the Common Market Fiasco: What Next for Britain, Labour and the Common Market* and *The Truth about the Common Market*. These set out the case for the aforementioned association.

New Europe

New Europe was inaugurated in 2000 under the slogan of 'No to the euro, Yes to membership'. It supported continued membership, enlargement, a common environmental policy and the Single Market, whilst insisting that Britain remain a self-governing nation. Members included Ian Davidson, Dennis Healey and David Owen, plus Caroline Lucas.

Vote 2004

Vote 2004, which was supported by 60 Labour MPs, was created in 2003 in order to campaign for a referendum on the European Constitution.

9.2 THINK TANKS

The Centre for Democratic Policy-Making

The Centre for Democratic Policy-Making (CDP), launched in 1999 by members of the Socialist Movement and several writers associated with the *Red Pepper* magazine, adopted a federalist, eco-socialist position on European integration. Like the Green Party, the CDP supported the creation of a Europe of Regions on the basis that regionalisation would assist the democratic renewal of Britain and serve as an effective means of challenging globalisation.

Centre for a Social Europe

The Centre for a Social Europe (CSE) was formed in 2004 by several academics, Labour MPs such as Ian Davidson and Kelvin Hopkins, and Green Party figures such as Caroline Lucas. The CSE advocated the reform of the EU, favouring European co-operation by democratic nation-states rather than the undemocratic and free market-oriented EU. It specifically opposed euro entry and the European Constitution, publishing *Why the Left Should Reject the Constitution: A Progressive Case for Reforming the EU*.

Compass – Direction for the Democratic Left

Compass was founded in 2003 to provide a ‘coherent and radical programme for a progressive left government.’ The Compass statement, co-authored by several academics, the Co-operative Party General Secretary and representatives from other think tanks – including Catalyst, Demos, the Fabian Society, the Institute for Public Policy Research and the New Economics Foundation – included a section on European integration. ‘Progressive multilateralism must be pursued in a European framework’, it stated, because only the EU ‘can act as a counterbalance to the United States.’ A progressive EU ‘could bring social democratic principles to the reform of international trade and financial rules and environment policy. But to do this it needs a British Labour government at the heart of the European project, shaping it for progressive ends’ (Compass, 2003).

Demos

Established in 1993, Demos was committed to radical thinking on the long-term problems facing Britain and other advanced industrial nations. Left figures on the Demos board of trustees included a former editor of the *New Statesman*. Demos possessed no agreed position on the EU; however, it produced a number of publications, listed in Figure 32, that accepted further European integration as a given.

Figure 32: Demos Publication on European Integration (1995-1998)

<i>Big is Beautiful: Bringing East and Central Europe into the European Union</i> (1995)
<i>Politics without Frontiers: The Role of Political Parties in Europe's Future</i> (1997)
<i>Euro-visions: New Dimensions of European Integration</i> (1998)
<i>Rediscovering Europe</i> (1998)
<i>Tomorrow's Politics</i> (1998)

The Fabian Society

The Fabian Society, formed in 1884 and affiliated to the Labour Party, was unique among think tanks in that it was a democratic, membership-based organisation. It was instrumental to the development of several pressure groups and think tanks, including BiE, the CMC, Compass and the Labour Research Department. At the 1961 Labour Conference, the Fabian Society cast its votes in favour of unconditional entry. The Fabian Society published a number of publications, including discussion papers, edited collections and pamphlets, on European integration between 1958 and 2003, as shown in Figure 33.

Figure 33: Fabian Society Publication on European Integration (1958-2003)

Title (Year)	Position*
<i>Britain and the Free Trade Area</i> (1958)	P
<i>The Common Market and its Forerunners</i> (1958)	P
<i>Britain and Europe</i> (1961)	P
<i>The Common Market Debate</i> (1962)	N
<i>Commonwealth and Common Market: The Economic Implications</i> (1962)	P
<i>The Farmer and Europe</i> (1962)	P
<i>Not with Europe: The Political Case for Staying Out</i> (1962)	A
<i>Europe: Problems of Renegotiation</i> (1967)	N
<i>Europe: The Price is Too High</i> (1968)	A
<i>Europe: Out of the Impasse</i> (1969)	P
<i>Europe: What Next?</i> (1969)	A
<i>Farm Gate to Brussels</i> (1970)	P
<i>EEC Problems for British Agriculture</i> (1971)	A
<i>Europe: Towards a Monetary Union</i> (1972)	P
<i>Britain, European and the Law</i> (1973)	N
<i>Europe: The Way Back</i> (1973)	A
<i>The Referendum Reconsidered</i> (1975)	N

Title (Year)	Position*
<i>A Wider Europe</i> (1976)	P
<i>Electing Europe's First Parliament</i> (1977)	P
<i>Influencing Europe: A Guide for Pressure Groups</i> (1977)	N
<i>A Regional Policy for Europe</i> (1978)	P
<i>Bringing Common Sense to the Common Market: A Left Agenda for Europe</i> (1988)	P
<i>Controlling Inflation: Two Views</i> (1990)	P
<i>The Democratic Deficit and the European Parliament</i> (1991)	P
<i>East Meets West: Policies for a Common European Home</i> (1991)	P
<i>Beyond Economics: European Government after Maastricht</i> (1991)	P
<i>A European Environmental Charter</i> (1991)	P
<i>A New Model Army: Towards a European Defence Community</i> (1991)	P
<i>Regional Power and Local Government in Europe</i> (1991)	P
<i>Euro-Monetarism: Why Britain was Ensnared and How it Should Escape</i> (1992)	A
<i>Towards a Wider, Deeper Federal Europe</i> (1992)	P
<i>Jobs and Growth: The International Perspective</i> (1994)	P
<i>For a Single Currency</i> (1995)	P
<i>Against a Single Currency</i> (1995)	A
<i>Europe after Major: Can Labour Make a Difference?</i> (1996)	P
<i>Left Out of Europe?</i> (1996)	P
<i>A Partnership Democracy for Europe</i> (1996)	P
<i>Wherever Next? The Future of Europe</i> (1996)	P
<i>Labour and Europe: Proposals for Government</i> (1997)	P
<i>The New European Left</i> (1999)	P
<i>In or Out? Labour and the Euro</i> (2002)	N
<i>The making of Europe's Constitution</i> (2003)	P

Notes: A = Anti-EU or sceptical. P = Pro-EU or accepting the EU as a given. N = Neutral.

Editorially, whilst the Fabian Society possessed no agreed policy on the EU – the views expressed in all published works being those of the authors rather than the collective position of the Fabian Society – there was a fundamental imbalance in its published output. Of this work, 17 per cent was opposed to, or sceptical of, the EU, 14 per cent was neutral, whilst 69 per cent were pro-EU or accepted European integration as inevitable.

The Foreign Policy Centre

The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) was launched in 1998 with Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook as its patrons. The FPC described itself as a European think tank with a global outlook. It was in favour of European integration, publishing a number of pamphlets in support of euro entry and the European Constitution (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: Foreign Policy Centre Publications on European Integration (2000-2005)

How to Win the Euro Referendum: Lessons from 1975 (2000)
Winning the Euro Referendum (2001)
How to Join the Euro (2003)
Who are the Euro Waverers? (2003)
The Referendum Battle (2004)
The European Foreign Minister (2005)

The Institute for Public Policy Research

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), inaugurated in 1988, played a key role in getting ‘the left to accept the utility of the market.’⁵ Left-wing members of the board of trustees included John Eatwell, Neil Kinnock, Shirley Williams and, more recently, the UNISON General Secretary. The IPPR was also instrumental in shifting Labour’s European policy, publishing a paper by Patricia Hewitt in the early 1990s that was ‘enthusiastic about EMU and ERM entry’.⁶ However, the IPPR later adopted a more cautious stance. Its policy document, *A Progressive Future*, highlighted the importance of the exchange rate, the need to reform EU fiscal and monetary policies in line with British practice, and the objective of ‘modernising’ the European social model before entry could be contemplated. As a result of board divisions, the IPPR decided not to ‘oppose or to support euro entry, and not to take sides in a future referendum’.⁷ Its publications on the EU are listed in Figure 35.

Figure 35: Institute for Public Policy Research Publications on European Integration (1989-2000)

Britain and the European Monetary Question (1989)
The German Surplus: An Economic Problem in the New Europe (1989)
European Monetary Union: The Issues (1990)
Britain, Germany and the New European Security Debate (1991)
The CAP and Green Agriculture (1991)
A More Perfect Union? Britain and the New Europe (1992)
Economic Integration After Maastricht (1993)
EMU: The People’s Choice (1995)
Restating the Case for EMU: Reflections from the Left (1995)
Transformation and Integration: Shaping the Future of Central and Eastern Europe (1995)
About Turn: Forward March with Europe (1996)
Economics and EU Immigration Policy (1996)
European Union Citizenship: Option for Reform (1996)
Social Democracy at the Heart of Europe (1996)
Britain in Europe (1997)
European Defence: Meeting the Strategic Challenge (2000)

⁵ Interview with Peter Robinson, 24th July 2002.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Labour Research Department

The Fabian Society, together with several trade unions, organised the Labour Research Department (LRD) in 1918 as a research organisation for the trade union movement. The LRD position on European integration, as manifest in its publications (briefing notes, the *Labour Research* journal and pamphlets), tended to follow that of the TUC and the larger trade unions, its principal funders. In the 1970s, the LRD published pamphlets such as *The Common Market: What Would Entry Mean*, *The Common Market: What Would it Mean for Britain*, and *The Common Market: In or Out*, which were critical of entry/membership, highlighting the loss of economic and political sovereignty. However, in the 1990s the LRD adopted a neutral stance, producing factual information on EU policies such as European Works Councils and the Working Time Directive.

The New Politics Network (Citizens for Europe)

Citizens for Europe was established in 2000 by the New Political Network – a think tank composed of former members of the original CPGB. It was committed to full British participation in the EU and organised a number of conferences on issues such as European citizenship and the future of the EU. Speakers included representatives of the Federal Trust and the Work Foundation, Foreign Office officials, and New Labour Cabinet Ministers.

CONCLUSION

The European policies of left-wing pressure groups and think tanks exhibit six main features. The first feature is that the post-war period witnessed two waves of pressure group formation: the first wave in the 1960s and 1970s when entry/continued membership was a particularly salient issue, the second in the 1990s when divisions over further European integration re-emerged.

The second feature is that those pressure groups that organised exclusively within the Labour Party and trade union movement were fairly evenly balanced in terms of the support they received from Labour members, the PLP and trade unionists. However, for most of the Cold War period, pro-EU pressure groups enjoyed far greater financial and institutional support from the leaderships of the Labour Party, the TUC and several trade unions, from the state, and from external actors such as the EU and the US. Indeed, these pressure groups played a critical role in the national pro-EU propaganda campaigns detailed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, in the post-Cold War period, although anti- and pro-EU pressure groups are more evenly balanced in financial terms, the latter continue to enjoy access to the considerable power resources of the state and external actors such as the EU.

The third feature is that the arguments promoted by anti- and pro-EU pressure groups had a major impact on the discourse and the European policies of the Labour Party, the TUC and the 'big five' trade unions (see Appendix 2). The arguments put forward by these pressure groups – that the EU was undemocratic, damaging to the economy and a threat to parliamentary sovereignty, or, conversely, that the EU was beneficial for the economy and socialism generally – are reflected in conference/congress debates and the motions/resolutions adopted by these actors.

The fourth feature is that both pressure groups and think tanks, whether anti- or pro-EU, tended to use the traditional left method of pamphleteering to promote their ideas. The fifth feature is that most of the think tanks on the left were established in the post-Cold War period, and the sixth feature is that most of them were favourable towards European integration.