CHAPTER IV
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MEMBERSHIP OF THE EEC AND INDIA

The decision of the Labour Government to apply for membership of the EEC in mid-1967 had an important bearing on Britain's relations with all parts of the Commonwealth (including India). Its move for Britain's entry into Europe was quite contrary to its earlier stand. Their Government under Clement Attlee had declined to join the European Coal and Steel Community. Stafford Cripps, the then Chancellor of Exchequer, observed: "It is not compatible either with the Commonwealth ties, our obligation as a member of the wider Atlantic Community or as a world power." Later, the Labour Party while in opposition remained consistently opposed to Britain's entry into the newly created "supranational European institutions."

In 1961 the Conservative Government announced its decision to apply for membership of the EEC. The Labour Party did not support the idea. Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party said:

Great Britain should enter the European Economic Community only if this house gives its approval and if the conditions negotiated are generally acceptable to a Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference and accorded with our obligations

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and pledges to other members of the European Free Trade Association. 2

At the Annual Party Conference held in 1961, the members of the Labour Party were greatly divided on the issue of the membership of the EEC. The opinions of the Labour members ranged from strong support to bitter opposition. 3 Ultimately the Conference adopted a resolution which called upon the Party to oppose entry into the EEC unless "guarantees protecting the position of British Agriculture and Horticulture, the EFTA countries and Commonwealth are obtained and Britain retains the power of using public economic ownership and planning as measures to ensure social progress within the United Kingdom". 4 The Conference also made call to "the National Executive Committee to convene a meeting of Socialist leaders of Western Europe and Commonwealth countries to discuss the efforts of the Common Market." 5

The general attitude of the party on this was expressed by Hugh Gaitskell. Speaking on television on 8 May 1962 he said:

2 Hansard, HC 645, 2 August 1961, col. 1494.

3 The members who were opposed to entry were John Stonehouse (CLP), H. Collison (National Union of Agricultural Workers), C. Jenkins (ASSET) etc., while members like Roy Jenkins (MP from Stechford Barrington, Mrs B. Sawyer (Aldershot CLP), etc. were in favour of entry.


5 Ibid.
To go in on good terms would, I believe, be the best solution to this difficult problem. And let us hope we can get them. Not to go in would be a pity, but it would not be a catastrophe. To go in on bad terms which really meant the end of the Commonwealth, would be a step which I think we would regret all our lives, and for which history would not forgive us. 6

In the House of Commons in June 1962, he held that "the government should only agree to entry provided that the negotiations were acceptable to the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference". 7 He, however, dismissed the possibility of Commonwealth existing in parallel with the EEC should Britain enter. Their leadership was convinced that Britain's entry into the EEC would affect adversely British trade with the Commonwealth, including India.

The Labour Party, however, proposed Britain's entry to the EEC subject to the following five conditions:

1. Strong and binding safeguards for trade and other interests of our friends and partners in the Commonwealth.

2. Freedom to pursue our own foreign policy.

3. The right to plan our own economy.

4. The fulfilment of Government's pledge to our own associates.

5. Guarantees to safeguard the position of British agriculture.


These five conditions, according to Crossman, were not a "piece of anti-Common Market propaganda, but a considered expression of the attitude adopted by the leadership of the Labour Party". Gaitskell was particularly apprehensive of the damage that might be caused to the Commonwealth by Britain's entry into the EEC. He said: "We must be clear about that, I make no apology for repeating it. It means the end of a thousand years of British History. You may say let it end, but my goodness it is a decision that needs a little care and thought."

The attitude of the Labour Party hardened against joining the EEC as the negotiations progressed. The Party realized that the conditions on which it supported entry were not likely to be attained. After the French Veto, the new leadership of the Labour Party became even more critical. Wilson said:

Never again must a British minister be put in a position of sitting outside in a cold antechamber while six European nations decide the fate of his country. We must make it clear that we are not going to have another eighteen months of negotiation as happened last time. One of the tragedies of the negotiations was

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10 For the factors which led to the hardening of the British Labour Party's attitude see Miriam Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963*, p. 450.
the impression given by the Government that we were turning our backs on the Commonwealth both economically and politically. A great deal of harm has been done. The future of Britain is in the re-creation of our links with the Commonwealth. 11

The Labour Government and the Membership of EEC

The Labour Party again came to power in 1964. It continued to adhere to its earlier stand. Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, told the House of Commons that there was no question, whatever, of Britain either seeking or being asked to seek entry into the Common Market in the immediate foreseeable future. 12

The attitude of the Labour Party towards joining the EEC underwent a change in 1965. Like the Conservatives and the Liberals, the Labourites also started believing the membership of the EEC a solution to the economic difficulties of Britain. Michael Stewart, the Labour Secretary, informed the House of Commons that Britain was ready to join the Common Market if the right conditions could be found. He further asserted that the five conditions of the Labour Party were now easier to meet than they had been in 1962. 13

Wilson shifted his stand in February 1966. In reply to a question by Patrick Jenkin, a Conservative MP, he said:

12 Hansard, HOCH 711, 29 April 1965, col. 623.
in the House of Commons: "I hope that all hon. members would agree that we should join if we can get the right conditions to safeguard British interests." 14

But it is not a conclusive proof that Wilson had been fully converted to the EEC membership. In his Bristol speech of 18 March 1966 he made clear that he was opposed to the entry on the terms of the Conservative Party. He said:

The Government's position, as we have stated again and again, is that we are ready to join if suitable safeguards for British interests and our Commonwealth interests, can be negotiated. But, unlike the Conservative leader, we shall not proceed on the basis of an unconditional acceptance of whatever terms are offered us....Given a fair wind, we will negotiate our way into the Common Market, head held high, not crawl in. And we shall go in if the conditions are right. 15

So far, Wilson had not made any commitment regarding Britain's entry to the EEC. Replying a question of Mrs Short, he said in the House of Commons on 5 May 1966: "The five conditions are still operative, but there have been certain changes in Europe itself, not least in relation to E.F.T.A., which make some of them no longer such impediments as they seemed to be three and a half years ago." 16 It was only on 10 November 1966 that Wilson stated in the House of Commons:

14 Hansard, HOC 724, 10 February 1966, col. 616.
15 The Times (London), 19 March 1966.
16 Hansard, HOC 727, 5 May 1966, col. 1864.
...after a careful review by the Cabinet of Britain's relations with Europe, the government had decided to embark on a series of discussions with the governments in the EEC to explore whether negotiations for entry were possible. 17

He, however, made it clear to the House that the "Government are approaching the discussions with the clear intention and determination to enter the EEC if essential British and Commonwealth interests are safeguarded. We mean business". 18

The factors which contributed to this change in the attitude of the British Labour Party were as follows: First, economic difficulties were looming large at home. The country was faced with an unfavourable balance of payments and deficits were continuously growing. 19 It ultimately resulted in the devaluation of sterling in November 1967. A number of leading members of the Labour Party had come to believe that the membership of the EEC did offer a solution to many of Britain's economic difficulties. The Party leaders could have stuck to the earlier stand only at the risk of division in the party. Secondly, the Commonwealth which was the central factor in determining Labour Party's attitude towards entry into EEC had undergone a complete change by 1966. The Indo-

17 Hansard, HOC, 735, 10 November 1966, col. 1540.
18 Ibid.
19 The deficit stood at £776 million in 1964; £342 million in 1965; £133 million in 1966; and £540 million in 1967. See Donald Maclean, n. 1, p. 102.
Pakistan War of 1965 and the failure of the British Government to play an effective role in settling the dispute between the two members of the Commonwealth, had dampened the enthusiasm of the Government vis-a-vis the Commonwealth. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia had also weakened the unity of the Commonwealth. Thirdly, on the economic front there had been a considerable increase in trade with the EEC in the intervening period (1962-66) and the Commonwealth had no longer remained a vital trading area. And finally, the rate of industrial production was also very low, as compared to other advanced countries. This was devaluing British political potentiality. In a meeting of the Labour MPs, Wilson at a later stage confessed the dominance of the two Super Powers—US and USSR—since "we in Europe are not sufficiently powerful, economically and therefore politically, to make...our own influence felt." Therefore, 

20 The following UK trade figures reveal this fact:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commonwealth</th>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£ million</td>
<td>£ million</td>
<td>£ million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>1341.2</td>
<td>1735.9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>1720.4</td>
<td>1896.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>1016.9</td>
<td>1910.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>1150.3</td>
<td>2342.1</td>
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21 In the three years period 1964-66, the British index rose by only 5 points, while that of Japan went up by 49, of Italy by 32, of the United States by 26, of France by 12 and of West Germany by 11. See Maclean, n. 1., pp. 102-3.

Wilson also saw in the EEC a stimulus to Britain's flagging rate of industrial production. 23

On 10 November 1966 he informed the House that he along with his Foreign Secretary, George Brown would embark on a "series of discussions with each of the Heads of Government of the Six, for the purpose of establishing whether it appears likely that essential British and Commonwealth interests would be safeguarded if Britain were to accept the Treaty of Rome and join E.E.C." 24

Wilson described his effort to join the EEC in his Guildhall speech as "embarking on an adventure of the kind that enabled merchant ventures of the city of London and other cities in times past to win, treasure and influence and power for Britain." 25 He said: "We go forward in the same spirit of enterprise today. I believe the tide is right, the time is right, the winds are right to make the effort." 26 However, Wilson did not allow his new-found enthusiasm over-dominante. He emphasized towards the close of his speech: "I do not guarantee that this new venture will lead to success." 27

23 Hansard, HOC 746, 2 May 1967, col. 316.
24 Hansard, HOC 735, 10 November 1966, col. 1540.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
In early 1967 Wilson and his Foreign Secretary visited the heads of Governments of "the Six" and carried out an exhaustive examination of all the issues involved. Ultimately the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons on 2 May 1967:

Her Majesty's Government have today decided to make an application under Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome for Membership of the European Economic Community and parallel applications for membership of the European Coal and Steel Community and Euratom. 28

Clarifying the approach which his government intended to adopt in conducting the negotiations, he pointed out that the negotiations would be confined to "the small number of really important issues" leaving the lesser issues to be dealt with after the entry. 29

The issues of British application for EEC was debated in the House of Commons between 8 and 10 May 1967. The leftist members of the Labour Party did not support. On the contrary 37 Labour Members of Parliament, including Shinwell, the former Parliamentary Labour Party Chairman, tabled an amendment to Government's motion. The amendment stated:

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29 Ibid.
That this House refuses to give its approval to the Government's White Paper because it fails to affirm in explicit terms the Government's adherence to the conditions laid down by the Labour Party and reaffirmed in Labour's election manifesto, on which the United Kingdom should decide whether to apply to enter the E.E.C. 30

This was clearly a demand for securing "five conditions" which Gaitskell and later Labour Party had laid down for Britain's entry to the EEC.

At the end of the debate the House accorded approval for an unqualified application to enter the Common Market. The proposal was approved by 488 votes to 62. It may be noted that in the final voting 36 Labour M.P.s voted against their party defying the three-line whip. 32

Unlike in the past, the Indian Government was rather cautious in making comments on the Labour Government's decision to seek membership of the EEC. The Indo-Pak War of 1965 had shaken the Indo-British relations to a great extent. As pointed out in the previous chapter the two Governments were trying to improve their relations by remaining, as far as possible neutral in such affairs. In 1961 when Britain made the first bid to secure membership of the Common Market,

30 [Daily Telegraph (London), 9 May 1967.]
31 [Hansard, HOC, 746, 10 May 1967, cols. 1649-50.]
32 A three-line whip is an issue of confidence.
India had reacted sharply. In 1967, during the first six months when the Labour Party was busy exploring the possibility of British membership of the Community, India did not offer any comment. On this attitude of indifference on the part of the Indian Government, Sitanshu Dass commented:

The contrast between New Delhi's present and past reaction to the British bid to secure Common Market membership is too sharp to be missed. Either New Delhi had concluded that nothing is to be gained by kicking up a fuss about the status of 'lesser issues' to be tackled after British entry to the E.E.C. or the Government of India is too deeply pre-occupied with the domestic developments to spare a thought to anything so outlandish as Britain-EEC negotiations. 33

The Indian Government continued its cautious policy. Its first official reaction on the issue of Britain's application for membership of EEC was a statement by Dinesh Singh, the then Indian Minister of Commerce in Lok Sabha. He said:

We have always said that it is for the U.K. to consider whether she wants to join the Community and when she wants to join the Community, they are a Sovereign nation and they have to decide on their own, but that we hope that if and when they do join the Community, they would also bear in mind the close trade relations that we have between our two countries. 34

He further apprehended that "the elimination without safeguards,

33 Sitanshu Dass, "India and Britain's E.E.C. Bid", Indian Express (New Delhi), 20 May 1967.
on Britain's entry into the Common Market of existing U.K. preferences for Indian industrial products would seriously impede India's efforts to finance her overseas purchases and to meet the external obligations. 35

Some members of the House were critical of British Labour Government for not making any reference to India before applying for the Community's membership. The Commerce Minister, however, informed the House:

We have been in close touch with the U.K. They have consulted us and we are going to hold further talks with them. From the 2nd June they have invited us and we are sending two representatives who will hold talks with U.K. Government. We shall also assist them in their talks with the Community so that our interests are safeguarded. 36

He expressed the hope that Britain would remember her commitment not to raise existing trade barriers against the products of the developing countries and the provisional agreements worked out in 1962 would not only be revived but also re-fashioned in the light of the latest developments in international trade. 37

The Indian public and the press on the other hand watched the developments leading to Britain's application for membership of the Community with keen interest. They were

35 The Statesman (New Delhi), 20 May 1967.
37 The Statesman (New Delhi), 20 May 1967.
greatly surprised by Wilson's statement to the House of Commons listing the subjects over which Britain considered it her duty to "seek safeguards". This statement made no mention of the interests of the Asian members of the Commonwealth. This omission was significant. Ever since 1961, when Britain made first attempt to join the Economic Community, the British representatives had been consistently assuring India and other Asian members of the Commonwealth that while seeking entry to EEC their interests would be protected. As late as June 1966, the British Labour Government had assured the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Conference that "in negotiating British entry into the Common Market, it would not let the existing Commonwealth preferences to be diluted or whittled down unless the E.E.C. gave counter-vailing benefits to the Commonwealth countries."38

Wilson also emphasized during the course of his European tour, which he undertook on the eve of filling application for the Community that "essential British and Commonwealth interests would be safeguarded". However, he never spelt out what these "essential interests" were and how they would be reconciled with the terms of the Treaty of Rome and regulations of the Community. In actual negotiations, the British Labour Government tried to protect the interests of New Zealand alone. New Zealand was the chief supplier of

38 *The Indian Express* (New Delhi), 18 June 1966.
butter and cheese to Britain and earned half of its foreign exchange through this supply. The Labour Government paid no attention to the interests of Asian Commonwealth countries like India, Pakistan and Ceylon. This was against the stand taken by the Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell. Gaitskell opposed Britain's entry to EEC in 1961 unless the question of Commonwealth safeguards was resolved satisfactorily. In 1967 the opposition to the EEC membership among the Labour rank and file was not based on Commonwealth considerations. They were chiefly concerned that "Britain's membership of the EEC might militate against socialist planning". As regards the countries which stood to lose the Commonwealth preferences in Britain, they were "left to fend for themselves and negotiate directly with the EEC six for tariff concessions". 39

The indifference on the part of the Labour Government to protect the Indian interests did not perturb the Indian Government. The changing trade pattern had already decreased importance of India to Britain. Therefore, Indian representatives had already taken successful initiatives to protect Indian interests in the wake of Britain's entry into the EEC. The Community had abolished its tariff on a number of items of Indian interest, principally tea. Further, the UNCTAD and GATT in their decisions specially enjoined upon all developed countries to reduce and eliminate the trade

39 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 3 May 1967.
barriers to the products "currently or potentially of particular export interest to less developed countries".

Despite these concessions and assurances the British membership of the EEC was bound to affect adversely the special trade and economic arrangements of the Commonwealth countries. India's trade with Britain had already gone down. Though India's overall imports increased from $2,123.6 million in 1960 to $2,631.3 million in 1967, but it declined in case of UK from $423.2 million to $217.3 million in the corresponding period. Similarly India's total exports increased from $1,332.3 million in 1960 to $1,611.4 million in 1967; but it declined in case of UK from $366.2 million in 1960 to $313.9 million. With Britain joining the Common Market, the Indo-British trade was further going to be affected since the trade preferences enjoyed by India as a member of the Commonwealth would have automatically ceased. The Indian

40 See UN, Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Far East 1970, p. 123. The declining importance of India was further evident from the fact that Australia and New Zealand were becoming more favourable trade partners of UK. UK imports in 1967 from Australia and New Zealand were £174.6 and £185.6 million, i.e. £360.2 million, whereas the imports from the whole of the Commonwealth Asia was only £334.1 million. In the same year U.K. exports to Commonwealth Asia was £295 million, whereas only Australia's share was £253.5 million. Perhaps for this changing pattern, India which was mentioned as one of the selected trade partners of UK in 1959 had become a part of the Commonwealth Asia by 1967 in so far as UK Official Yearbook is concerned.
exports to Britain would have been subjected to the EEC common tariffs.

In view of these hardships the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) appealed to the British Government that "the existing arrangements of preferential tariff treatment of Indian products in the U.K. market must continue until India got adequate opportunities to make up in the enlarged European Community the loss in the U.K. market." It also expressed a fear that unless Britain and EEC agreed to extend these concessions to India's exports, particularly those of cotton textiles, hides and skins, coir manufacture and the whole range of industrial goods are likely to suffer.

The second attempt of Britain to enter the EEC received a serious jolt when de Gaulle in a press conference on 16 May 1967 made a statement which came to be called as the "valvet veto". The General said: "There is no question of veto and there has never been one". But, then he continued that Britain must undergo a "profound transformation" before it joined the community and there would be "destructive upheavals" within the community if it joined before such transformation. He particularly insisted that the sterling must cease to be a world trading and reserve currency before Britain could join the EEC. He further said:

41 The Statesman (New Delhi), 5 May 1967.
42 Ibid.
While one does not despair of the pound holding its own...it will be long time before one is certain about this...Parity and monetary solidarity are essential conditions of the Common Market and could not possibly be extended to our neighbours across the channel unless some day the pound sterling shows itself in a completely new position. 43

Wilson, however, was not disheartened. He met the General again and impressed on him that the problem was not insoluble. He continued negotiations with "the Six". On 4 July 1967, George Brown presented the British case before the West European Union (WEU). Even at this stage France tried to prevent further consideration of British application till its balance of payment position stabilized. While Italy and the three Benelux countries favoured early negotiations, Germany adopted rather a cautious approach. In the meanwhile Britain devalued the pound by 14.3 per cent on 18 November 1967, which gave de Gaulle an immediate reason for rejecting Britain's application. On 27 November 1967, while rejecting Britain's second application for membership of the EEC, the General said at a Press Conference:

...the Common Market is incompatible with the economy as it is of England. The chronic deficit of the British economy's balance of payments demonstrates its permanent disequilibrium....

43 Quoted in Elisabeth Barker, n. 22, p. 227.
The Common Market is also incompatible with the way the British get their food, both from their own agricultural production, subsidized to the highest degree, and from supplies bought cheaply all over the world and particularly in the Commonwealth. This rules out London ever really accepting the levies provided for in the financial arrangements of the Common Market, which would be crushing for it.

The Common Market is incompatible also with the restrictions imposed by Britain on the outward movement of capital which, by contrast, circulates freely among 'the Six'. The Common Market, finally, is incompatible with the state of sterling as revealed again by the devaluation and by the loans which preceded and accompanied it. Moreover, in view of the pound's position as an international currency and the enormous external balances which weigh it down, the state of sterling would not allow it at present to become part of the solid, interdependent, and assured society in which the franc, the mark, the lira, the Belgian franc and the guilder are joined. 44

These conditions were unrealisable. It virtually meant "no" to Britain's application. However, Prime Minister Wilson and other leaders of his party refused to take this "no" for an answer. Wilson told the House of Commons "our application is in and remains in". 45 "The time is on our side."

All this suggested that Labour Government still wanted Britain to join the Community.


45 Hansard, HOC 751, 24 October 1967, col. 1493.
There was a sizeable number of Labour M.P.'s led by Emmanuel Shinwell and Douglas Jay who criticized Government's EEC policy in the House. They expressed regrets that:

Her Majesty's Government has given no answer that in any negotiations with the EEC it will insist on the terms as pledged to the electorate in the general election of 1966, and explained by the Prime Minister in his speech at Bristol on March 3, 1966; and urges that if these terms cannot be obtained without unreasonable delay, our application to join the EEC should be withdrawn. 46

In the wake of French veto, a group of Labour Party Members of Parliament issued a statement urging the Prime Minister that he should make clear to the EFTA and the Commonwealth that Britain was withdrawing the EEC application and was willing to explore practical ways of achieving wider and freer trade.

Some of the ardent supporters of entry from the Conservative Party also favoured withdrawal of application. For example, the notorious racist Enoch Powell said:

With the progress of time...and the movement of events, this is fast becoming an absurdity and a humiliation and for my own part I believe the time has come to call it back and resume an independence and freedom of action which suits

the present reality both of our own position and that of Common Market. 47

The drive against Britain's entry into the EEC became so strong that a Common Market Safeguards Campaign Organisation was formed by the members from all political parties, trade unions, business and industry. It tried to build up public opinion against British membership of the EEC. It particularly aimed at safeguarding Britain's Commonwealth responsibilities.

On 10 February 1970 Wilson presented the White Paper Britain and the European Communities48 which took stock of the various issues involved in Britain's membership of the EEC. However, it made no reference to the economic consequences of British entry on the Commonwealth. Commenting on this lapse, V.R. Bhatt pointed out:

The British Government has already started disengaging from the Commonwealth system as was demonstrated in the raising of Press telegraph rates, increased tuition fees for Commonwealth students in U.K., and the plan to tax Commonwealth textiles. On the other side too, several members of the Commonwealth in Africa have made independent agreement with the EEC. This left them as it leaves now the Asian members, to look after themselves. 49

47 The Times (London), 22 March 1969.


Wilson's main intention in presenting the White Paper to the House was to apprise the House of all the consequences. He was trying to keep the door open for entry. He told the House of Commons:

We have made clear that if the negotiations produce acceptable conditions for British entry, we believe that this will be advantageous for Britain, for Europe and for Europe's voice in the world. Equally we have made clear, that if the conditions which emerge from the negotiations are in the Government's view not acceptable, we can rely on our own strength outside the Communities. 50

The White Paper provided lot of ammunition to the anti-marketeers, and the public opinion swung against entry. The Gallup-poll conducted by the Daily Telegraph showed that only 22 per cent of public approved of Government's decision to apply for membership of the Common Market. 51

In the midst of this debate Wilson called for a general election in June 1970, which resulted in the victory for the Conservatives. The Conservatives ultimately negotiated the terms for British entry into the EEC.

A survey of the Labour policy towards membership of the EEC shows that initially the party favoured entry to the Common Market only if its "five conditions" were met. But subsequently, it came to hold at least for economic reasons

50 Hansard, HOC 795, 10 February 1970, cols. 1083-4.
that Britain's future lies with Europe. Wilson, who in his earlier career in the Party was close to the left wing and was against joining the Common Market made efforts from 1966 to 1970 to secure Britain's entry into the Community. For the attainment of this objective he did not insist on any preconditions for entry. He was even willing to sacrifice Britain's association with Commonwealth, if it stood in the way of attaining Community's membership. The tightening of the Commonwealth Immigration controls, imposition of tariff on duty free textile imports from Commonwealth countries, raising of Press telegraph rates, increase in the tuition fees for the Commonwealth students in the UK etc., are a clear pointer to this trend.

Michael Stewart, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary of Labour Government, tried to give an impression that with the increase in British influence within Europe, it would try to make the European Communities much more outward looking than they now are, and in this process Britain's ties with the Commonwealth would be of the greatest importance. This assertion of Michael Stewart is not substantiated by the actual conduct of the Labour Government. Unlike the French Government, which protected the interests of its former African colonies through Associate membership of the EEC, the British Labour

52 Michael Stewart was speaking at the Annual meeting of the Royal Commonwealth Society on 19 February 1970. See The Times (London), 20 February 1970.
Government did not fight for the Commonwealth interests in the Community. No doubt, it tried to protect the interests of New Zealand and Australia in a limited way, it did nothing significant for safeguarding the Asian Commonwealth countries' interests as and when Britain made entry into the EEC.