

POLITICAL CULTURES IN BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM AND THEIR
DISSEMINATION: 1931 – 1951

SALLY ANN RICHARDSON

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Sally Ann Richardson

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Abbreviations

AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AFL	American Federation of Labour
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AMGOT	Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories
ASSNC	Aircraft Shop Stewards' National Council
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
BSP	British Socialist Party
CGT	Conderacion Generale du Travail
CIO	Committee of Industrial Organisations (US)
CLP	Constituency Labour Party
CNT	Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour)
Comintern	Communist International
CP	Communist Party
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
DC	District Committee
DO	Divisional Organiser
DORA	Defence of the Realm Act
EAM	Ethnikon Apeleutherotikon Metopon (National Liberation Front)
EATSSNC	Engineering and Allied Trades Shop Stewards National Council
EC	Executive Council/ Committee
EEF	Engineering Employers Federation

ELAS	Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (National Popular Liberation Army)
EPT	Excess Profits Tax
ETU	Electrical Trades Union
EWO	Essential Works Order
FAI	Federacion Anarchista Iberica
FT	Financial Times
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
JPC	Joint Production Committee
LO	Landsorganisationen i Sverige (Sweden)
LNU	League of Nations Union
LP	Labour Party
LPTB	London Passenger Transport Board
LRC	Labour Research Council
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MFGB	Miners' Federation of Great Britain
MP	Member of Parliament
MW	Metal Worker (formerly New Propellor)
NC	National Committee
NCB	National Coal Board
NCL	National Council of Labour
NCLC	National Council of Labour Colleges
NEC	National Executive Council

'Non'	Non-trade union member
NP	New Propellor (latterly Metal Worker)
NUGMW	National Union of General and Municipal Workers
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
NUWM	National Unemployed Workers' Movement
OAP	Old Age Pensioner
PM	Prime Minister
PWC	Price Waterhouse Cooper Accountants
RILU	Red International of Labour Unions
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
SLP	Socialist Labour Party
SWMF	South Wales Miners' Federation
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TU	Trade Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UNA	United Nations Association
WCML	Working Class Movement Library
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

Abstract

This study is an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded collaborative project between Salford University and the Working Class Movement Library (WCML). The project seeks to investigate and analyse, both diachronically and synchronically, the political cultures within major British trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, the way in which these relate to the ideologies of working-class political movements generally, and how they are situated within wider contemporaneous debates.

Typically research into trade unions has focused on the industrial side of their work, their official doctrine, and their formal and explicit policies, as expressed through conference speeches, resolutions and voting behaviour. In contrast this study focuses on the morphology of the ideology and ethos of the different unions and their membership, looking beneath the official policies and overt statements to ascertain their common-sense understandings and unconscious and unquestioned received wisdom, which may have been invisible to the participants, but is exposed with the passage of time. The relationship between the ideological understandings expressed through the journals, the dominant strands of socialist thought, and Labour Party policy, will also be investigated.

The key sources for the project are in-house journals (1931-1951), written by and for trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party, which are held at the WCML. The Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (NUGMW) have been selected for scrutiny: the NUGMW, a general union in which 'labourism' dominated, and the AEU, a traditional craft union renowned for its centrist leadership and powerful communist influenced, shop steward movement. The journal of the Aircraft Shop Stewards' National Council (ASSNC), the *New Propellor*, is also included, not as a co-equivalent to the official union journals, but as a representative benchmark of the ideological understandings of many engineering activists, who agitated and promoted left-wing socialist and communist interpretations.

Research Questions

The analysis of the journals will ascertain whether the passage of time has exposed attitudes and assumptions that reveal underlying mentalities, ideologies, and political cultures, that would have gone unnoticed at the time of their publication. In this pursuit, the texts will be interrogated for evidence of whether the journals written by and for trade unionists reveal elements of socialist political cultures within the British trade union movement, the extent of any commonality of political culture within and between the journals, and the extent to which these are contested, both by other socialists, and by non-socialists.

The journals did not exist in isolation, and thus it is important to identify whether the journals' content reflected the broader political culture of Britain, and what changes in political cultures were evidenced as the context in which they were situated developed, from the 1931 turn to the left, through the 'red 1930s' and the pro-USSR war-time period, and finally the period of the first majority Labour Government and the evolving Cold War. Thus, this study will seek to identify the morphology of socialist ideology in the period as expressed within the journals, and the nature of any challenges to it. Importantly, ideas, interpretations, implications, and beliefs, regarding the presence of 'actually existing socialism' (the USSR) will be ascertained, and how temporal contextual factors affected such beliefs.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to analyse the politics of British trade unions and shop steward movements in the context of the period in question (1931-1951) when socialism was the dominant discourse of the Labour Party. This will be accomplished through an examination of the key in-house journals of leading trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, held in the WCML's archives. The study will focus on, and analyse, the ideological character and function of the content, including the apparently 'non-political' content (such as letters pages, cartoons, events, education, and training), seeking evidence of political cultures, especially 'lived culture' and unconscious received understandings, and how these relate to the formal and explicit politics of the unions concerned.

Introduction

Trade Unions were established to defend, promote and extend the interests of their members. They provided the institutional form for workers to unite to counter the power asymmetries between themselves and their employers within the capitalist legislative and judicial environment, where their interests were subordinate to those of the employers. Collaboration enabled workers to garner 'strength through unity', to protect and enhance their interests and to undertake occupational and even class motivated action to fight for realisable goals. Unions can be viewed as institutionalised manifestations of societal ideology, their organisational bureaucracy, structure, collective bargaining, rules and procedures, being derived from the dominant ideology of the society in which they were embedded.¹ They were principally protectionist organisations, subject to the structural constraints of the legislative framework and judicial interpretations of capitalist society.

Trade unions evolved embodying the ideology and interests of their founders; they were adaptive and reflexive, mediated by their structural environment and their history as it interacted with prevailing circumstances. Like all institutions, trade unions embodied 'particular amalgams of ideas and material power which in turn influence[d] development of ideas and material capabilities',² whose past shaped their structures, values, ethos, and policies. Individual unions were institutions in themselves, but they also formed part of the greater labour movement in Britain and other countries such as Sweden and Germany. Such movements can be understood as 'a collection of loosely related institutions and individuals working towards a vaguely defined common goal', whereby its various elements are expected to make sacrifices for other sections of the movement.³

The unions shared the *raison-d'être* of advancing their member's interests, and a common ethos, and shared values. Trade unionism as an ideology in its own right

¹ John E. Kelly, *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics* (London, 1998), pp. 63-68, 77.

² Robert W. Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations theory millennium', *Journal of International Studies*, 10:2 (1981), pp.126-155.

³ Donald Schon, 'Beyond the State', (London, 1971), in H.M. Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party* (London, 1979), p.18.

provides a distinct prism and interpretative framework for analysing issues which directly affected employment and workplace issues (slumps, unemployment, or booms); it guided the unions responses and actions in the industrial sphere, and facilitated the establishment of a collective identity. Nonetheless the ideological stances of the union officials, their members, and the journal contributors, were not necessarily homogenous on an intra-union or inter-union level, or between the trade unions and the shop steward organisations. The dominant ideology of the organisations inevitably diverged from that of a proportion of its members, who were recruited on occupational criteria rather than political allegiance. Each union represented workers with different occupational identities (within a narrow or very broad range), from white-collar workers, skilled craftsmen, to the semi-skilled, or unskilled. Such differentiation *inter alia*, affected workers' material wealth and social standings, their perceptions, and outlooks. Occupational identities were further overlaid by workers' more fundamental identities: their gender, ethnicity, roles outside work, and their own ideologies, and societal norms and values.

In the period 1931-1951, as in most of their history, trade unions represented under half of the total workforce – which fell to around 30% between 1920 and 1931; it then increased, but remained below 40% until the Second World War. Trade union membership was not exclusive to socialist or even Labour Party supporters; many members had no particular interest in politics, and others were Liberal or Tory voters. Indeed, over 50% of working class people voted Conservative in the British general elections of 1931 and 1935 and a proportion of these were probably trade unionists. Thus, union membership was a loose affiliation of workers who combined in pursuit of their material interests. Some, especially core activists, sought to modify the current system and considered their union membership to be an expression of commitment to a broader labour movement that could involve the long-term reform and even the replacement of capitalism.

The Labour Representation Committee (LRC) / Labour Party (LP) was created in recognition that the parliamentary path would prove more efficacious than industrial militancy in achieving some of the unions' objectives, especially within the prevailing hostile legislative environment. The Labour Party's creation as the union's parliamentary voice was overtly political, and embodied a potent and enduring, reciprocal duty to protect. Moreover, its inception as the 'child' of the TU movement created lasting structural, constitutional, financial, and emotional bonds. The formal

separation of the political and the industrial wings was an expedient that ostensibly left the trade unions depoliticised and certainly subordinate to parliamentary politics (although the point of production's centrality in the economic struggle ensured that conflict at work remained a politically contested area). Of course, the deliberate attempt to depoliticise industrial conflicts was itself political. But it expressed the ruling conviction in Britain that legitimate politics took place within the formal political system, at the apex of which stood Parliament.

The ostensibly depoliticised unions often presented themselves as practical, empirical, and reactive, a disposition which effectively marginalised a broader concern for theoretical issues. Guild socialists, communists, and syndicalists were among those who challenged the unions' ostensibly depoliticised stance by raising issues of power within society and industry. The practice of the unions was in any case overtly political. The nineteenth century union leaders were principally Liberals (with some openly Conservative, for instance in the Lancashire mills), and many retained a Liberal ideology even after the Labour Party's establishment. Socialism in Britain grew from very small beginnings in the revival of the 1880s and entered the unions via the work of individuals such as Tom Mann and Will Thorne and through the interventions of various socialist organisations, including the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), the Fabian Society, Socialist Labour Party (SLP), British Socialist Party (BSP), the Plebs League, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and the Communist Party (CP) and the debates within and between them. The Labour Party's adoption of a socialist clause in its 1918 constitution testified to the growing influence of collectivist thinking within the unions. But even after the Great War – a radicalising and destabilising experience for all the belligerents – socialists remained a tiny minority within the Labour Party. Studies of the period plausibly depict Labour as a party dominated by unions which remained indifferent, if not actually hostile, to socialism.⁴ Yet by 1931 socialism was the regnant ideology in both the Party and the unions affiliated to it.

This change was not inevitable. Some unions created or later became affiliated to the Labour Party, but the Party's purposes were initially rather narrowly conceived. The unions themselves remained wedded to free collective bargaining and sought to recruit members irrespective of political allegiances. Trade unionism did not

⁴ Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party: 1910-1924* (London, 1974).

imply socialism. The optimisation of members' terms and conditions of work in the industrial sphere depended on the unity of as many members of the workforce as possible. Steering clear of association with particular political parties and their ideologies was one way of pursuing that goal, as the USA's American Federation of Labour (AFL) tried to demonstrate under Samuel Gompers' leadership. Indeed, the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) preached such an approach to African and Caribbean trade unionists in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.⁵ The role trade unions actually played depended on history and politics and these varied significantly in accordance with national trajectories. For instance, in Sweden, under their Social Democratic Governments' labour friendly environment (1932 -1976), their fewer and larger unions coalesced in the Landsorganisationen i Sverige (LO) federation, which unlike the TUC, could make long-term binding decisions on wages with an equally centralised and comprehensive employers' federation. This environment enabled the country to engage in long-term tripartite planning even in the absence of extensive state ownership of industry. In post 1948 Germany, historical circumstances allowed a statutory co-determination policy to be introduced, obliging large companies to have union representatives on their Boards, resulting in more powerful unions that garnered arguably greater benefits than their British counterparts. Elsewhere unions split on political or religious lines, as in France and Italy, further illustrating that the development of trade unions in Britain followed one amongst many evolutionary possibilities, albeit subject to contextual constraints.

Trade Unions and Politics

British unions are a product of their history and the path dependencies it can generate. The transformation of society wrought by the industrial revolution gave rise to trade unionism, as industrialisation thrust large groups of workers together in an asymmetric power relationship with the employers. The employer – employee relationship developed in the context of a state where the elite (originally the landed, then increasingly the industrial), set the constitution and laws; thus, class was political as well as economic (and cultural). Proscribed by the Combinations Acts 1799 and 1800 and the Unlawful Societies Act 1799, the early trade unions' survival

⁵ Peter Weiler, *British Labour and the Cold War*, (Redwood City, 1988).

and growth depended on their convincing government that they did not threaten the capitalist status-quo. Concessions were obtained, such as the Ten Hour Act and the 1867 Reform Act (which also protected the bourgeoisie by demonstrating that reforms were obtainable through parliament, obviating the need for revolution). However, only with the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875 were two or more people able to further their trade dispute without being liable to criminal conspiracy charges. Subsequent legislative changes enabled or constrained organised labour. Nonetheless, legislation remained inequitable. Unions in Britain were forced to realise that political engagement was a necessary condition for shaping subsequent legislation and practices, including employer acceptance of the unions as workers' legitimate representatives in negotiations and collective bargaining.⁶ Changes made in law offered institutional and universal rights and protection, and were consequently striven for by the labour movement.

There is a large and diverse body of published work investigating the relationships of trade unions with politics which provide the background and context in which the journals analysed in this study were written.⁷ These range from general labour histories, to histories of trade unions and trade unionism, through craft unions and friendly societies, to new unionism, and the subsequent wave of militancy and syndicalism. These studies are all situated in their various historical contexts, such as the dire economic conditions and unemployment of the 1920s, (with failed strikes, lock-outs, especially the 1922 engineers' lock-out), the 1926 General Strike and 1927 Trade Disputes Act (which significantly weakened the unions, and resulted in many union leaders seeking negotiation and accommodation and the promotion of Mondist policies, rather than industrial actions),⁸ as well as the subsequent rearmaments boom, WWII, and the post-war period.

⁶ The Conciliation Act 1896 underlined state support for collective bargaining. This was further enhanced by the new powers to promote the issue given to the Ministry of Labour in 1918.

⁷ These issues are covered in the wide-ranging literature on trade unions and working class politics and history. For instance, Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London, 1994); Hugh A. Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889: Volume II: 1911-1933* (Oxford, 1985); H. A. Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889 (Volume III): 1934-1951* (Oxford, 1994); H. A. Clegg, Alan Fox, and Andrew Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889: 1889-1910. Vol. 1* (Oxford, 1964); Charles L. Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940 (New Edition)* (London, 1956); Andrew Taylor, *Trade Unions and Politics: A Comparative Introduction* (London, 1989).

⁸ The accommodative policies followed by powerful union leaders heightened the left-right divide in the movement. The PLP welcomed this stance, as it minimised public discontent over the consequences of industrial action (electorally disadvantageous), and perceptions of the Labour Party

Other studies focused on specific unions⁹ or specific issues such as the trade union - Labour Party relationship or the influence of communists. There is also a large body of literature 'from below'. The current study, analyses trade union and shop stewards' journals as cultural artefacts that archive the understanding and consciousness that these organisations disseminated to their readership, and thus attempts to fill a gap in the literature by examining the changing political cultures exposed by the conversations the unions had with their members through their journals.

The history of the labour movement (1889-1951) within the broader economic, social and industrial environment, is traced in Hugh Clegg's three volumes *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889*, which cover pivotal industrial actions, landmark rulings, and other enabling / conciliatory, or constraining / coercive, legislation, and their immediate and cumulative effects.¹⁰ The structural problems facing the unions as institutions are explored, including their bureaucratisation and centralisation which their growth necessitated, their collective bargaining function, and their relationships with the TUC and Labour Party. The Government's expansion and extension into the industrial sphere resulted in the labour movement's inclusion on Government committees and subcommittees, which brought trade unions and the political rulers into increased proximity, transforming their position from outsiders at the beginning of the twentieth century, to their subsequent incorporated status. The unions' attempted to influence government and the executive bureaucracy through engagement with the state at multiple levels, including Royal Commissions, Commissions of Enquiry, Select Committees (such as Education and National Expenditure), war-time production and labour committees (including Joint

as a 'class' movement which the capitalist press promoted, as opposed to the Conservatives who they portrayed as representing public opinion and the national interest.

⁹ Histories of the specific unions whose journals are analysed in this study include: William MacLaine, *The Engineers' Union, Book 1*, (1938), WCML trade union/ENG/6/G/45; James B. Jefferys, *Story of the Engineers: 1800-1945* (Herts, 1945); Hugh A. Clegg, *General Union in a Changing Society* (Oxford, 1964); Lianne and Giles Radice, *Will Thorne: Constructive Militant* (London, 1974); John Callow, *The Union* (London, 2012); John Robert Clynes, *Memoirs* (London, 1937); John Lloyd, *Light and Liberty: One Hundred Years of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union* (London, 1990); ETU, *The Story of the ETU: the Official History of the Electrical Trades Union* (Kent, 1952); Frank Chapel, 'Sparks Fly' (London, 1984).

¹⁰ Such as: The Taff Vale and Osborne Judgements; 1926 General Strike; the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act 1927 which replaced 'Contracting-Out' from paying the political levy with 'Contracting-in', and legislative restrictions on Trade Union's Political Levy, Political Funds, and Political Expenditure (described by William Brownlie (AEU), as 'One for the creation of industrial sheep pens and the extinction of Trade Unionism.', cited in *Manchester Guardian*, 11th May, 1927, p.11.)

Production Committees (JPCs)), Ministerial Advisory Committees and Government Co-ordinating Committees), as well as specialist investigative committees, legislative scrutiny committees, tripartite corporatist bodies, other state bureaus, and quangos.¹¹ The unions' embeddedness in the legislative and politico-economic environment is evidenced, and Clegg highlights the union leaders' conviction that legal changes were a necessary condition to make all concessions won, permanent and enforceable.¹² Clegg's account adopts an ostensibly apolitical approach, but it encompasses a sense of an inevitability of outcome, casting syndicalism and Marxism as implicitly undesirable and unfeasible, industry based unionism as unrealisable, and the left-wing generally as obstructive and a hindrance to the Labour project.

Clegg and other Oxford School proponents'¹³ publications concentrate on the management of the conflicting interests of workers and managers through institutional reforms that would facilitate grievance resolution, tripartite working, and legislative interventions to maintain and enhance workplace relations. Thus, they advocated that trade unions should not merely pursue wage bargaining (deemed a threat to the country's economic position through undermining competitiveness and creating wage push inflation), but also that unions should work with employers and the government (including on wages policy) to increase productivity and economic growth, whilst minimising inflation. In this vein, Allan Flanders' *Trade Unionism*,¹⁴ presented an account of prevailing conditions, problems, and policy prescriptions around 'responsible' union leaders working constructively with employers to facilitate productivity increases and efficiencies, and the role of Government in establishing wage policy.¹⁵

¹¹ There is also a literature that specifically covers the relationship between the trade unions and the Government. For instance, V. L. Allen, *Trades Unions and the Government* (London, 1960),

¹² Clegg, Fox, and Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions Volume 1* (Oxford, 1964); Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Volume 2* (Oxford, 1985); Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Volume 3* (Oxford, 1994).

¹³ Including theorists such as Allan Flanders, Alan Fox and Otto Kahn Freund.

¹⁴ Allan Flanders, *Trade Unionism* (London, 1958).

¹⁵ For an account of the ideological underpinnings of Flanders' work, see, John Kelly 'Democracy and Anti-communism: Allan Flanders and British Industrial Relations in the Early Post-war Period', in Alan Campbell, Nina Fishman, and John Mcillroy, *British Trade Unions and Industrial Politics* (Hants, 1999), Also see, Michael Poole, *Theories of Trade Unionism* (London, 1984); John T. Dunlop, *Industrial Relations Systems* (Henry Holt, 1958); Alan Fox and Allan Flanders, *Trade Unionism*, (Hutchinson, 1958); Arthur Marsh *Industrial Relations in Engineering* (London, 1965), Hugh Clegg, *Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining* (Oxford, 1976); for international comparisons, see for example, Richard Scase, *Social Democracy in Capitalist Society: Working Class Politics in Britain and Sweden* (Maryland, 1977).

Studies by theorists like Richard Hyman challenge the Oxford School of industrial relations policy-orientated pragmatism, instead employing Marxist analysis, focusing on the class conflict considered endemic in capitalism, and manifest in the asymmetries reified through its hegemonic ideology, and institutionalised in its politico-judicial, economic, and social systems. Hyman's *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*,¹⁶ and his *Industrial Relations: A Marxist introduction*,¹⁷ provide theoretical Marxist accounts of trade unions situated within their multifaceted environment. Such Marxist understandings, interpretations, and critiques of the prevailing political economy, and the embodied political ambition to empower and eventually emancipate labour and fundamentally restructure society, are useful in the analysis of the journals written by and for trade union members.

John Kelly's *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*¹⁸ analyses the union's ability to represent working class interests, the viability of industrial democracy, and the impact of wage militancy and industrial action in raising class consciousness and politicising the workforce. He rejects the theory that union leaders have become merely a conservative force. Kelly examines the forging of class consciousness through trade unionism, and the interactive and inter-penetrative relationship between class consciousness, trade unionism, and socialist politics with reference to classical socialist texts (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, and Gramsci). These selected texts cover the various theorists' understandings of trade unions, concerning for instance, their position as a product of the capitalist system, the incorporation of trade union leaders and officials through bureaucratisation, the unions' conception of their own welfare (and that of their officials), and the power of capital and the expediencies of the capitalist system. Thus, Kelly highlights the plurality of explanations and interpretations of trade unions, even when analysed from a purely communist perspective.

The shop steward movement forms an important element in British trade union function and dynamics, providing an interface between the officials and the rank and file. Indeed, for many workers 'the shop steward is the union',¹⁹ as their workplace

¹⁶ Richard Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism* (London, 1971).

¹⁷ R. Hyman, *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction* (London, 1975).

¹⁸ John Kelly, *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics* (London, 1988).

¹⁹ James Hinton, 'Coventry communism: A Study of Factory Politics in the Second World War', *History Workshop*, 10 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 90-118; J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, *Shop Stewards* 2nd Ed., (London, 1973), p.xiv.

presence (as opposed to branch presence), means they are normally the first people workers consult for dispute resolution or to pursue grievances. The stewards' precarious position (historically elected and dismissed by a show of hands) ensured that they were attuned to the rank and file's mind-sets, opinions, objectives, and concerns.²⁰

The shop stewards were a particularly powerful element in the AEU due to the industry's structure (multiple small engineering firms). Edmund and Ruth Frow's 1982 study, *The Engineers Struggles*, focuses on AEU shop stewards', their history, roles, the movements' protagonists, and internal unions relations, as they evolved and encountered various industrial disputes.²¹ Written by a communist shop steward / trade union official, the study provides an insightful backdrop to the *AEU* and *NP* journals' perspectives, content, and the common sense understandings that underlay its articles (Edmund Frow was active in both the AEU and Aircraft Shop Stewards' National Council (ASSNC) / Engineering and Allied Trades Shop Stewards National Council (EATSSNC)).

Studies into workplace organisation and dynamics form another strand of the literature on trade unions. Richard Croucher's study *Engineers at War 1939 - 1945*,²² seeks to capture the ethos of the union membership that diverged from its right-wing leadership, exposing the tensions that can arise between rank and file opinion and the union officials over pay claims and industrial disputes, raising issues of trade union loyalty. As such, he exposes issues that are minimised or excluded from the official Trade Union journals. His study challenges the dominant narrative of wartime national unity, instead revealing wartime industrial politics and militancy, including that of apprentices and women. He also examines the different stances of the AEU and Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) (principally male) union officials' and shop stewards' attitudes towards women, and women's (largely non-unionised) militancy in pursuit of equal pay.

²⁰ The Shop Stewards movement in general is explored in, for instance, Goodman and Whittingham, *Shop Stewards*. Also see for instance, Edmund Frow and Ruth Frow, *Engineering Struggles* (Manchester, 1982);

²¹ Frow and Frow, *Engineering Struggles*; Also see: Arthur Marsh, and Edward E. Coker, 'Shop Steward Organization in the Engineering Industry', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1:3 (1963), pp. 170–190.

²² Richard Croucher, *Engineers at War*, (Manchester, 1982); Also see R. Croucher, *Communist Politics and Shop Stewards in Engineering, 1935-46*, PhD Thesis, (University of Warwick, 1977),

Other studies such as Alan McKinlay and Joseph Mellings' *The Shop Floor Politics of Production*,²³ reject institutionalists' accounts, instead concluding that it is the interplay between the shop floor and the other principal actors in the historic circumstances of the post-war engineering industry, that shaped outcomes. Studies by Jonathan Zeitlin,²⁴ Richard Price,²⁵ and Richard Hyman,²⁶ also expose the unions' internal tensions, as trade union leaders (who have a stake in the status-quo) can clash with the rank and file opinion, further exposing the structural conflict between capital and labour, and the centrality of the point of production for trade union politics, in terms of both bread and butter issues, and also their potential to encompass political issues.

Ken Coates and Anthony Topham's *Shop Stewards and Workers' Control* (1975)²⁷ examines the issues through participants' voices, exposing intra-union tensions, where the ethos of the union as the 'members' union' under the member's democratic control and policy direction, came into conflict with the Trade Unions' need for efficient governance, adherence to union-employers' agreements, and avoidance of anarchy and unofficial strikes. Their analysis is imbued with Marxist ideology,²⁸ promoting workers' control, and condemning Mondism, Corporatism, and the Neo-Corporatism advocated by Keynes (implemented under the post-war consensus, and generally favoured by the TUC), which they described as 'an apostasy, because wage slaves remained in bondage even while their living standards increased ... for us socialism was, is and will remain a call for freedom'.²⁹ Such analysis provides a useful background to the on-going factional actions and

²³ Alan McKinlay and Joseph Melling, 'The Shop Floor Politics of Production: Work, Power and Authority in British Engineering', in Campbell, Fishman, and Mcillroy, *British Trade Unions and Industrial Politics*, p. 76.

²⁴ Jonathan Zeitlin, 'Shop Floor Bargaining and the State: A Contradictory Relationship', in Steven Tolliday and J. Zeitlin (eds), *Shop Floor Bargaining and the State*, (Cambridge, 1985); J. Zeitlin, 'From Labour History to the History of Industrial Relations', *Economic History Review*, 40:2, (1987); J. Zeitlin, 'Rank and Filism and Labour History: A Rejoinder to Price and Cronin', *International Review of Social History*, XXXIV, (1989), pp. 89-102;

²⁵ Richard Price, *Masters, Unions and Men: Work Control in Building and the Rise of Labour, 1830-1914* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 17.

²⁶ Richard Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism* (London, 1971); R. Hyman, *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction* (London, 1975); R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism: Recent Tendencies and Some Problems for Theory', *Capital and Class*, 8 (1979), pp. 54-55.

²⁷ Ken Coates and Tony Topham, Eds. *Shop Stewards and Workers Control Vol 1* (Nottingham, 1975); K. Coates and T. Topham, Eds. *Shop Stewards and Workers Control Vol 2* (Nottingham, 1975); K. Coates and T. Topham, Eds. *Shop Stewards and Workers Control Vol 3* (Nottingham, 1975).

²⁸ Coates and Topham founded the Institute for Workers Control.

²⁹ K. Coates, and T. Topham, *Trade Unions and Politics* (Oxford, 1986).

debates that existed beneath the formal accounts presented in the union journals, which form the basis of this thesis.

Although the unions were constitutionally intermeshed with the Labour Party and it was the principal party they supported, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was also influential - to an extent disproportional to its size. Nina Fishman's exploration of the CP's influence on, and within the trade union movement, in her *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions 1933-1945*,³⁰ dispels many myths perpetuated within the historical record, and fills some of the omissions. Her work is pertinent to all studies on trade unionism of the period, but is especially useful in this study as communists were over represented in the AEU, and controlled the ASSNC. Specific situational studies, such as Hinton's *Coventry communism: A Study of Factory Politics in the Second World War* (1980) explores the relative success of the Communist Party, with its industrial focus, during the specific conditions of WWII, compared to that of the Labour Party which traditionally attempted to depoliticise industrial relations.³¹

The dominance of the Labour Party and the trade union movement hierarchies by the right, and their relationship with those of other ideological persuasions, is also evidenced in the current literature (particularly the trade union /Labour Party /CPGB relationships).³² Fears of communist infiltration of the labour movement at all levels had abounded since the Bolshevik revolution,³³ and remained a live issue throughout the period analysed here, especially when contextually determined international or domestic issues rendered it pertinent. Trade unions' Labour Party affiliation was subject to the acceptance of the Labour Party's 'Programme, Principles, and Policies', which was incompatible with the CPGB's ideology and allegiance to the Communist International (Comintern).³⁴ Attempts to restrict

³⁰ N. Fishman, *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions, 1933-1945* (Hampshire, 1995).

³¹ Hinton, 'Coventry communism: A Study of Factory Politics in the Second World War', *History Workshop*, 10, (1980), pp. 90-118.

³² For instance: John McIlroy, 'British communists and the 1932 Turn to the Trade Unions', *Labor History*, (December 2015), pp. 1-25; John Callaghan, 'National and International Dimensions of British Communist History', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24:3 (2008), pp. 456-472; J. Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict. The CPGB, 1951-68. Volume 5* (London, 2004); J. Callaghan, 'The Plan to Capture the British Labour Party and Its Paradoxical Results, 1947-91', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40:4 (October 2005), pp. 707-725.

³³ Premised on communist writings since 'Lenin's Left-Wing communism: An infantile Disorder', (1920) and especially after the, 1935 Popular Front set a pattern for communist attempts to recruit shop stewards, and obtain office, or high position.

³⁴ Particularly the communist International's 21 conditions which included unconditional support for Soviet Union.

ideology within the trade unions and the Labour Party through the exclusion and vilification of communists was codified through rule changes.³⁵ This resulted in the TUC, many individual unions, and the Labour Party, being conspicuously absent from concerted and unified political action, such as the 'National Unemployed Workers Movement',³⁶ or the United and People's Fronts, against fascism.³⁷ The CPGB countered that the Labour Party, to be fully representative of the labouring classes, must incorporate workers who were communist, especially as historically they accepted the ILP and SDF and BSP.

Such CPGB / Labour Party / trade union / internal union politics, and factional conflicts, were notoriously exposed within the Electrical Trades Union (ETU). Although the ETU is not one of the principle unions analysed here, the literature on its internal dynamics is noteworthy, both in terms of the factional conflicts within the union, but also as an illustration of the extent to which authorial perspectives shape analysis. The ETU sponsored study by Schaffer (1949) focused on the unions formal history, changes to its internal structure, and its decisions and actions.³⁸ The unions' own account (1952), does likewise.³⁹ Both accounts underplay internal disputes highlighted elsewhere, and adopt a somewhat self-satisfied unreflective tone, concentrating on the constitution, officials and leadership, and the union's achievements, whilst denigrating those dissenting from official policies. Contrary accounts are presented in John Lloyd's (1990) analysis,⁴⁰ which judged

³⁵ In 1929, a prohibition was placed on members of proscribed political parties attending the Labour Party Conference as delegates; the Labour Party NEC increased control over Labour candidate selection, and required individual party membership; the TUC's 'Black Circular' (1934) barred Trade Councils from permitting communist delegates. All these factors combined to reinforce the Labour Party-trade union relationship, whilst excluding the far-left. Moreover, some unions (for instance the TGWU) banned communists and fascists from holding certain offices as incompatible with their Labour Party affiliation. The Labour Party also opposed the pre-WWII Unity campaign promoted by the ILP, Socialist League, and the CPGB. Indeed, the Labour Party disaffiliated and then proscribed the Socialist League at its 1936 conference (precluding its members from continued Labour Party membership), effectively forcing it to disband. Similarly, in, 1939 Stafford Cripps, supported by trade unionists like Will Lawther and Sam Watson of the miners, urged the NEC to establish a Popular Front. When the NEC rejected the proposal, he circulated his memorandum, and refused party instructions to withdraw it; he was expelled along with others including Aneurin Bevan and George Strauss.

³⁶ Richard Croucher, *We Refuse to Starve in Silence* (London, 1987); Wal Hannington, *Ten Lean Years*, (London, 1940); J. Callaghan *Socialism in Britain* (Oxford, 1990) pp. 130-131.

³⁷ For an analysis of the relationship between the trade unions and the CP and Labour Party, see for instance, Fishman, *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions*. For proscribed organisations, see for instance, The Labour Party, *The Communist Solar System: The Communist International* (London, 1933).

³⁸ Gordon Schaffer, *Light and Liberty: 60 years of the ETU* (Kent, 1949).

³⁹ ETU, *The Story of the ETU* (Kent, 1952).

⁴⁰ Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*.

communists, their meetings, planning, candidate selection, and electoral strategies, to be insidious and manipulative; whereas the same actions by reformists were considered courageous. Such accounts are also useful in highlighting examples of leadership and membership's policy differences,⁴¹ the interrelationship between the trade unions and the parliamentary party, and their ideological and policy similarities, differences and tensions, which are highly pertinent to this study.

The unions presented themselves as 'the members' union', representing the members' opinion, and acting in the members' interests. Their democratic foundation was considered fundamental; leaders emerged to represent the will of the members. Nonetheless, the extent to which union leaders embodied their members' will, is difficult to ascertain.⁴² Martin Harrison's *Trade Unions and the Labour Party since 1945*, explores such phenomena along with the parallel issues of manipulation of the unions' affiliation numbers and delegate discretion (although composite resolutions rendered discretion inescapable) which affected policy outcomes due to the potentially hegemonic influence of the biggest unions' block vote.⁴³

The Labour Party's trade union roots are evidenced in their constitutional incorporation and structural power within the Labour party. The unions' input extended well beyond finance to cover numerous inter-related spheres, including policy formation and decisions, political education, socialist ideology, revolutionary separatism, and political factionalism.⁴⁴ Trade unions, to varying degrees, encouraged members to influence political policy discussions and directions by lobbying, submitting resolutions, or by standing for office in local, district, or national government, or in civil society institutions.⁴⁵ Lewis Minkin, summed up the trade union – Labour Party relationship in his title: *The Contentious Alliance: Trade*

⁴¹ As exemplified by the 1946 membership's rejection of the EC's decision to submit a resolution to the Labour Party Conference supporting the CPGB's affiliation, albeit on a ballot restricted to the 28% who paid the political levy, of whom 45% voted (Ibid.).

⁴² John McIlroy, *Trade Unions in Britain Today* (Manchester, 1995).

⁴³ The numbers that unions affiliated (as opposed to the numbers paying the political levy) determined vote allocation. Unions could enhance their political influence by overestimating numbers; alternatively, if conservation of union funds was prioritised, they could underestimate. For instance, the ETU (1949) increased their affiliation from 30,000 members to 100,000. Moreover, the NUM typical affiliation figures for the Labour Party were higher than those which it used in its TUC affiliation. Martin Harrison, *Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since, 1945* (London, 1960), p. 64.

⁴⁴ Lewis Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁵ Such member activism varied both geographically and between trades (miners tending to be particularly active).

Unions and the Labour Party.⁴⁶ His study explores the evolution of the power relationships, roles, protocols and unwritten 'rules', which shaped respective positions and territorial tensions resolutions. Minkin foregrounds the importance of ethos in the relationship, and how unwritten 'rules' (founded on shared values) governed participants' behaviour, including the dynamics of their connections and interactions, and their mutual respect for the autonomy and primacy of each in their particular (but interpenetrative) spheres of the political and the industrial.

Minkin counters the view that the union 'Barons' effectively controlled Labour Party policy direction (although they may have closed-off some options),⁴⁷ instead he posited that 'Restraint has been the central characteristic of the trade union – Labour Party relationship'.⁴⁸ Indeed, only about 25% of unions submitted resolutions to the Labour Party Conference (absorbing just 15% of debate time), contrasting with some 75% of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) (accounting for 34% of debate time).⁴⁹ Moreover, the Conference Arrangements Committee, not the unions, set the Conference agenda.⁵⁰ The complex trade union - Labour Party relationship, is further analysed in Shaw's *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party*,⁵¹ including their reciprocal obligations, rights, responsibilities, and undertakings to confine the pursuit of the political (including economic issues and social emancipation) to legal and parliamentary means. This relationship between the two wings of the movement, from the unions' perspective, is exposed in their journals.

H.M. Drucker's *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party*⁵² adopts a different perspective to those theorists who consider the Labour Party's function to be

⁴⁶ Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance*; also see: L. Minkin, *The Labour Party Conference: A Study in the Politics of Intra-Party Democracy* (London, 1978).

⁴⁷ Such issues as keeping issues off the agenda, as well as agenda setting and timetabling see: Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (2nd ed.) (Hampshire and New York, 2005).

⁴⁸ Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance*, p. 26.

⁴⁹ M. Harrison, *Trade Unions and the Labour Party*, pp. 204-8.

⁵⁰ The order and timing of debates mattered as items late on the agenda were liable to be time limited, and simultaneous debates could be employed expediently, whilst exclusions were as much an exercise in political power as inclusions. Non-decision making was also employed, some topics or resolutions being left off the agenda by tacit agreement, others pushed out, or transformed into composite resolutions, or by specifying that certain topics could only be discussed after specified intervals of time; for instance, constitutional matters such as affiliation. See for instance, L. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance*; S. Lukes *Power: A Radical View*; M. Harrison, *Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945*, p. 241.

⁵¹ Eric Shaw, *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party* (Manchester, 1988).

⁵² Henry M. Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party* (London, 1979); See also David Howell, *MacDonald's Party: Labour Identities and Crisis, 1922-1931* (Oxford, 2002).

acquiring parliamentary power for the labour movement, and its formal politics.⁵³ Drucker analyses the Party's ideology both in terms of its doctrine (its formal, usually codified, values and constitution), and its powerful but informal ethos, including loyalty to the leaders, conservative attitudes to funds, formality in practices, and the expectation of leaders to make sacrifices.⁵⁴ The ideological understandings of union protagonists, and the views the union journals disseminated, encompassed this wider understanding which feeds into their own understandings and interpretations

In short, trade unions in Britain have been political in numerous ways as recorded and analysed in the existing literature. They have lobbied to change the law, advanced rights, promoted specific policies (such as the nationalisation of industry) and set up and funded their own political party. Activists have worked within them to make them more political, and divisions within and between unions have been exploited to this end. Given that politics itself is an activity of groups seeking to influence resource allocations and decisions affecting the wider society, trade unions are necessarily political.⁵⁵ Furthermore, politics is unlikely to be confined to leaders – whether official leaders or unofficial rank-and-file leaders. The question arises as to the beliefs of the wider membership and whether this can be evidenced in the form of ideologies expressed and presented to that membership through their journals.

Ideology

Ideology is fundamental to this project. It is understood here in its broadest sense, as a means to interpret and to make sense of the world. Ideology assigns meanings, informs political thought, provides collectively held frameworks of reference, offers normative explanations and prescriptions, and shapes decision-making. Ideology is ubiquitous, even, and arguably especially, when unnoticed. Ideology has its own extensive literature that ranges from general explanations to

⁵³ Such as Robert McKenzie, Ralph Miliband, Samuel H. Beer, Tom Nairn and Perry Anderson.

⁵⁴ Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party*.

⁵⁵ Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London, 2005).

specific interpretations and understandings.⁵⁶ It is intimately interwoven into politics and impacts on decisions regarding the distribution of scarce goods, and securing or opposing public policy. Ideology manifests as claims which underpin and inform people's self-conceptions, their understanding of society and place in the world. This encompasses both the overtly political, and the construction of the paradigms within which issues are analysed, limiting the questions asked, and shaping how they are understood and answered. Ideology seeks to decontest meanings and control political discourse (with knock-on effects on contingent understandings). Ideologies bestow specific associations and inferences and points of reference; they establish dominant narratives and provide structured social perceptions and interpretations of 'truth' and 'fact'. This study will analyse the trade unions' journal content to ascertain whether they evidence such competing ideologies.

Ideology enables and binds those with shared concerns and assumptions to engage in collective action, guided by norms, beliefs, and considerations of the fundamentals of the 'good life', perceptions of morality, human nature, desirability of social-systems, and even 'brute facts'.⁵⁷ Ideology dictates both what is possible, and what is desirable within the systems of civil society, becoming woven into the culture and fabric of daily life.⁵⁸ It encompasses shared systems of ideas and beliefs (symbolically or within the lived experience) that provide an explanatory and interpretive conceptual framework directed towards practical political thinking and public activity, that are typically linked with specific social groups or classes. Like politics and trade unionism, ideology is a group endeavour that penetrates society at multiple levels through various agents and institutions, reflecting group goals and prescriptions. It is subject to expediencies and context specificities and sensitivities, as advocates attempt to elicit and maintain public support in order to action policies.

Both ideology and political cultures influence received understandings and interpretations, yet they are distinct. The ideological is where cultural practices and political power become interwoven.⁵⁹ Political cultures are the product of political thought, and form a sub-set of ideology, specifically the forms of knowledge,

⁵⁶ For instance: Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (Essex, 1994); T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An introduction, 2nd ed.* (London, 2007); Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford, 1998).

⁵⁷ Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.56.

⁵⁸ M. Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford, 2003). pp.21-25.

⁵⁹ Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 11.

received understandings, sets of values, attitudes and beliefs held about politics that infuse the lived reality and aspirations which operate in civil society as a form of social cement.⁶⁰

Political cultures through discourse and interpretations, engage with the social world to shape decisions; they become manifest as social facts, injecting order and meaning into observed or anticipated sets of political phenomena, and hold together sets of related notions. The meeting of political thought and ideas expressed as matrices of political concepts, combined with the need for public support in order to action policies, means ideologies cannot deal solely in terms of abstract political philosophy; rather they are embedded in political action and the real world.⁶¹

Concrete orientation requires consideration of the actual circumstances where political thought and policy ideas are to be operationalized.⁶² Ideologies, whilst reflecting group goals and prescriptions, necessarily also reflect contextual expediencies and sensitivities as their producers and advocates interact with their audience and environment in their attempt to elicit and maintain support from a critical mass of the public, thus rendering ideological standpoints permeable.

The plurality of ideologies in complex industrial societies emerges from the amalgam of power exercised in the interests of specific groups (embodying the capacity to shape meanings and influence thought-practices). They also reflect people's understandings of the contradictions and discrepancies between the realities and outcomes of particular social-systems and aspirations. These are all imbued with tensions between structure and agency as causal mechanisms, but most, including Marx, consider both to be pertinent, as in his famous formula; 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already'.⁶³

Marxist ideological understandings inform the perceptions the CPGB journal contributors, the non- CPGB Marxists, and many non-Marxist socialists, and thus are important to this study. The wide literature on Marxism includes his conception of ideology as dissimulations and power manipulation; an obfuscation which acts to reify and reproduce power relationships through their entrenchment to advantage a

⁶⁰ Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London, 1936), pp.154-155.

⁶³ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

specific class or group, upholding unjust or oppressive systems through the institutionalisation of social and political ideas that construct specific knowledge, mystifications and misinterpretations of the social reality.

Others built on Marx's foundations. For instance, Gramsci perceived ideology to extend beyond distortion and obfuscation, as its functions of legitimation necessitated its resonance with people's life experiences in order to provide plausible explanations for reality as experienced by the mass of people (failure to bear some relationship to the lived reality would result in the ideology's demise, as arguably occurred with Marxism in the USSR). In this pursuit, he elucidated factors pertaining to ideology beyond the base infrastructure determining the superstructure. He explored ideas around hegemony, and engendering consent through civil society and institutions, utilising culture as social cement which facilitated the ruling class' maintenance of their position with minimal coercion. Ideology is consciously produced, consciously and unconsciously reproduced and reified, but it is typically internalized unconsciously.⁶⁴ Education, civil institutions and dominant discourse shape received understandings and persuade subordinate classes that the prevailing order is in their interests. Consent and legitimacy is engendered, albeit with occasional strategic concessions to subordinate groups to maintain consent, resulting in individuals becoming part of the organic whole, impeding counter-hegemonic movements (although history shows hegemonic ideas and regimes decay and are replaced). For Gramsci, 'organic intellectuals' emergent in the subaltern class, critiquing the prevailing system, carried the potential to remedy spurious understandings internalised by the subordinate groups, and could create in them a cultural-social unity and self-consciousness through forging links between political theory and ideology as 'lived'. Thus, the performative contradictions between the social reality of subordinated groups and the official ideas and conceptions of the dominant class could be dissolved.⁶⁵ As such, Gramscian thought provides a nuanced understanding of how ideas, social practices and institutions intertwine and inter-penetrate within a complex social whole. Such insights are useful in analysing both changing political cultures in the

⁶⁴ See for instance: David Forgacs and Eric J. Hobsbawm (eds.), *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935* (New York 2000).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

trade union movement, and the influences on the participants received understandings.

Althusser considered that the 'ideological state apparatuses', religious institutions, the legal, political, cultural, and especially the educational system and the family, moulded social practices and instilled conceptual boundaries through socialisation. Norms and values are internalised and then reinforced through social interaction and institutions, fashioning political thought-behaviour. Thus individuals are 'interpellated' as social 'subjects' and become the unconscious and unreflective carriers of the dominant class's ideology, ensuring the maintenance of the ruling class and the established order, and protecting the economic system.⁶⁶ The conceptual limitations imposed restrain options as much as material circumstances, dictating norms, impacting values, and restricting conceptions of what is possible.⁶⁷ Althusser's focus on the role of institutions and the importance of axiomatic beliefs provides an approach whereby the state endorsed assumptions that underlie educational curricula and the ethos of various state and civil institutions can be problematized to facilitate an understanding of the acceptance of oppression and exploitation of subordinate groups.

However, not all regard ideology as a super-imposed negative phenomenon; some perceive it to be a social product, the manifestation of political thought interacting with the real world. Michael Freeden suggests that 'ideologies are the arrangements of political thoughts that illuminate the central ideas, overt assumptions and unstated biases that in turn drive political conduct',⁶⁸ and that the conceptual morphologies within different ideologies are realised in the political thought-practices of its adherents. Freeden's morphological analysis of ideology examines the nature of political concepts (the basic units of political thinking such as freedom, justice, rights, equality, democracy, and citizenship, which all ideologies contain). These concepts in themselves are 'essentially contestable' and subject to competing depictions of their components and hold multiple possible characterisations.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Louis Althusser *Lenin and Philosophy*, translated by Ben Brewster, (New York, 1971), pp. 95-126.

⁶⁷ L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (New York, 2001); L. Althusser, *For Marx* (London, 2005).

⁶⁸ Freeden, 'Editorial: What Is Special About Ideologies?', p. 6.

⁶⁹ Freeden, *Ideology and Political Theory*, p.12.

Different ideological strands have their own distinct clusters, combinations, patterns, and inter-relationships, continuities, discontinuities, and decontested meanings, which both shape, and are shaped by, what is politically possible, which itself is dependent on what is contextually possible.⁷⁰ However, decontestations in the meanings of concepts can be subject to challenge. Terence Ball posits that core concepts become 'sore' concepts when contested and destabilised by external events or changes in understanding, thereby either necessitating a reconceptualization of the original concept to incorporate the new meanings, or its rejection.⁷¹

Each ideology offers its own ideational complexes, prescriptions and solutions. In Freeden's terms, they have their own hierarchies, priorities and ideational proximities and permeability. They each contain an ineliminable core formed from concept clusters, along with peripheral concepts (intellectually or emotionally marginal to the core), and contextually malleable contingent perimeter concepts, which form the interface between concrete political action and political thought, and thus lend pertinence, functioning as cultural conduits, often in the form of policy ideas.⁷² Core concepts depend on adjacent concepts for their interpretation. Specific patterns of core, adjacent and perimeter concepts, endow ideologies with their distinctiveness. However, their specific constructions are malleable, diachronically and synchronically, in terms of their relative positioning and rankings and reweighting, showing structural permeability and context sensitivity. It is the competition for legitimacy in conceptual configurations that underlies efforts and repeated conflicts to garner control over public policy or the political system, including attempts to alter perceptions and offer politically credible alternatives.⁷³

Differences and mutations within and between the configurations of concepts exist within, as well as between, broad ideological categories. For instance, socialist ideology (the dominant ideology evidenced in the union journals) has different strands, but they all share core values and common characteristics, what Wittgenstein called 'family resemblances', which like a thread have multiple

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Terrance Ball, 'From 'Core' to 'Sore' Concepts: Ideological Innovation and Conceptual Change', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 4:3 (1999), pp. 391-396.

⁷² Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp. 79-82, 84-88.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 12.

overlapping strands, with no strands running the thread's full length.⁷⁴ Thus, all strands of socialism share equality and social welfare as core concepts, regardless of their relationship with other concepts, whilst the differing configuration and relationship between these concepts define the type of socialism under scrutiny.⁷⁵

Morphological analysis enables the tracing of the trajectories of various concepts over time, as they migrate, distancing themselves from previously adjacent concepts, whilst moving closer to others, or travelling nearer or further from the core, subject to contexts, idea-environments, and logical and cultural constraints. Indeed, Freedden draws the analogy between this morphological analysis of ideology and maps, where the network of roads emerging from a specific point are equivalent to the logical constraints on an ideology (those required by concretisation), whilst the cultural constraints (within the framework of logical agency, considered necessary but not following logically from the ineliminable core) act as guides to different routes, dependent on preferences but also effectively barring some routes. Different ideologies present competing maps, where the multi-dimensional relationships between the towns vary, and where the towns are not in any fixed location, prominence, or even existence.⁷⁶ Thus ideologies are subject not only to historical inheritance and decontestations, but also the specific positioning and interrelationships between the concepts at any time and place. Freedden's morphological approach enables the tracing of both conscious and unconscious expressions of ideology, political cultures, common-sense understandings, and ethos, and thus is particularly useful in the analysis of the trade union journals for changes in political cultures.

Disseminating Ideology: The Role of the Press

The dissemination of ideology is fundamental to its survival and growth, and involves various institutions, such as political parties, trade unions and other

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁵ Ideological families can also be understood from a psychological perspective, the 'Gestalt-forming' essentialist wholes that people construct, and which are greater than the 'sum of its parts'. The structural anthropologist Levi-Strauss considered such categorisations as being founded on the ideology in total, its enduring practices and characteristics.

⁷⁶ Freedden *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp.85-87.

pressure and interest groups, intellectuals, and the media. The media act as both disseminators and gatekeepers of information (and misinformation), offering subjective interpretations as facts, framing events, mediating issues through specific ideas and interests, setting agendas (omissions and inclusions), promoting some aspects and ignoring others, and conferring voice selectively.⁷⁷ They also employ value laden statements, deploy devices like ‘letters’ to the paper which emanate from the paper’s journalists at owners’/ editors’ direction, but signed ‘housewife’ or ‘mother’ to lend authenticity.⁷⁸ The mainstream capitalist newspapers were notoriously hostile to socialist interpretations and analysis, and the labour movement found difficulty in projecting itself and its specific policies through established organs like the BBC or the commercial press. Thus, the Labour Party, and other organisations of the left, considered one remedy to the situation would be through their own independent press outlets. The TUC and Labour Party’s decision to take shares in the *Daily Herald* (1922) was political, and evidenced the perceived imperative to have a mainstream print outlet where they controlled the political messages and language and could disseminate Labour’s voice, policy directions, aspirations, and oppositions.⁷⁹ However, the history of the socialist press was one of chronic financial difficulties.

The Labour Party’s difficulties in effectively disseminating their message to mass audiences are addressed in Laura Beers’ study *Your Britain: The Media and the Making of the Labour Party*.⁸⁰ She examines the LP’s preoccupation with propagating their message in an overwhelmingly capitalist dominated press environment, where Labour’s opponents set parameters, framed debates, specified priorities, and selected which aspects to highlight or underplay. This was especially significant as Labour repositioned itself from its early sectional stance representing working class interests, to a Party which sought widespread public support from all sections of society, and where traditional posters and pamphlets were deemed ‘increasingly insufficient to combat the subtler and more ubiquitous propaganda

⁷⁷ Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*.

⁷⁸ Frank Allaun, ‘The Tory Press and the Coming Election-II’, *AEU Journal*, (December, 1949), p. 369.

⁷⁹ Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left* (London, 1977); also see Willaim. Rust and Allen Hutt, *The Inside Story of the Daily Worker* (London, 1949); the TUC / Labour Party relinquishment of the *Herald* largely abandoned the field to the commercial corporate press with natural right-wing biases.

⁸⁰ Laura Beers, *Your Britain: Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (London, 2010).

being served in the *Chronical*, the *Mail*, and other anti-Labour papers'.⁸¹ Moreover, the diminished political coverage in the mass circulation dailies resulted in increased editorial agenda setting powers.⁸² Beers posited that the Labour Party should have managed the Tory press better, and the disadvantage inherent in Labour's position could have been mitigated by greater input into the capitalist press; this would have facilitated increased public exposure to socialist framing and policy prescriptions, and thus ensure greater penetration of such understandings and interpretations into public discourse and debate. This is considered significant, as the popular press was the public's principle source of political news. If Beers is correct, the dissemination of a socialist voice would have impacted the non-socialist as well as socialist journal readers. The circulation of just the three principal journals examined here, was some 200,000 (purchased, not free), far exceeding that of the Left Book Club, meaning trade union journals in total would have exposed many hundreds of thousands of people to a socialist framing of events and issues.

Approach and Theory

The journal articles will be interrogated for the significance of the views expressed (both explicit and implicit), and the changing morphology of the ideology entailed, in terms of both ethos and doctrine. The dominant influences informing the views expressed will be sought, and how the ideological understandings evidenced in the journals are situated in the broader ideas environment. The unquestioned, symbolic, and unchallenged casual assumptions will be the focus, with the aim of exposing identifiable strands of political thought in terms of broad continuities, modifications within those continuities, inconsistencies, and positions that appear illogical. Such unconscious representations of ideas and 'facts' in the trade union journals, are central to this thesis.

Historic texts, such as the journals analysed here, typically focus on contemporaneous issues, which are mediated through cultural understandings, language and meanings. Theorists differ on how such texts should be addressed. History, culture, and social relationships shape meanings, and meanings shape the

⁸¹ Ibid. p.34.

⁸² Ibid. pp.18-19

socio-political world. The plurality of meanings that can potentially be ascribed to concepts, and the conflict over their decontestations, are central to ideology. Thus, a conceptual history approach (Begriffsgeschichte) that fuses contemporary and historic use of concepts, and their changing meanings and nuances, was advocated by Koselleck. He stressed the importance of both the synchronic and the diachronic, focusing on the evolution of ideas, concepts, adjacencies, and combinations; why some endure and flourish, whilst others fade, and how their meanings can be cumulative and open to further changes, and how they relate to real world situations.⁸³

The insights and potency of language and the importance of decontestations, the indeterminacy of language, and multiplicity and multi-level interpretations, are fundamental within ideology, as are the notions of intentionality and of surplus meaning. For instance, Skinner focused on the use of language in political thought and the importance of contextual interpretation of political texts in order to identify the author's intentions, and the authorial understanding of the audience for whom texts were constructed. Consequently, it would be supposed that articles written for trade union members would be of intrinsic interest to readers, and enable them to link the various 'facts' contained to ascertain ideologically consistent conclusions. Skinner argued that there should be a presumption of truthfulness by the author, but saw empirical 'truth' and 'fact' as insignificant in explaining beliefs, maintaining that to attempt to conflate rational belief and historical truths is unhelpful, as false beliefs are often rationally held.⁸⁴ Thus, ideology and the political thought it encapsulates, can be understood by attempting to comprehend the authorial intentionality, both in terms of motivation, and the intended purpose of texts within the social and cultural setting, 'seeing things their way'.⁸⁵ Skinner's historicist approach is employed in this study.

Political cultures incorporate class, not merely as a socio-economic group or in relations to the means of production, but again in its broad social sense, in accordance with E.P. Thompson's understanding that class is a fluid historical phenomenon, resulting from the fusion of experiences and consciousness embodied in people and contexts and manifest in the group's shared feelings and

⁸³ Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp.117-119.

⁸⁴ Quinten Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Volume 1* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.29-33.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3.

interests.⁸⁶ Class consciousness is a powerful force in trade unionism, and an influential factor in the unions' interactions. Class consciousness is considered an emergent property of class, consequent upon temporally and spatially specific cultural interpretations of experiences and circumstances, including received understandings of class relationships which involve the 'othering' of different classes.⁸⁷ Such 'othering' is employed by the journals; the authors draw-out and nurture class consciousness to highlight and contextualise the workers' position within capitalist society, highlighting the structural and lived inequalities of wealth, power, and opportunity (as exemplified by 'want in the midst of plenty' during the depression) and sacrifice in the war.

The idea that social communications are founded in the social experience, which extends beyond modes of production, social orders or cultures, was postulated by Raymond Williams.⁸⁸ He utilised the concept of a 'structure of feeling', that emerges from the lived experience in terms of the nebulous emergent consciousness that embodied the values and ethos that result from group members' affective and cognitive practices (including class), the comprehension of which is only fully accessible to them. The complexities and incongruities of society in which this occurs, for Williams, preclude absolute hegemony. This approach will inform the evaluation of complexities and incongruities evidenced in the journals, and how they expose the ideological understandings of the contributors.

The political cultures and the ideologies underlying them are not always overt or self-evident in texts. The material is often multi-layered and contains both nuances, and broader significances. The subjectivities and the changing nature of language, meanings, and understandings are addressed by the hermeneutic emphasis on multiplicity in the interpretation of speech acts, texts, and their meanings, including latent meanings that require a sensitivity to the environment in which they were composed.

Language is the conduit of thought, thus shaping social worlds, disseminating ideas and information, and acting as a facilitator and a constraint. Language is imbued with performativity and power which can give legitimacy. The tactical use of language, re-description and altered meanings, employing overlapping vocabulary,

⁸⁶ Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London, 1976).

or, similar techniques, can be used to steer or control discourse, or to undermine people and practices. John Searle considered language to be performative, founded in intrinsic intentionality, implying that ideas, once disseminated, can reinforce or change interpretations, norms and cultures and can mould 'common-sense' understandings.⁸⁹ 'Language does not just describe a pre-existing institutional reality but is partly constitutive of that reality'.⁹⁰ Like Skinner, Searle posited that texts must be analysed subject to contextual understanding.

Sources

The primary sources for this thesis are the journals produced by the unions for their members. Thus, insofar as this thesis is concerned, the concept of trade unionism here must be taken to be that which is understood and disseminated in the journals as constructed by their contributors (principally union officials and labour journalists), and their editors (typically the General Secretary or appointed editorial committees). The *NUGMW* and *AEU Journals*, and the *New Propellor* ((*NP*), renamed the *Metal Worker* (*MW*) in April 1946) are excavated for evidence of political culture in the subjective understandings evidenced in the framing of issues, interpretations given, and the inter-relationships between journal articles and broader debates. *The Clerk* (the journal of the National Union of Clerks) and the *Electrical Trades Journal* (the journal of the ETU renamed *Electron* in April 1950) are employed to ascertain the extent to which the findings from the principal journals are replicated and can be generalised. The large selection of trade union and labour movement publications, pamphlets, ephemera, and correspondence held at the WCML is utilised to situate the principal journals in the context of the wider labour movements' understandings, aspirations, and policy prescriptions.

The focus on political cultures is not intended to dismiss or diminish the extent to which the journals deliberated on industrial issues (varying between some 30-50% of the official union journals). However, the industrial and political are overlapping paradigms and it is often difficult to disentangle the two. Indeed, many articles that ostensibly focus on the industrial are heavily imbued with political undertones,

⁸⁹ John Searle, 'What is an Institution?' *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 1 (2005), pp. 1–22.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 12.

meanings, suppositions, and agendas. This is exemplified in the communist *NP/MW* in which the vast majority of content is ostensibly industrial, yet embedded (implicitly as well as explicitly) within the wider capitalist system and all which that entails, which renders the journal highly political.

A basic assumption in this study is that there is no monolithic political culture or ideological understanding shared by all trade union members or officials, and that differences will be dynamic and contested, and evidenced within as well as between the unions.

The selection of the unions whose journals are the focus of this study is necessarily a compromise between a broad sample with sufficient equivalence to find differences and similarities, and a narrower sample that facilitates detailed investigation within the limitations of the time available. The comparative nature of this study into these historic cultural artefacts is designed to facilitate the isolation and comparison of specific variables (the themes that arise from the texts), and to examine what lies behind the emergent patterns.

The choice of unions for this study was based on their specific and diverse characteristics. Firstly, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), the second largest union affiliated to the Labour Party, was an historically important old 'craft' union, which opened itself to a (limited) broader membership within the engineering industry. The AEU was notable for its strong, communist inspired, shop steward movement (largely autonomous consequent upon the structurally fragmented nature of British engineering), and a moderate left-wing leadership. Traditional 'craft' unions, like the AEU, represented the 'labour aristocracy', exclusive and skill based, usually through time served apprenticeships. They guarded against an oversupply of skilled workers undermining wage levels (albeit with sections for semi-skilled engineering workers), and were exclusively male until 1943.

Craft unions were distinct from the 'General Unions' like the NUGMW, the second union whose journal is scrutinised here. The General Unions emerged from the New Unionism movement of the 1880s and expanded rapidly, especially with the industrial growth of 1892-1911. They saw strength in numbers, were inclusive, and open to women. The NUGMW had a policy of 'One Big Union'. It was the product of an amalgamation of the National Union of General Workers (which incorporated the Women Workers Federation), the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, and

the Municipal Workers Association (all of which continued, to some extent, to keep their identity within the amalgamated union). The NUGMW was the most right-wing of the journals analysed, although its position varied over time, and in response to multiple external factors, and changes to personnel in its hierarchy.

The journal of the Aircraft's Shop Stewards' National Council (ASSNC which was renamed Engineering and Allied Trades Shop Stewards National Council (EATSSNC) to reflect its extension beyond the aircraft industry), the *New Propellor* (renamed the *Metal Worker*), is also scrutinised, not as a co-equivalent to the official union journals, but as a representative benchmark of the ideological understandings of many rank and file movements and engineering activists, who agitated and promoted left-wing socialist and communist interpretations.

Union Journals

The journals were constructed for a specific audience, their membership, which, whilst typically sharing related occupations, was heterogeneous, covering a variety of ideological understandings, allegiances, and degrees of activism. The journals' content was subject to numerous factors including the wider discourse, audience awareness, and attempts to engage non-active members. The journals contained implicit and overt political material, and embodied specific ideational frameworks for interpreting the present and understanding the past, and assumptions within the political narrative (including the denunciation of alternative narratives) which were constitutive of the received understandings of their readership.

The journals formed a conduit to extend the union's voice beyond union meetings and rallies, to the wider membership, eliciting a sense of community and solidarity amongst their members, not merely through the shared elements of their working-life, but through efforts to nurture class consciousness, interpellating the readership into being one of 'us', and 'othering' the ownership / management class, who, it was declared, lived off the product of their labour. They employed outside authoritative voices to give weight to their message, and promoted independent organisations with whom they shared goals, for instance, promoting their inter-war pacifist agenda by reproducing 'Union of Democratic Control' material,⁹¹ and Albert Einstein's 1930

⁹¹ For instance: 'The Union of Democratic Control', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), pp. 238-9; Arthur Hayday, 'The Vested Interest in War,' *Electrical Trades Journal*, (September, 1932) p. 184.

lecture on Militant Pacifism (before fascism rose in Europe, and the Spanish Civil War).⁹²

The journals enabled unions to exercise some control of language and narrative, exerting influence through disseminating ideas and interpretations, often at the subconscious level of unquestioned assumptions and common-sense understandings, thereby delimiting conceptions of what was considered possible. This thesis undertakes to reveal 'surplus meaning' and notable absences within the material, through analysing the journals in terms of the implicit and explicit political cultures, social biases, and value loaded statements - thereby exposing fixed and changing elements of socialist political culture and ideology, and how this was situated within wider contemporaneous debates. Both majority and minority interpretations expressed in the journals will be scrutinised, including policy prescriptions, and critiques of Government policies. Similarly, the malleability of dominant socialist thought itself will be considered, with different aspects being stressed at different times, and how this links with Labour Party policy and the external environment.

The journals disseminated a range of socialist understandings and interpretations and framing of events and issues, effectively making them largely unacknowledged propagandists and socialisers for the Labour Party. The wide-spread nature of trade union membership, as opposed to individual Labour Party membership, meant they and their journals could circulate socialist and 'labourist' values and ideas more widely than the Labour Party itself. Moreover, they embraced effective working class education directly in the journals, and indirectly through their reading recommendations. Nonetheless, contributors and editors were cognisant of their politically heterogeneous readership, and the necessity to tailor content to engage, or at least not alienate the non-socialist. The unions were fully aware of the importance of propaganda and the utilisation of diverse media for attracting and retaining members, and even proposed using films 'to secure interest of the new generation many of whom are ignorant of Trade Unionism'.⁹³ As Europe came under fascist oppression the AEU, recognising the propaganda power of the British printed press and British and foreign radio, called for anyone with linguistic skills to

⁹² Albert Einstein, 'Militant Pacifism', *NUGMW*, (March, 1931), p .375.

⁹³ Dorothy M. Elliott, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1937), p.179.

write, translate, or speak on radio, to disseminate international fraternity and sympathy with European workers.⁹⁴ The International Transport Workers Federation went further, producing a journal dedicated to the issue, 'Fascism'.⁹⁵

The journals' content was highly reactive to the dynamic event and issue environment in the political, economic, industrial, technical, and international spheres. In the context of the interplay of history, politics, and interest groups, within a society shaped by the dominant capitalist classes' hegemonic influence, the journal contributors mediated issues through their ideologies and cultural understandings, expediencies and sensitivities. Those journal contributors who rejected hegemonic constructions, strove to challenge and reshape such received understandings. Nonetheless, the official union journals promoted parliamentarianism. This was disseminated both explicitly, and implicitly through, for instance, Members of Parliament (MPs) contributing articles, and regular 'Parliamentary notes' and accounts of Labour Party's MPs' contributions to parliamentary debates.

The different union's journals each had their individual character and style, with many differences and commonalities. However, they shared a belief in socialist core principles, considering the group as the primary social unit, foregrounding relationships / interrelationships with their environment (especially their work environment), and the objectives of equality and social welfare. They also shared ideas around organisation and democratic representation of their members' sectional or class interests, valuing unity and solidarity, and power through collective action. The journals each contained selective accounts and histories, specific to their particular unions, and the labour movement generally. Such histories were imbued with meaning, held a symbolic function, creating and perpetuating the movement's folk memory, engendering fraternity and solidarity in the face of what was presented as enduring exploitation. They shaped perceptions of the unions and their members place in society, acting as cultural glue and class consciousness prompts, which combined with their ideology to shape perceptions, influencing behaviours, decisions and policies, from purely defensive, to the optimism that 1945 generated. The narrative they engendered at times stood in

⁹⁴ Robert B. Suthers, 'Peace in our time?' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1939), p.158.

⁹⁵ International Transport Workers Federation, *Fascism*, (Amsterdam, 1934-1945).

stark contrast to empirical evidence. For instance, despite the trade union weakness during the 1920s and 1930s, the union journals projected the impression that they were the powerful, sole voice of labour. No inkling was given that the unions represented only a minority of workers. Instead they stressed the trade union movements' successes, for instance, in influencing legislation (and individual unions' success in garnering improved pay and conditions, compensation claims, and appeals). When they failed to secure their objectives, structural asymmetries and powerful interests were blamed. The journals also highlighted the unions' financial benefits, clarified policy and discussed bread and butter issues. Union sponsored social events were detailed, outings, 'smoking concerts', dinners, long membership and service to the union awards, dances, sports events, children's outings, the Mary Macarthur Holiday Home, and weekend, day, and summer schools. Bonds with the wider labour movement were also encouraged through various activities, from raising money for Spain, to socials, outings, political rallies and meetings, and educational opportunities.

The NUGMW Journal

The circulation of the *NUGMW Journal* was some 50,000.⁹⁶ Journal contributors were typically union officials, and occasionally representatives of national or international labour bodies or the LP (rather than labour journalists). Articles submitted by members were sifted by their district office and then again by the journal editors (an editorial committee).⁹⁷ The *NUGMW* overtly promoted parliamentarianism and the Labour Party line,⁹⁸ and sought to reinforce the desired electoral path to achieve political influence and status through incorporation into government. They regularly published articles featuring members who worked on education boards, became Councillors, Aldermen, or Mayors, and MPs. Their achievements were then linked to their union membership, and where appropriate their advancement in the union hierarchy (other official union journals did likewise, but to a lesser extent). Such articles reinforced the idea that high position and voice was best attained through approved channels. The labourist voice within the journal was constant, but loyalty to the Labour Party leadership (as opposed to the union

⁹⁶ Editor, 'Editorial Note', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 22.

⁹⁷ Editor, 'Editorial Note', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 459.

⁹⁸ This is unsurprising considering the prominent role in the Labour Party of the NUGMW's President and General Secretaries and Chief Women's Officer in the period under consideration (J. R. Clynes, Will Thorne, and Margaret Bondfield, and later Chas Dukes and Tom Williamson).

leadership) was not strongly emphasised until the 1945 Labour Party electoral victory. When Chas Dukes succeeded Will Thorne as General Secretary (1936), journal content shifted to the left, but subsequently drifted markedly rightwards. The ensuing tenure of Tom Williamson (1946-1962) saw the journal firmly on the right, promoting a reformist agenda, faithfully reproducing the Labour Party line. The labourist ethos of loyalty to the leader, solidarity, and future Labour Party electoral prospects, usurped all other considerations. Nonetheless, there were continuities; the promotion of the co-operative movement (although this diminished after J.R. Clynes retired as President) and anti-communism was a long-term background issue, coming to the fore as circumstances made it pertinent.

The *NUGMW Journal* attempted to engage their readership at their own level, explaining terms, clarifying issues, and using accessible language. They periodically employed humorous columns to engage readers, and occasionally during the 1930s sought members' opinions on how to improve the union (offering a prize for published ideas on recruitment and retention in 1930-1931, and on women's organisation in 1934). They also established a themed Readers Forum (November 1933 -February 1935), initially focussing on worker control of industry, and occasionally members' ideas were sought through questionnaires sent to branches.⁹⁹ The readers' contributions to these forums was typically to the left of the usual journal content. Cartoons were employed until February 1937, after which, photographs were increasingly included (historic buildings, country scenes, and young boys enjoying leisure activities). Thus, as war fears mounted, overt and controversial political satire (and anti-non-TU member ('non') propaganda) was replaced with images of enduring England, and 'innocents' who represented the country's future.

The non-unionist (the 'nons') were heavily condemned in the *NUGMW Journal* through cartoons as well as written articles (diminishing post 1937 after Clynes retired). 'Nons' were portrayed as selfish, short sighted, morally defective; their own worst enemy, detrimental to union members by weakening their negotiating power, and thus tacitly aiding capitalists' downward pressures on wages and conditions.

⁹⁹ Chas Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes; Looking Back – , 1935', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1936), pp. 16-18; Consequently, journal publication was passed to Head Office's Research Department, and distribution problems were addressed; NUGMW, *The General and Municipal Workers Report of the 1938 Biannual Congress*, (NUGMW, 1938), pp. 168-169.

Similarly, the journal emphasised how 'nons' did not contribute to union negotiation costs, for instance, Trade Boards and Whitley Councils (which the *NUGMW* advocated). Condemnation and simplistic moral tales rather than analysis were employed in tackling the problem. Thus, class solidarity and fraternity were subjugated to developing the union and thus labour power.

The *NUGMW Journals* always contained articles written by women for general consumption, as well as specifically for women members. The articles covered the same industrial and international topics as other journal content, but also highlighted topics such as maternal care and nutrition, and, very occasionally, articles for women as housewives. Women were ostensibly treated as equal within the journal, however, this only pertained until gender interests clashed (such as when war work declined and men were afraid that women would still occupy their previous roles) at which time patriarchal norms came vigorously to the fore.

The AEU Journal

The *AEU Journal*, published since 1851, was edited by the General Secretary, and claimed a circulation of 100,000.¹⁰⁰ The spectrum of ideological understandings and intellectual debate evidenced in the *AEU Journal* was far greater than other journals analysed. Articles were written from conflicting but primarily left-leaning socialist standpoints, many informed by syndicalism, communism, Guild Socialism, as well as Labourism. The views expressed (often cuttingly satirical) by R. B. Suthers¹⁰¹ were representative of the most common ideological approaches taken by *AEU Journal* contributors. I. Haig Mitchel was an exception to the ideological norm, self-identifying as a trade unionist, not a socialist, judging socialism, with its middle and upper class protagonists, as detrimental to trade unionism. Notably, the high profile Marxist, J.T. Murphy,¹⁰² was employed as a regular contributor, illustrating the *AEU Journal* editor's desire to disseminate socialist ideological framing of issues and understandings (despite being unrepresentative of the membership). In the early 1930s his articles advocated industrial unionism,

¹⁰⁰ 'Trade Union Headquarters', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1932), pp.32-36.

¹⁰¹ R. B. Suthers was a labour journalist with a background as a *Clarion* writer and deputy editor and long-time colleague of Blatchford; Joyce M. Bellamy and John S. Saville (eds.), *Dictionary of Labour Biography vol.4* (Basingstoke, 1977), pp. 166-168.

¹⁰² John T. Murphy, had been at the forefront of the Sheffield engineers, and was a committed communist throughout the period examined here. He resigned from the CP in 1932 and became Secretary of the Socialist League and a United Front protagonist. See: Ralph Darlington, 'The Political Trajectory of J. T. Murphy', (Liverpool, 1988).

amalgamations, and increased shop steward numbers and works councils. Post 1935, he concentrated on the dangers fascism posed, geo-politics, and the historical background to the prevailing international situation, and advocated the United Front.

The *AEU Journal* also covered the social side of union life. They had irregular letter pages, but these were typically dominated by union officials and journal contributors rather than members. The journal was reformulated in 1933, relegating the Organising District Delegates Reports to the back, after the articles on political, economic, and industrial affairs.¹⁰³ The issues of wages and conditions were largely confined to the District Reports, the Abstract of the Council's Proceedings, and included in the Editor's notes at times of conflict. The journal's principal articles centred on economics, domestic and international politics, and history, providing its readership with a political education, socialising them into socialist interpretations and understandings of events and issues. The majority *AEU Journal* voice presented traditional patriarchal views, largely ignoring women until the rearmaments drive and wartime, when gender issues became salient; dilution, rules and agreements, pay (especially equal pay and the protection of the skilled male wage), and the post-war position of women, were all then covered. Women were excluded from the union until January 1943, when they were admitted into their own section, and not as equals.

The image of the engineers as the 'labour aristocracy' is strongly evidenced in the *AEU Journal*; the image promoted was that 'man' is a tool-making animal, and it is the engineers that construct 'man's' tools. The engineers' status and employment opportunities were, like many issues, politicised and exploited to present the case for socialism. The capitalist class was continuously 'othered'. For instance, the capitalist system was portrayed as structurally impeding the engineer-inventor from profiting from their intellectual property (their inventions stolen, obtained under deception, or acquired cheaply due to prohibitive patent or development costs),¹⁰⁴ whilst the capitalists were structurally facilitated in the exploitation of engineers' ingenuity. The *AEU Journal* also published and politicised company profits and

¹⁰³ After Smethurst retired as editor and General Secretary August, 1933.

¹⁰⁴ 'Technicus', 'Inventions and Inventors', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1934), p. 25. Also see for instance the series by 'Thaddeus' from March, 1934 onwards, such as: 'Thaddeus' 'The persecution of John Kay', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1935), p.19.

share dividend payments, which became especially pertinent when wage demands were refused as unaffordable. There were regular technical articles, which continued through war-time paper rationing.¹⁰⁵ The articles presumed a high level of prior knowledge amongst the readership on many topics, particularly economic questions (unlike the *NUGMW*); only the occasional articles explicitly directed towards youths provided explanations. The *AEU Journals* did not employ cartoons until 1943 when 'Giles' (later of *Daily Express*) began contributing, initially focusing on social rather than overtly political issues, although their cartoons became more political when reintroduced in December 1945

The New Propellor

The *New Propellor* (*NP*) renamed the *Metal Worker* (*MW*), April 1946, the journal of the Aircraft Shop Stewards' National Council (ASSNC), edited by the communist activist and journalist Peter Zinkin,¹⁰⁶ was established in 1935 (at a time when the CPGB was pursuing a United Front policy and frowned upon the establishment of new rank and file organisations).¹⁰⁷ The *NP* evidenced the significant communist sub-culture that existed in engineering and allied trades, which extended to a distributional network. The *NP*'s contributors were trade unionists, but free from an obligation to acquiesce in the official trade union policies, thereby giving the journal status as an ideological benchmark against which others can be measured. The *NP* is not included as a co-equivalent of the official union journals, but as reflective of, and an influence on, activist's interpretation of issues and events, and their representation through their specific ideological framework.

Overtly, the *NP* concentrated on those 'bread and butter' issues that precipitated rank and file grievances. They emphasised small victories which served to establish stewards' power and support for their role as the workers' agents. However, such coverage was underlain with Leninist logic, whereby worker grievances on material issues could be employed to highlight the 'true nature' of the structural power relationships within the capitalist system. In this pursuit, they regularly exposed aircraft, engineering, and allied industry's company profits and company tax evasion and avoidance schemes, for instance in their pejoratively

¹⁰⁵ Articles on, for instance, economic theory were significantly cut during wartime due to paper rationing.

¹⁰⁶ Frow and Frow, *Engineering Struggles*, p.376.

¹⁰⁷ See for instance, Fishman, 'The British Communist Party and Trade Unions'.

named 'The money we earn for others' column. The *NP* encouraged readers' contributions, including cartoons. Cartoons, were significantly more abundant in the *NP* than other journals, providing a readily accessible means of disseminating a strong message in a humorous form, thus appealing to the casual reader in addition to dedicated activists (these cartoons were reportedly frequently displayed on works notice boards). The educative function of the labour movement was also diligently pursued through their numerous (strongly communist biased) reading recommendations.

The inter-war victimisation of militant trade unionists meant that *NP* articles were normally published without attribution. However, in WWII (when the *NP* promoted the production drive) some attribution occurred, a trend that continued post-war and into the Cold War era. The *NP* advocated the *Daily Worker* as the daily paper of choice (the *AEU* and *NUGMW* journals recommended the *Daily Herald*). The *NP* generally followed the CPGB line, including promoting affiliation to the Labour Party, the Popular Front, and workplace gender equality. They recommended greater member participation in union branch work to 'secure the much needed change in the 'be good boys' attitude of the present officials'.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, despite their promotion of the trade union movement, they complained that the *AEU*'s Executive Committee used their own journal 'to promote their viewpoint,' but denied the *NP* 'the right to have our opinion published, even though they put the journal at the disposal of non-members (contra to rule 16, Clause 5, para 3 which gives preference to its own members)'.¹⁰⁹

Unlike the subsidised official union journals, the *NP* was financially dependent on sales and financial appeals to continue in publication.¹¹⁰ Its circulation increased substantially over the period under investigation, selling 15,000 in March 1937, 27,000 by May 1939, and almost 45,000 by May 1940 (when the received understanding was that the Nazi-Soviet Pact had elicited widespread anti- Soviet and anti-communist opinion),¹¹¹ eventually reaching some 95,000 in the post-war era.

¹⁰⁸ Anon., 'A.S.S.N.C.', *NP*, (October, 1936), p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ London D.C. of the *AEU* 'Unofficial disputes: The reply of the London D.C. of the A.E.U', *NP*, (June, 1936), pp. 9 -10.

¹¹⁰ For instance, the *AEU* devoted 2d per member from subscription towards the monthly journal.

¹¹¹ The extent to which the rises in circulation were due to the journal's resonance with workers is complicated by the increased employment within the aircraft sector due to rearmament and the war.

Chapters and Themes

A broadly thematic approach is taken in this study, split chronologically into four time periods to facilitate the analysis of the interplay of the multiple factors and themes in their wider context and how they shaped political thinking and cultures diachronically and synchronically. The current academic literature on trade unions typically focuses on either: i) the early years of unionism; ii) the inter-war years; or iii) post 1945. This study will cover the period 1931-1951: Chapter 1, 1931 – 1937; Chapter 2, 1937 to 1941; Chapter 3, 1941 to 1945; and Chapter 4, the period of the Labour Government 1945- 1951. As such, a wide range of political, economic, and industrial circumstances are covered, facilitating an analysis of morphologies in the political cultures of the unions under scrutiny.

The themes scrutinised in this study are those that emerged from the journal content, rather than preconceived themes being superimposed upon the material, although this is done with the understanding that these themes cannot be truly isolated; they are interpenetrative, overlapping and interwoven within a complex whole, which itself is an outcome of the conjunction of historical and present contexts.

Economics emerge in the journals as a primary theme; one that directly and indirectly affects workers' lives, life chances, and their wider environment.

Economics manifests itself in multiple forms in the 1931-51 period, including the 1930s depression and its consequences (including the Government's economic and fiscal policy responses); the Government's rearmament policy (its financing, implementation, and opportunity costs); the Government's relationship with private arms manufacturers, and the ideology and interests that drove such policy choices. Economics continued as a major theme post-WWII due to the dire economic difficulties and the consequent US loan and the Marshall Plan (and its conditionalities, which made the complexities and interrelationships of the economic, the international, and ideological spheres overt).

The economic sphere directly impacted employment and unemployment, pay and conditions, which itself informed and elicited debates in the journals. Such debates encompassed a wide range of issues, including: short-term difficulties, legislative changes, larger structural and ownership changes, issues around the National

Register, Conscription, and the Labour Government's wages policies. Women, their employment, their treatment, equal pay, and patriarchal attitudes, form another theme.

International affairs emerged as another important area of concern. This included issues of war and peace (which directly affected all other spheres and themes). In 1931 WWI was still temporally proximate. The resultant widespread pacifist sentiment combined with the belief that weapon's technology 'improvements' meant future wars would create even greater destruction. This resulted in the vast majority of journal contributors advocating a peace agenda in the early 1930s.

Subsequently, the rise of European Fascism, and its direct and indirect consequences and implications including the Spanish Civil War, challenged the pacifist perceptions of some (but by no means all) whose deeply held convictions of 'never again' became largely usurped by the imperative of halting fascism. The interrelated strands within this theme that the journals covered (to varying degrees) included disarmament, the debates and reactions around the Government's failure to meaningfully engage with the League of Nations and collective security, as well as what the journals deemed to be the National Government's pro-fascist sympathies as exposed in their attitudes towards Mussolini in Abyssinia and Franco in Spain. Attitudes of the labour movement towards the United Front, and towards the Soviet Union (contextually and ideologically driven) were also debated, as were the attitudes and actions of the British Governments. The international sphere remained contested post WWII as manifest for instance in the relationships with the US (especially financial), the Greek situation, India, the United Nations, and the Cold War.

Russia and communism (both together and separately) emerged as another theme in the journals. The Capitalist West's economic problems were juxtaposed with the apparent success of the Russian Five Year Plans, and their example of socialism as practical, a viable form of government. Russia was held up as illustrative of communism as lived reality, not merely a theoretical possibility, where a planned economy provided what was considered a real alternative to capitalism. The differentiation in attitudes towards Russian and domestic communism, and the variations between journals and over time is an important strand within this theme. Interwoven with this are the ideological contestations over what were considered acceptable and unacceptable forms of socialism; such understandings themselves

informed debates on what structural form industry should take under the post-war Labour Government, especially regarding planning, nationalisation, socialisation, and worker control.

Issues around the press, and workers' education, the unions' role in educating their membership and disseminating ideology, was an ever present theme in the journals.¹¹² The unions' journals supplemented and advertised their own publications, educational courses and members' training courses, as well as providing reading recommendations, which combined to form an important part of their political work in socialising and educating the membership into trade unionism and socialist thinking. Unions worked to influence people and to promote socialist understandings and a wide range of policies in the political, economic, industrial, and social realms. It was an on-going process whosoever was in government, and was considered vital to counteract the lobbying of capitalists and the power of the capitalist press.

Importantly, interwoven into and informing journal contributor analysis of the other themes is the overarching and multifaceted theme of capitalism (and its alternatives) including the structure of ownership, industry and society, as argued from various socialist perspectives.

¹¹² This was pursued through local meetings, pamphlet and leaflet writing and distribution, door to door electoral canvassing, and utilising their own press. The unions also trained members to become stewards, union officials, and prospective candidates for all levels of local, district and national government. They also provided information for researchers (within the civil service and outside), and worked with tripartite corporatist bodies, and challenged the limited understandings of the plight of the working classes, of many higher civil servants (traditionally drawn from narrow socio-economic and educational backgrounds). See for instance: A. Taylor, *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party*.

Chapter 1. Depression and Burgeoning Fascism: 1931-1936

The early twentieth century in Britain was a time of extreme upheaval and change. The catastrophe of WWI and its aftermath, wrought profound changes in multiple spheres. Important advances were made in science and technology. In the industrial sphere, women entered the workforce in non-traditional roles (only to be excluded again after the war), and attempts were made to modernise, mechanise, and rationalise industry (including the introduction of the Bedaux and Taylor systems). Embedded within this environment were the trade unions, whose fortunes fluctuated with the prevailing economic, political, and judicial context, the cumulative effect of which shaped conditions and people's understanding of their circumstances. Events of this period left a profound legacy, such as the 1926 General Strike which persuaded some leading trade unionists like Ernest Bevin and Walter Citrine to pursue a policy of seeking influence through incorporation in an attempt to become respected partners in state economic management.

The economic crisis that faced the country and much of the world dominated and marred the early 1930s. The accompanying extremely high levels of unemployment, poverty (particularly in distressed areas), changes to National Insurance and the Means Test, led to hardship for many, and insecurity for more. However, the trade union journals, whilst devoting much space to such issues did not portray it as a 'Moribund Age' as others have retrospectively.¹ In contrast, it was the pre-WWI period that the trade union journals portrayed as a dark time, where hours were long and terms and conditions of employment dire; a time when the unions successfully fought for concessions from the employers (a theme often repeated to illustrate the unions' achievements). Indeed, the fallacy of pre-1914 as 'the good old days', was the specific focus of some journal articles.²

1931 witnessed a significant turn to the left in labour politics consequent upon multiple concurrent factors. The economic turmoil in the Capitalist West was starkly

¹ For instance, Richard Overy, *The Moribund Age*, (London, 2009) concluded that, in the inter-war period, public perceptions were dominated by a sense of foreboding about the decline and collapse of civilization, and nostalgia for pre-WWI society, which was regarded as ideal and progressive. He cites the popularity of fictions such as those of Aldous Huxley and H. G. Wells as symbolic; their popularity indicating predictions of an ominous future resonated with the public.

² For instance, W. Shilletto, 'The Good Old Days', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p.452; A. G. Schirn, 'The Hypocritical "Good Old Days"', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1932), p.302.

contrasted with the perceived success of the Soviet 5 year plans through which socialism was transformed from a theory to a viable form of government.³ It was a year of contradictions and paradoxes for those in the Labour Movement. On the one hand, capitalism appeared to be collapsing in line with Marxist predictions, not only in Britain but in the whole Capitalist World; on the other hand, the Labour Party suffered a crushing electoral defeat, whilst depression conditions weakened the unions' negotiating power. Despite this, the union journals portrayed both the trade unions and the Labour Party as central institutions securing and promoting workers' interests (working men in the case of the AEU). There was a minority voice in the journals that suggested poverty and destitution could, if not ameliorated, drive some to steal life's essentials in order to survive, causing not only capitalism's collapse, but civilisation's disintegration.⁴ However, this was an infrequent topic and usually deemed unnecessarily catastrophic. Nonetheless, a significant minority perceived the economic crisis as an opportunity to exercise agency free of capitalism's straightjacket and to rebuild society in a different form. This opinion was not overtly stated by journal contributors, but was evidenced in the surplus meaning within the texts; the anti-communist contributors used this as justification for their stance against communists, the CPGB, and its affiliates.

Considering the TUs commitment to the parliamentary path to socialism, and their perception that the LP was their child, the 1931 election received very little attention in the union journals (especially in comparison with the journals' vigorous electoral propaganda during the post-war elections). The *NUGMW* called on their readership to vote according to their working class consciousness, and to free the land 'for reversion to the common ownership and control by the people', but did not push the issue.⁵ The subsequent electoral failure received no significant analysis, it was simply blamed on the 'betrayal' by MacDonald and Philip Snowden,⁶ further

³ J. Callaghan, 'Labour's Turn to Socialism in 1931', *Journal, of Political Ideologies*, 14:2 (2009),

⁴ For instance, Will J. Sherwood, 'Fair Warning? A Rebellious Note Sounded', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1932) p.289.

⁵ Peter J. Tevenan, 'When Shall We Get Down to Brass Tacks', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p. 34.

⁶ See for instance, Tubul Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1931), p. 46; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1931), p. 52; John Gunning, 'To the Engineering Mechanic', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1932), p.55; 'Garw', 'In Defence of Mr. MacDonald. A Review of Lord Allen's Pamphlet', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1932), p. 43; W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1931), p. 586; H. Tracey, 'The Meanness of the Means Test: Why the PACs are Taking Fright', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (January, 1932), pp. 4-5; Herbert Tracey, 'Liberals Join ex-Labourists in Joint Attack', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (May, 1932), pp. 105-6.

exacerbated by a misinformation campaign regarding an alleged LP plan to confiscate peoples' Post Office Savings accounts.⁷ The capitalist press was blamed, especially Lord Rothermere's and Lord Beaverbrook's newspapers, which the *NUGMW Journal* condemned as not being 'newspapers in the ordinary acceptance of the term. They are engines of propaganda for the constantly changing policies, desires, personal wishes, personal likes, and personal dislikes of two men'.⁸

Economic Conditions and Consequences

The 1930's economic depression resulted in the labour movement's effective agency being severely curtailed by its structural environment, particularly, as, apart from a short period of minority LP administration (which itself followed orthodox economic policies), the governments of the day supported those structures. The negative employment climate meant wage cuts, short-time working, layoffs, and fears of unemployment. Thus, articles on economics and economic policy would have resonated with journal readers, and the journal contributors framing of issues and socialist interpretations of the interconnectedness of finance, industry and employment, effectively disseminated socialist understandings through which readers could contextualise their own situation. Most contributors believed they were witnessing capitalism's implosion, the playing-out of the doctrine that the bourgeois democratic system 'carries within it the seeds of its own destruction'.⁹ Within this milieu the journals sought to prick class consciousness, and to work for and attain socialism, the presumed panacea.

The journals framed their analysis of Government policy in terms of 'them and us'; 'them' being the capitalist classes' for whom the Government acted as agents, and 'us' being the ordinary workers whose welfare was sacrificed to ensure the capitalist classes' prosperity. The structural class disparities, combined with the preferential

⁷ W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1931), p. 602; J. R. Clynes, 'The Greatest Lie of the Election', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1931), p. 608; C. Dukes, 'The Palace of Westminster', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1931), p. 616.

⁸ The President, 'The People and the Press', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1931), p. 613.

⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League*, (1850), pp. 505-11

treatment advantaged groups received from Government policies, was continually evidenced and noted. This was exemplified in the Government's inequitable treatment of those who lent money for WWI, who received guarantees and high interest, and those who gave their bodies, were maimed or killed, and whose families suffered. The *NUGMW Journal* reminded readers that amongst these, three thousand ex-servicemen remained in mental hospitals, and 30,000 suffered from war service related nervous disorders.¹⁰ They also highlighted how war victims included civilian workers, for instance, iron-ore miners working for capitalists' profits under the guise of 'the war effort'. Dust and fibrosis left a legacy of morbidity and mortality, and workers' dependents without their main wage earner.¹¹ The journals' message was stark; workers had sacrificed themselves in WWI and were now expected to bear the economic adjustment costs of the peace. War debt interest payments amounted to some £1 million daily (approximately £4,000 million by 1931), which the journal contributors considered was a significant factor in deepening and extending the depression (exacerbated by the injudicious return to the gold standard, gold hoarding by the US and France, and with German reparation obligations, an important conduit for its transfer).¹²

The language the journals employed in their analysis of this was direct, and often visceral or acerbic, designed to reinforce the sense of betrayal many workers, particularly the unemployed, felt. Thus, the journals actively moulded and reinforced a 'common-sense' understanding that: 'The people fight always, then pay always. The owners of property fight sometimes but pay never. Instead they lend, on the finest security'.¹³ Thus, the journal contributors sought to interpellate the readership, appealing to them emotionally as well as intellectually as right-thinking people, calling them to connect with the common-sense assumptions and received understandings that the journals disseminated, and their ideas around class interests, norms, values, and beliefs.

In addition to castigating the Government's policy choices as ideologically and class driven (to the disadvantage of the working classes), the journals alleged this also

¹⁰ Anon, 'The Terrible By-Product of War', *NUGMW Journal* (March, 1933), p.87.

¹¹ W. J. Lowery, 'Dust and fibrosis', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1934), pp. 291-292.

¹² For instance: C. Dukes, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1930), p. 298; P. J. Tevenan, 'The Unions are after your Wages. The unions are after the Employers', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1931), pp. 363-364; P. J. Tevenan, 'Lunatics at Large', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1932), p. 69; 'Shaughraun', 'Financiers' Perpetual Toll', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1932), p. 242.

¹³ P.J. Tevenan, 'Lunatics at large', pp. 69-70.

extended to, and was embedded within, the questions the Government and establishment asked. For instance, with regard to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, the question asked (their terms of reference) was restricted to how best to make the fund solvent and self-supporting¹⁴ (and arrangements outside the scheme for those capable and available for work). Such question framing was attributed to the power of the capitalists' classes, and their specific disapproval of Social Security spending and high taxes. The Labour movement's efforts to change the terms of reference were unsuccessful.¹⁵

The journals examined here presented unemployment as an inevitable consequence of capitalism, to be cured by socialism, with production for use, not profit. However, the journals posited that until socialism was realised, the depression could be ameliorated through decreased hours without wage cuts, thereby increasing employment and workers' spending power, and thus effective demand.¹⁶ The journal contributors unanimously prescribed a reversal of the government spending cuts which they considered had worsened unemployment by depressing demand. Instead, substantial infrastructure projects to create jobs were advocated. Unemployment was understood as a national phenomenon, and thus the journals recommended a National Insurance scheme funded from general taxation to rectify the skewed burden of Poor Law Relief falling on Depressed Areas.¹⁷

The Government's prioritisation of war expenditure over the welfare of the most vulnerable in society was condemned, as was the 10% benefit cut (with a 26-week annual limit), the increased NI contributions, Means Testing transitional payments, and the Local Authority Public Assistance Committee regulations,¹⁸ which were all implemented after the 1931 Labour administration fell. The journals further

¹⁴ For instance: W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p. 338; W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 442; League of Nations, 'International Labour Conference 15th Session', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1931), p. 491.

¹⁵ See for instance: 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p.338; 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 442; C. Dukes, 'Thunder over Westminster', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 449; 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1931), p. 471.

¹⁶ This argument was used in the unions' campaign for a 40-hour week.

¹⁷ W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1932), pp., 193-194.

¹⁸ The Local Authority Public Assistance Committee's rules (based on Poor Law principles) forced many young people into lodgings away from the family home. T Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Big Battles over Unemployment Insurance', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1934), p.10; Anon, 'The Unemployment Bill', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1934), p. 91.

suggested that the widespread hardship caused was exacerbated by the inaccuracies of the Board of Trade Cost of Living Index, resulting in subsistence pay-outs.¹⁹ All such measures were universally framed in the journal articles (and *NUGMW* cartoons)²⁰ as unjust and class motivated, and were featured most months, especially during 1932. The journals also reinforced their own conclusions concerning malnutrition levels and hardships by citing outside authoritative sources, including religious groups and even some Tories.²¹

The Anomalies Regulations (National Insurance) was regularly featured in the *NUGMW Journal*, especially the position of married women and seasonal workers who formed part of their membership. The journals highlighted the considerable time union leaders devoted to representing members at the Courts of Referees, appealing against unfair decisions. Their positive results were published, illustrating to readers the benefits of union membership over and above merely workplace pay and conditions. The *NUGMW Journal*, in-line with its ongoing narrative, portrayed the 'nons' hardships in relation to the Means Test, unsympathetically.²²

Hardship and unemployment, although widespread, were geographically variable. The traditional heavy industry and mining areas were especially effected. Government inaction over unemployment was denounced, as was their failure to make unemployment and its funding a national responsibility, which would have relieved local rates and thus facilitated their provision of essential services, such as health.²³ The *NUGMW Journal* drew attention to the Government's failure to forgive the 'Goschen Loans' (taken during the 1921 and 1926 coal strikes), which Sir Wyndham Portal's Report on the distressed areas made clear, were onerous to

¹⁹ P.J. Tevenan, 'That 'Fodder' Basis. What it is and how it Works', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1931), p. 501.

²⁰ Will Dyson 'The Meanness of the Means Test' (Cartoon), *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1932), p. 307.

²¹ For instance: 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1932), p. 43; Anon, 'Another Tory Protest about the Consequences of the Means Test', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 44; Anon, 'Religious Body Protests over Means Test', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1932), p.40; Industrial Christian Fellowship, 'Starving in a World of Plenty', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1932), p. 32; Anon, 'Archbishop of York on Unemployment', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1934), p.11; Christian Fellowship Manifesto, 'Christianity and Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1935), p.175.

²² Mathew Riggins, 'Apathy', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1932), p. 111.

²³ Anon, 'Unemployment and Rates: Why Councils Should Combine for Relief', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1933), p. 271.

Local Authorities. They called for their cancellation, especially as the amounts were inconsequential compared to rearmament expenditure.²⁴

The journals took up the plight of the unemployed to some extent, but those in employment remained their priority. Moreover, for some contributors, empathy for the unemployed was dependent on union membership and activism, 'be a fighter and let them starve who like it'.²⁵ (The journals in general were very negative about non-union members; in the *NUGMW Journal* the anti- 'non' propaganda was extreme).²⁶ Major unions, the TUC and the LP typically refused to back the campaigns and hunger marches of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM), regarding it as a CP satellite, 'elastic in organisation, accessory or subservient to the Communist International in all their propaganda'.²⁷ Indeed, in a TUC publication, Walter Citrine described the NUWM 's hunger marches as 'attempts to discredit the democratically elected Trades Union leadership without serving any useful purpose whatsoever in remedying the conditions that have brought about the crisis in unemployment'.²⁸ Such attitudes were evidenced in the pernicious reception given to the NUWM representatives at the 1930 Trade Union Congress:

The usual request to receive a deputation of the NUWM was courteously refused by Standing Orders, endorsed by Congress. Isolated resentment was manifested without avail, as the vast majority of delegates would not take the protestors seriously, but treated them with good humoured hilarity.²⁹

Thus, for this speaker (and like-minded members of the unions, TUC, and Labour Party), the core values of working class solidarity and fraternity were subsumed under anti-communist sentiment. Nonetheless, although largely omitted from the journals, this attitude was far from unanimous in the trade union (TU) and labour

²⁴ George Dean, 'Goschen Loans. Why not Sweep Them Away', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1935), p. 315.

²⁵ Fred Smith, 'My Impressions of the Hyde Park Demonstration', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 741.

²⁶ Anti-'Non' comment was included in most *NUGMW Journals*, and many cartoons were directed against the 'Nons',

²⁷ *The Communist Solar System: The Communist International* (London: 1933),

²⁸ Walter M. Citrine, *Democracy or Disruption? An Examination of Communist Influences in the Trade Unions (2nd Edition)* (London, undated), p.30.

²⁹ R. Spence, 'Rejection of the Communist spirit: Trade Union Congress, 1930', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1930), p. 260.

movement, for instance the AEU's own Wal Hannington (National Organiser 1939 onwards) led the NUWM.

The Economy Under the National Government

The 'poverty in the midst of abundance' situation of depressed demand due to the working class's inability to afford goods, was attributed to a misdistribution of income and wealth. Following J. A. Hobson, the *NUGMW* and *AEU Journals* argued that markets failed to expand in line with the increased productivity attained through rationalisation and mechanisation, and that income redistributed in favour of the workers was necessary to create effective demand and thus resolve the under-employment of men and machines; socialism, it was asserted, would rectify this situation.³⁰ Similar views were presented in other union journals, for instance, that of the *Electrical Trades Journal*.³¹

The pernicious absurdity of 'want in the midst of plenty' also led the journal contributors to examine ideas and expedencies such as the social minimum,³² as well as issues concerning industrial changes, where technology simultaneously increased production, displaced workers, increased debts (due to rising capital costs), and contracted workers' real wages (in-line with Marxist predictions).³³ Although the position expressed in the *AEU Journal* on technological changes and rationalisation was somewhat malleable at this time, contributors agreed that, thus far, the employers' had seized the financial benefits of such advances. They warned that vigilance was needed to ensure that technological and scientific advances were not employed for harm, but instead, they should be embraced for

³⁰ For instance: P.J. Tevenan, 'When Shall we get down to Brass Tacks', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p. 342.; 'Industrial Christian Fellowship', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1932), p. 32; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1933), p. 35; C. R. Crawford, 'The Engineer and the Industrial Revolution', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1933), p. 55; R. B. Suthers, 'Lunatics at Large', p. 13; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1935), p.11; Richard M. Fox, 'The World's Window: The Conquest of Bread', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1935), p.16; J. T. Edlin, 'Intimidation Law', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p. 340; C. Dukes, 'A Real Crisis or a Big Panic', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1931), p. 566.

³¹ For instance: Anon, 'Thinks. Idle Thoughts of an Idle (Enforced) Fellow', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (July, 1932), p. 49.

³² Fred Montague, 'Why Not a Social Minimum?' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 51.

³³ C. Dukes, 'In America and Canada', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 65.

socialism and the people, as, they asserted, was the case in Russia.³⁴ Machinery had the potential to enhance life rather than enslave workers, it just depended on how it was employed. Russia's rapid development, whilst the Western World floundered, was attributed to its application of science, and the efficiency of its production for need not profit, by a motivated workforce.

The journals' (1933) exploration of the role of technology, mechanisation, and rationalisation, and their consequences, extended to ideas concerning the establishment of a 'technocracy' (as proposed by a group of US engineers, economists, industrialists and scholars), to address the disparity between industrial output and purchasing power distribution.³⁵ These 'technocrats' acknowledged that the current wage labour system failed to distribute the monies by which production could be purchased effectively, but did not advocate changing the ownership structure. Therefore, the *NUGMW Journal* recommended rejecting their ideas, and instead endorsed a democratic dictatorship with community ownership of wealth production, employing experts in the public interest.³⁶ The *AEU Journal* advocated fundamental changes to the monetary system and the financial mechanism that governed production, distribution and consumption.³⁷

Whereas the journals explored alternative ideas outside the straight forward capitalism versus socialism debate, the majority of their economic and fiscal coverage was devoted to advocacy of socialism and the condemnation of capitalism. This was illustrated in their attacks on the Government's professed inability to afford unemployment benefit (without reducing payment levels), or to fund public infrastructure investment, whilst being able to service war-debt interest payments and, when sterling came under pressure, to fund the 'Exchange Equalisation Fund' (with £150 million credit, and £200 million in reserve).³⁸ The conclusion of both the *AEU* and *NUGMW* journals was that money can always be

³⁴ Frederick E. Walker, 'The Rationalisation of the Union, Pt 4. The Challenge of Capitalist Rationalisation', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 46.

³⁵ The 'Technocrats' recommended that 'experts' should be entrusted with ensuring that production and consumption were balanced. They suggested that technological improvements meant that enough could be produced by those aged 25-45 years in 4 hours per day, 4 days per week, to satisfy consumption.

³⁶ G. P. Dean, 'Technocracy', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 85.

³⁷ 'Garw', 'Wages, Prices, and Production', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1932), p. 44; 'Garw', 'Production, Consumption and Under-Consumption: More about the Technocracy Revolution', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 58.

³⁸ W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 217.

found to protect 'The Temple of Mammon', but is scarce when dealing with employment and social need.³⁹ Such examples were regularly highlighted, politicised, and denounced, pricking class consciousness with the aim of motivating the readership to pursue change through legitimate (parliamentary) means.

Although the journals shared a common socialist ideological framework, they differed in their coverage of government economic policies. The *NUGMW* concentrated on how these impacted worker's lives. Events, facts, and ideas around causation were reported, and the dominant narrative expounded by the establishment and capitalist press was challenged. For instance, the *NUGMW Journal* highlighted how, despite the depression:

After paying wages far higher than in France or Germany, after supporting a quarter of our (employable) population in idleness, after adding to the country's equipment of houses and roads and electrical plant we still had a surplus available to be lent to foreign countries, which in 1929 was greater than the surplus for such purposes of any other country in the world, even of the United States.⁴⁰

The *NUGMW Journal* provided multiple examples of generous share dividend payouts,⁴¹ that undermined capitalist claims of the unaffordability of wage rises. For instance, the day after a debate between Will Sherwood (NUGMW Industrial Officer) and Sir Herbert Austin (Chairman of Austin Motors Ltd.) where Austin declared a 40 hour week without pay reduction was unaffordable, he announced an Ordinary Share Dividend of 25% with a cash bonus of 75%.⁴² Calls by economists, the Conservative Party, and industrialists, for workers to take a 10-20% wage cut, wage cuts in sheltered industries, and a 33% cut in Unemployment Benefit, as a

³⁹ For instance: W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 217; J. D. Lawrence, 'The Higher Politics of Trade Unionism: Pt.6', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1931), p. 39; Anon, 'Reply to the 'Christian Lord Brentford' Attack on Dole', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1931), p. 50; George Barnes, 'Money and Mind: More Reflections', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1932), pp. 35-7.

⁴⁰ John Maynard Keynes, 'Is England Down and Out?' Excerpt of radio speech cited in *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 416.

⁴¹ For instance: P. J. Tevenan, 'Change the Record!' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1931), pp. 429-30; W. Thorne, 'Cheek and Impudence', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1931), pp. 380-381.

⁴² The previous year (1932), its share dividends were 50% and, in 1931, 100%, whilst the market value of Ordinary Shares, with a five-shilling nominal-value, had risen to sixty-five shillings and seven pence halfpenny; Anon, 'Friend or Frankenstein: Debate between Will Sherwood and Sir Herbert Austin.' *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1933), pp. 353-356.

solution to the crisis, were indignantly rejected.⁴³ Thus, what was considered to be the self-serving, and untrustworthy nature of the capitalist class was again made explicit and underlined. The language employed by the journal contributors to describe the capitalists was stark and pejorative; they were 'parasites' fattening themselves from the workers' toil.⁴⁴

The *AEU Journal* also presented the immiseration of workers through pay and unemployment benefit cuts as counter-productive, as well as being socially and economically unjust. Instead, they advocated Keynesian type public works schemes, such as house building (which also tackled housing shortages) to cure unemployment and stimulate the economy.⁴⁵ They vigorously refuted the claims of economists like Professor Pigou, who stated that dole payments prevented sufficient wages cuts, and kept production costs too high,⁴⁶ and they condemned Chancellor Neville Chamberlain's stance that public expenditure would push out the private sector.⁴⁷

The journals use of language embodied emotive as well as descriptive elements, for instance, producer subsidies were widely referred to as 'dole' for capitalists, to which the contributors pertinently added, that unlike the workers' benefits, these were not Means Tested. Thus, the perception of class based disparity was again stressed, highlighting the distinction between socialist solutions (in their various strands) in which equality was a core value, and the prevailing capitalist system which structurally privileged the most advantaged in society at the expense of the least advantaged. In related articles, the *AEU Journals* compared how capitalists and their press advocates sought public sector economies and the curtailment of the social security budget, whilst remaining silent on capitalists' subsidies, tariffs

⁴³ Thomas Hurley, 'Oyez, Oyez, Oyez.' *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 388.

⁴⁴ See for instance: 'Bros. Fearn & Shaw', 'One Day School', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1931), p. 531; J. R. Clynes, 'To Housewives: Balancing our Budgets', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1931), pp. 563-4; George Oats, 'Capitalism in Society', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 87; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 30.

⁴⁵ 'Garw', 'The Path to Prosperity. Keynes's Guidance', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1933), p.54.

⁴⁶ 'Garw', 'Is the Dole the Cause of Unemployment?' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1931), p51.

⁴⁷ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1933), p.37.

and quotas.⁴⁸ R. M. Fox⁴⁹ (*AEU*) highlighted the long standing nature of asymmetries of treatment of different classes by drawing parallels between Government schemes to destroy produce to maintain producer prices at tax-payers expense (of which the capitalists approved), and the Luddite destruction of machines to maintain workers' incomes (which capitalists deplored).⁵⁰ These disparities, the *AEU* posited, were also evidenced in the establishment of various marketing boards, for instance, the Milk Marketing Board received an advertising budget of £60,000, whilst British children were malnourished through poverty. The journals provided their readers with the solution; production for need and not private profit would benefit all and no money would be wasted on advertising,⁵¹ making it the more efficient, common-sense, solution. Thus, the journals challenged the hegemonic histories, narratives, and understandings, employed by the ruling classes to present the prevailing social structure and societal contradictions as natural, without alternatives, and consequently legitimate. In doing so they attempted to counter the false consciousness which dislocated people from their reality.

Notably, there was a conspicuous silence, in all the journals examined, concerning the business failures and bankruptcies of the depression, except insofar as lamenting job losses. However, at times expediency usurped their socialist ideology. For instance, when work stopped on the Cunard liner (the *Queen Mary*), some 3,500 workers laid-off, and a further 10,000 indirectly affected, Sir Percy Bates, Cunard's Chairman stated:

⁴⁸ Such as the, 1929 De-rating Act (costing £41 million in state reimbursements to local authorities), £30 million for the sugar beet industry and £30 million in sugar duties grants / rebates; J. D. Lawrence, 'The Higher Politics of Trade Unionism, Pt. 6', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1931), pp. 39-40. Also see for instance: J. D. Lawrence, 'The Higher Politics of Trade Unionism (Pt. 2)', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 47; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1932), p.39; W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1935), p.19; W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1935), p. 361; W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1936), p. 133.

⁴⁹ Note R. M. Fox is not Ralph Fox. Richard Michael Fox (1891–1969) was a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the Industrial Workers of the World, who condemned WWI as an imperialist war in which he refused to fight.

⁵⁰ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: Destroying the World's Wealth', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 41.

⁵¹ S. Beare, 'The National Government's yardstick', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1935), p.18.

If the Government will give the Cunard Line a contingent guarantee of £3,000,000 for a period of not more than six years, work on the new giant liner will be resumed immediately.⁵²

The government obliged. The monies benefited the owner's profits, not the workers, and the absence of worker or Government stakes in the company consequent to their investment was noted. Will Sherwood, NUGMW's National Industrial Officer, reiterated their opposition to state resources being employed for private gain. He instead argued that state subsidies to shipbuilding should be balanced by some degree of public control. This lack of public control or guaranteed repayments also concerned the AEU and the LP⁵³ Nonetheless, Government intervention to protect jobs (albeit with misgivings) was approved by the *NUGMW Journal*, in contradiction to their normal attitudes and ideological position regarding Government subsidies to industry.⁵⁴

The anti-capitalist stance taken by the *AEU*, *NUGMW*, and *NP* journals was shared by the secondary journals analysed here.

Banks and Financiers

The interconnections between the industrial, political, and economic spheres and the finance industry, were exposed and explored in the journals. Financiers' powerful voice, and bankers' behaviour, were routinely denounced. Outside authoritative sources were employed to reinforce the position taken in the journals, for instance, the *NUGMW Journal* published a long quotation from one of President Roosevelt's speeches on the topic.⁵⁵

The denunciation of financiers intensified after the MacDonald Government failed. The Journals, like most on the political left, unanimously considered that this had been caused when parliament had been usurped by international financiers' refusal

⁵² W. Sherwood, 'Stoppage of the Giant Cunarder', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1932), pp. 31-32.

⁵³ W. Sherwood, 'Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation Annual Meeting - Some Points from the Presidential Address' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1933), p. 183; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1934), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ Ben Smith, 'The Cunard Problem', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1932), p.32; The President, 'Build the Cunard: How to Finance it', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1932), p. 72; 'Annual Meeting of the Engineering and Shipbuilder's Federation at Bournemouth: W. Sherwood President's address', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 141.

⁵⁵ W. Thorne, 'And yet they had to go off the Gold Standard', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1933), p.123.

of credit unless the government acquiesced with their conditions including the reduction of unemployment payments. This was interpreted as 'dictatorship by the bankers'.⁵⁶ The journals never intimated such a refusal of credit may have been governed by the same criteria as credit decisions regarding foreign firms and governments.

The British press, after having blamed the Labour Government for the depression, admitted its international nature, but only after the Tory dominated National Government took office.⁵⁷ The journals set the British experience in its international context for their readership; National Incomes had dropped some 40%, and only six countries remained both on the Gold Standard and without restrictions. Moreover, some twenty-three countries imposed constraints on private and commercial payments, further undermining confidence in forward transactions. The idle wealth locked in the banks was condemned, 'The World is suffering from indigestion because it is choking itself with gold.'⁵⁸ Sixty-six countries met at the 1933 World Economic Conference to seek resolutions to the world economic, financial, and trade problems. However, the talks were restricted to resurrecting trade, as opposed to interrogating the root cause of the problem.⁵⁹ Thus, the journal contributors framed the issue as participants seeking answers within capitalism to resolve the devastation capitalism had itself produced. The contradictions of capitalism were thus laid bare, and the common sense understanding that only socialism held the answer to all such economic, and consequently social and political problems, were advanced.

In line with socialist thinking, all official union journals examined here called for joint stock banks and the Bank of England to be taken into public ownership. The Bank of England controlled credit (the 1930s credit drought was considered a causal factor in the depression), and substantially profited from lending to the state; such capitalist self-enrichment through a national institution was antithetical to the socialist ideology which the journals' promoted. Instead, the journals advocated

⁵⁶ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1931), p. 36; also see: for instance: Anon, 'Prosperity amongst banks', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 411.

⁵⁷ 'Sfax', 'Truth Comes Slowly - Is it too Late?' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 163.

⁵⁸ J. T. Edlin, 'Unemployed Demonstration in Nottingham', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 75.

⁵⁹ 'Garw', 'An Argument about Money Reviewed', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1933), p. 57; 'Garw', 'The Currencies are all Dancing Together: Why World Economic Conference can't get on', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1933), p. 47.

that the country, not private interests, should control its own credit, as the whole population's welfare was affected by its decisions.⁶⁰

The *NUGMW Journal* informed their readers that the world's ten largest banks (five in both the US and London) controlled some \$15,000,000,000 in deposits, endowing them with massive power and influence.⁶¹ Banks' ability to create or refuse credit 'with the stroke of a pen', and thus choose to sustain or destroy industries and manipulate markets, was considered capricious.⁶² The banks and financiers were perceived to be directing the employers' campaign to reduced workers' wages and worsen their conditions by imposing loan conditions premised on 'high wages increase production costs and interfere with dividends'.⁶³

Perceptions of the financiers' corrupt nature was reinforced with examples. The *NUGMW Journal* highlighted topics such as the enthusiasm of the wealthy for tax evasion schemes,⁶⁴ which was linked with their feigned concern for the public purse, and also their claims that wage increases were unaffordable, whilst they increased dividends.⁶⁵ Similarly, reports in the *AEU Journal* ranged from the complicity of Price Waterhouse Cooper Accountants (PWC) in accounting irregularities, including inflated assets prices, uncovered after financier Ivar Kreuger's suicide,⁶⁶ to the disastrous 'get rich quick' multi-million pound loans by London Financial Houses to Central Europe. This was exemplified when Germany was unable to raise American loans, the City of London lent-long to her and borrowed-short from France and America. When the short-money was recalled, London's financial houses were unable to fulfil their obligations, and the Bank of England was divested of its gold, thus contributing to the 1930s financial crisis.⁶⁷ Such articles were imbued with the idea that these were the consequences of

⁶⁰ John McKenzie, 'Banking and the Present Depression', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1931), pp. 321-322; also see, for instance: 'Public Control of Banks', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1932), p. 42.

⁶¹ Anon, 'Prosperity amongst banks', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 411.

⁶² C. H. Kirkby, 'The First Great Cause', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1931), p. 542.

⁶³ W. Sherwood, 'Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades: Annual meeting at Great Yarmouth. Some points from the President's Address', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 447.

⁶⁴ For instance, through specially constructed Swiss limited companies; J. Tevenan, 'Lunatics at Large', pp. 69-70.

⁶⁵ For instance, Anon, 'Friend or Frankenstein: Debate between Will Sherwood and Sir Herbert Austin', pp. 353-356.

⁶⁶ 'W.W.C.', 'Ivar Kreugar', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1932), pp. 51-52.

⁶⁷ G. R. Mitchison, 'Socialism and the Banks', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1935), p. 25; J. D. Lawrence, 'Prosperity and Plunder, Pt. 5', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1932), p. 45.

capitalism, and that socialism would end such iniquitous and inappropriate practices.

The *New Propellor* (*NP*, established September 1935), began a monthly column, pejoratively entitled *The Money we earn for Others*, that listed company results, along with shareholder dividends, bonus share issues, and subsequently, tax expediencies (July 1936 onwards).⁶⁸ The *NP*'s coverage of the topic was stark, and stripped of the explanations that the official union journals offered. Instead it presented the abuses and exploitation involved in capitalist industry as needing no elucidation or explanation; they were blatantly self-evident.

The WWI legacy, the League, Pacifism, and War

The temporal proximity of WWI, the widespread pacifist sentiment that grew out of it,⁶⁹ and the belief that the 'war to end all wars' should be more than a slogan, permeated much of the journal content on European issues in the early 1930s. As such, journal content mirrored the popular sentiment. In terms of the reconfiguration of core ideological concepts (following Freedon),⁷⁰ the WWI experience caused the migration of the concept of international fraternity into close proximity to the pursuit of human flourishing within the core cluster. Such concepts were then expressed through peripheral concepts such as the pursuit of pacifist policies including disarmament. Worries over international events and politics were present in union journals throughout the 1930s. The rise of fascism in Europe, nationalism, economic nationalism, capitalists' and financiers' interests, all fermented in the context of economic depression and the perceived injustices of the Versailles Treaty. Such injustices concerned not just the German reparation payments, but the war responsibility and disarmament clauses, (and the unfulfilled promise that the allies follow suit), culminating in the subjugation of peoples and

⁶⁸ The column ran from July 1936 to August 1942 it was then dropped as a regular feature (although it appeared periodically under different titles throughout the period) before being resurrected as an irregular feature from June 1947.

⁶⁹ The pacifism exhibited in the journals took multiple forms. The majority considered that there was always a better option than war to sort out disputes or both practical and ethical lines, and furthermore, capitalism and imperialism lay behind most wars, and that they were fought to the detriment of the working classes. For a minority, pacifism was religiously founded.

⁷⁰ Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*.

broken treaties. Thus, the pursuit of self-interest by capitalists and nationalists in Britain and Europe was presented as subjugating international fraternity, equality, and fairness (socialist core values), with the consequence of creating an environment where desperate people misguidedly turned to seek an escape through fascism.

In the early 1930s the TUs understandings and ideas concerning the League of Nations, international affairs, war, and disarmament, largely mirrored that of the LP, but with different stresses and foci. For instance, the *NUGMW Journal* focused on the pacifist case, which it presented vociferously and passionately. War was framed as an abomination, the needless destruction of life for capitalist or imperialist gains. It was consequently condemned as repugnant on moral, humanitarian, and for some, religious grounds. Pacifism was presented as a universal moral imperative, not merely a socialist or trade unionist ideal.

It was unanimously agreed that deals and treaties of the type that preceded WWI should be avoided, as they would justify Hitler's ideology and elicit support for him. Instead diplomatic solutions, including sincere engagement in disarmament conferences, were always advocated (contra the later position of 'Cato' in *Guilty Men*).

Both the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* had regular contributors who were themselves WWI conscientious objectors. The Journals also devoted space to other pacifists, such as reporting on Albert Einstein's 1930, New York lecture on Militant Pacifism.⁷¹ The *NUGMW* published extracts from the publications of the Union of Democratic Control, for instance 'Patriotism Ltd.'⁷² A *NUGMW* member on a Ruskin Scholarship at Oxford reported in the journal the (now infamous) resolution to refuse to fight for 'King and Country', the failure of Lord Stanley and Randolph Churchill to expunge the resolution, and the outrage of the establishment press.⁷³

The economic arguments employed by journal contributors against war, utilised multiple linguistic devices to convince readers of the cogency of their position. These ranged from theoretically backed rational argument and explanations of economic principles (especially in the *AEU Journal*), to emotive appeals and

⁷¹ Albert Einstein, 'Militant Pacifism', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1931), p.375.

⁷² The Union of Democratic Control, *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), pp. 238-9.

⁷³ John Brown, 'Oxford Today', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1933), p.139.

attempts to interpellate readers. For instance, *NUGMW* contributors such as Chas Dukes and Will Sherwood argued that armament's spending diverted money from household expenditure or investment (which would improve sustainable employment), and that taxes currently used for armaments, if redirected into government infrastructure projects, would create employment and societal benefits.⁷⁴

13yrs after the 'war to end all wars' we are armed to the teeth. Millions which might help the unemployed are frittered away every year on the preparations for war.⁷⁵

Thus, in addition to the moral imperative and the general good, war was condemned on the grounds of the population's economic welfare, as opposed to that of the arms' manufacturers. A similar interpretation was disseminated by *The Clerk* (1931) both in their own articles, and in their promotion of the 'No More War Movement's' publications, such as Sir Norman Angell's *Will Disarmament Increase Unemployment*.⁷⁶

Disarmament was presented as necessary and urgent; the still fresh memories of WWI, and intimate understandings of the reality of military conflict, meant such issues resonated with both the journals' creators and its consumers. The general sentiment of the individual trade unions and the labour movement generally at this time was expressed in a manifesto issued by John Bromley, Walter Citrine, George Lathan, and William Gillies, which promoted the idea that 'Disarmament by international treaty is not the futile expression of an impotent aspiration', but 'the vital need of the movement if civilisation is to avoid another, even worse, catastrophe.'⁷⁷

The League of Nations, and the League of Nations Union (LNU), were championed in the primary and secondary journals throughout the 1930s. The vilification and belittlement of the League by the capitalist press was criticised as detrimental to

⁷⁴ Norman Angell, 'If we Disarm – More Unemployment', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1931), pp. 599-600.

⁷⁵ C. Dukes, 'Britain Should Lead in Disarmament', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1932), p.17.

⁷⁶ Anon., 'Political Aspects of the Unemployment Crisis', *The Clerk*, (July, 1931), pp. 101-2; Anon., 'Disarmament and Unemployment', *The Clerk*, (July, 1931), p.106.

⁷⁷ Anon. 'Disarm! and Disappoint the Warmongers!', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (January, 1931), pp. 14-15.

improved international relations, disarmament, and peace. Despite this, a small minority voice (much smaller than would have been expected given the powerful leftist voice within the journals) warned of the League's capitalist Liberal foundations:

... one can no more get peace with order in the international world, while armed 'Powers' claim the absolute ownership of the earth's surface, than one can get a planned economy at home while private owners possess the machines.⁷⁸

The inclusion of such opinion in the *NUGMW Journal* amidst the otherwise solid support for the League implies that opinion was not as uniform as the usual (edited) content implied.

In 1932, the *AEU Journal* acknowledged that, on a narrow industrial level, particularly in engineering, disarmament would negatively affect their members' employment situation and thus their welfare, (the *raison d'être* for the union's existence). To ameliorate this, they proposed shorter hours, and the help of League of Nations' in re-employment of affected workers, which would off-set job losses. Thus, within the hierarchy of competing policies, norms, and values, a desire to maintain engineering jobs in-line with the unions' primary function was subordinated to the ideological imperative to seek disarmament as a means of promoting peace and disrupting the potential harm and the path dependencies of rearmament: inevitable war.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the political cultures evidence in the *AEU Journal* articles were not ideologically homogeneous with regards to pacifism or in the means of attaining their shared objective, peace. Moreover, they mutated over time, and by 1934 some *AEU* contributors argued:

Those who make it a principle to utter only the lulling word 'peace' are in truth passively rendering war possible. The abstract pacifists are the de facto allies of Hitler and Mussolini.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ H. N. Brailsford, 'The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe To-day', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), p. 339.

⁷⁹ Albert H. Smethurst, 'Editor's Notes: Disarmament', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1932), p. 29; T. W. Gillindler, 'Disarmament and Employment', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1932), p. 51.

⁸⁰ 'Wilcra', 'Pacifism: Abstract or Concrete', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1934), p. 8.

Instead, concrete pacifism through aggressive socialism was advocated to counter the fascist threat.⁸¹

As the decade progressed the European situation led to the concept of pacifism becoming increasingly contested; some perceived war was invariably wrong, others considered that Hitler's and Mussolini's policies, and their treatment of socialists, communists, and trade unionists, necessitated action,⁸² whilst a significant minority argued that pacifism allowed evil.

The Government's declared position of 'collective security under the League' was popular amongst the electorate and in-keeping with the journals' position.⁸³

However, the journal contributors considered the Government's declared position with regards to both the League and disarmament to be disingenuous. Despite the changing geo-political environment in the early 1930s, changes in the viability of various policy options were rarely analysed or reflected on in the journals. The journals offered no analysis on the difficulties and complexities involved in actualising collective security. There was a general sense within the texts that if League members, especially Britain and France, made it clear that they would take any action necessary to ensure League decisions were adhered to, then the League could deter aggressive behaviour without resorting to force of arms. No mention was made of the fact that what constituted realistic policy options in 1932 were not feasible by 1933, when just Britain, France, and weak countries constituted the League standing against Japan and the European fascists, or even after 1934 when Russia added its strength to the League. The policies advocated remained unchanged.

Concrete policy options were proposed. The AEU's George Barnes articulated a commonly held position when he proposed a new Commonwealth with an international police force replacing all armed forces dedicated to national wars, and a tribunal empowered to revise the treaties that underlay much of European discontent.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² R. B. Suthers, 'Cleaning Up Democracy', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1934), p.18; R. B. Suthers, 'Grim Visage War or Friendly Peace', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1935), p. 11.

⁸³ Successfully exploited by Baldwin in his, 1935 General Election campaign.

⁸⁴ G. Barnes, 'The World's Peace', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1934), p. 10.

All the journals presented as axiomatic the assumption that capitalist competition for markets and resources lay behind all wars. Increased world industrialisation, it was argued, necessitated more and larger markets for surplus production, unaffordable to workers as capitalists extracted surplus value as profits: 'So we have war for capturing the markets of the backwards areas; war to injure the industrial powers of competitors; war to satisfy the jealousies of capitalists'.⁸⁵ Thus, journal contributors sought to establish an inextricable link between international mistrust, economic nationalism, trade barriers, and armament spending. The world economy was presented as intertwined, intermeshed and international, a trade based economy, 'gradually working towards several great economic units, each labouring under the delusion that it can become independent of the other'.⁸⁶

The idea that economic nationalism was counterproductive pervaded the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* and was presented as a common-sense assumption. R. M. Fox (*AEU*) argued that tariffs, like war, harmed the wealth and industry of all parties, both immediately and going forward, and instead advocated that rather than 'beggar thy neighbour policies' such economic decisions should be informed by Hobson's economic theory, which posited that the 'world is a single economic system and improved or impaired productivity and consumption in every part affects every other part'.⁸⁷ Economic co-operation to deal with the root causes of war was presented as a necessary condition to maintain peace, along with adherence to treaty obligations, and collective security through the League (aspirations shared by the LP).

The malevolent influence of powerful interests, the counterproductive nature of rearmament, and the need for collective security, were recurrent themes throughout the period. Both the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* reported that the atmosphere created by the press and politicians mirrored that of pre-WWI, when jingoists (often with substantial armament interests) proclaimed that war-readiness was the best means of ensuring world peace. By February 1932, articles about the 'next war' started to appear. Readers were reminded that war scares periodically emerged, but typically disappeared, but military defence chiefs unfailingly call for more

⁸⁵ H. Morrison. 'What a World', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1933), p. 46.

⁸⁶ W. J. Lowery, 'Why Didn't Someone Lock the Doors?' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), pp. 269-270.

⁸⁷ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: The World Industrial Machine', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1931), pp. 44-46.

armaments.⁸⁸ Chas Dukes highlighted Sir Austen Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons 'It is my confident belief that none of those (foreign) armies or naval forces is being piled up against us' (a view largely backed by the press), which was juxtaposed with the Government spending 70% of their 1932 budget on rearmaments and WWI debt, in spite of the League of Nations and the International Court of Arbitration obligations and restrictions.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, it was argued that trade unionists working internationally had the potential to prevent war.⁹⁰

The *AEU Journal* informed its readership about the multilateral nature of rearmament which meant capitalist manufacturers sold armaments to all parties, if necessary covertly through second and third countries.⁹¹ This, the journal contributors concluded, was a principal factor in the 1932 Geneva Disarmament Conference failure.⁹² The *NUGMW Journal* denounced the Conference's focus on the restrictions on weapons and regulating war, rather than safeguarding peace. Thus, they declared, the Conference's focus was on 'how would you like to be killed?'⁹³

The vast, powerful, capitalist nature of the arms industry was highlighted by the *AEU Journal* which utilised authoritative sources to reinforce their message and give it gravitas. For instance, in 1933 they cited, 'The Temporary Mixed Commission to the League of Nations', whose Report A81.192 concluded that arms firms utilise any means, often covert, to stimulate anxiety, and incite re-armament and war.⁹⁴ The *AEU* also included in its recommended reading (1934) *Why War?* acerbically subtitled *A Handbook for Those Who Will Be Engaged in the Second World War*.⁹⁵ In conjunction with their articles which attributed war's underlying cause to capitalism (including private arms manufacture), the *AEU* highlighted the National Government's stress on the need for a larger Army, Navy, and Air Force, and their somewhat contradictory justification for adding 41 squadrons to the air-force to

⁸⁸ Editor, 'Editorial', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), p. 326.

⁸⁹ C. Dukes, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 393; C. Dukes, 'Great Britain Should Lead in Disarmament', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1932), p. 17.

⁹⁰ T' Young'un, 'On Planning', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1931), p. 60.

⁹¹ W. J. Smith, 'Fascists and Armaments', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1934), p. 19.

⁹² 'Wilcra', 'The Bloody International', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1932), p. 55.

⁹³ Anon. 'Mr. Clynes' Spirited Plea for Disarmament', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1932), p. 124.

⁹⁴ C. R. Crawford, 'The Death Profiteers', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1933), p. 59.

⁹⁵ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1934), pp. 7-9.

'strengthen our influence for peace and avert a race in armaments'.⁹⁶ The British Government's promises to prevent industry profiteering from their rearmament policy was considered a mere repetition of the WWI promises which were proved to be false.⁹⁷

The journals also evidenced the underlying profit motive regarding armaments by quoting the capitalist and financial press. For instance, the *Sunday Times* spoke of:

... the brilliant future that lies in front of Aviation shares in view of the disturbed political state of the world and the stress that is being laid upon the importance of the air arm in this and other countries. This agitation for the strengthening of Air Force has been going on for quite a long time, and has been accompanied by rising prices of the shares of companies that are supposed to be benefiting most from Government contracts.⁹⁸

Before WWI, annual Government armaments spending was £77million; by 1936 it was £190million. The *NUGMW* reported, that, not unrelatedly, the capital value of 13 firms connected with munitions contracts increased from £11 million to £38 million.⁹⁹ This, the journal interpreted to be private interests profiting from the workers' taxes (which paid for the arms) and labour (which produced them). The journals' unanimous message until the late 1930s was clear and repetitive; workers are exploited in the construction of war materials only to become the victims of their deployment, whilst the ownership class profited. This diagnosis of the problem was published in conjunction with the proposed solution: collective action through the labour movement to ensure capitalism is usurped by socialism. R. B. Suthers (AEU) caustically postulated that if like bees, the owners/investors died when they stung, war would be less common.¹⁰⁰ Another *AEU* contributor suggested that if war was financed by the landowners (as it had been historically), instead of by the Government through high interest loans financed through taxation, then war would seldom occur.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ R. B. Suthers, 'One Man's Noise, Another Man's Music', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1934), p. 22.

⁹⁷ See for instance: 'Aircraft Workers v Aircraft shareholders', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1936), p152.

⁹⁸ *Sunday Times* Financial Editor, cited in *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1934), p.190. Also see for instance, Editorial 'Some facts to think on during the upcoming 2 mins' silence', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), p. 326.

⁹⁹ Anon, 'Our President Reviews International Position', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 293.

¹⁰⁰ R. B. Suthers, 'A Busy Bee on Work and War', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1933), p. 13.

¹⁰¹ Mentor, 'Taxation', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1934), p. 14.

The press advocates of the capitalist arms industry were portrayed in the journals as fear mongers. The *NUGMW* cited Lord Rothermere: 'We need 5,000 war aeroplanes if we are not to remain for ever at the mercy of our neighbours.'¹⁰² They also published the statements he made in France: 'If I were a Frenchman I should not feel secure until my country possessed absolutely overwhelming superiority in the air'.¹⁰³ The *NUGMW* presented the Tory press as promoting the stance taken in the 1934 Government White Paper supported by Sir Austin Chamberlain, and backed by Tory statements that 'Britain must become the most heavily armed nation in Europe' and that 'Britain must have a bigger air force than any other nation.'¹⁰⁴ Such attitudes, the unions considered, increased suspicion and mistrust, and revealed the arms race to be a reality.¹⁰⁵

Some journal contributors, for instance John Brown (an uncharacteristically left-wing *NUGMW* member / contributor and Ruskin student) urged socialists and trade unionists not to engage in capitalist warfare, and to enlighten those whose reasoning was sculpted by capitalist's hegemony:

... blinded by the distorted education of the State schools and the cinema they allow themselves to be dragged to the shambles in defences of rent, interest, and profit in another holocaust.¹⁰⁶

Although there was a general consensus regarding disarmaments and pacifism in the early 1930s, opinions differed regarding questions of handling war material, arms export embargos, and calling a general strike if war was recommended.¹⁰⁷ The National Joint Council of Labour (1934) 'neither accepted nor rejected' this as policy, instead they recommended convening a special conference if circumstances dictated.¹⁰⁸ Similar resolutions were presented at the labour movement's International Conference in Brussels, including calls for the abolition of the private

¹⁰² Lord Rothermere, *Daily Mail*, cited in *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1934), p., 195.

¹⁰³ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1934), p. 194.

¹⁰⁴ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1934), p. 233. Also see Will Thorne 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1935), p. 114.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁶ J. Brown, 'Storm Over Austria.' *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1934), p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ W. Thorne, 'A Review of the Trades Union Congress, 1932: Newcastle upon Tyne', *NUGMW Journal*, (1932), p. 266; C. Dukes, 'The Brighton TUC', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1933), p. 296.

¹⁰⁸ John McKenzie, 'Reflections on the Congress', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1934), pp. 315-316

manufacture of armaments, and compliance with the Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 11.¹⁰⁹

The *NP* did not promote a pacifist stance, they merely vilified capitalists' wars as tools to advance specific capitalist interests to the detriment of workers (exploited in armaments production, their financing, and any fighting). Nonetheless, they accorded with the official union journals (and LP and TUC) insofar as the condemnation of the private manufacture of arms was concerned, which they also deemed to be a threat to world peace, and the assumption (presented as fact) that meaningful collective security would obviate the need for intense rearmament as no state would challenge the combined strength of the rest. In this pursuit, they recommended to their readership Phillip Noel-Baker's *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*,¹¹⁰ and T. H. Wintringham's *The Coming War*.¹¹¹

Despite different foci and some policy differences, there was much commonality between the opinions expressed at the individual union, the TUC, and the LP Conferences and Congresses.¹¹² The argument typically centred on how to achieve disarmament and peace, unilateralism or multilateralism. Its advisability was assumed. For instance, the *Electrical Trades Journal* promoted the National Peace Council's pamphlets and message,¹¹³ and their recommended reading included the publications from the Union of Democratic Control, including *The Secret International* which identified 'the real enemies of disarmament' to be armament manufacturers and international financiers, who saw war as a profit making opportunity.¹¹⁴ *The Clerk* used their journal to publicise and endorse the *International Declaration on World Disarmament* (promoted by the Women's International League)¹¹⁵ and the National Council for Prevention of War's *Peace Year Book*.¹¹⁶ Moreover, at their 1935 Annual Conference, *The Clerk* adopted a

¹⁰⁹ Article 11 required arbitration in all political and economic disputes; A. Hayday, 'International Notes-Brussels Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1933), p. 267.

¹¹⁰ Anon., 'The Private Manufacture of Armaments', *NP*, (November, 1936), p. 9; Also see, for instance, Anon., 'The Money We Earn for Others', *NP*, (April, 1938), p. 4.

¹¹¹ Book Review, *NP*, May, 1946, p. 9; Thomas H. Wintringham's 'The Coming War' was also given by the *NP* as a prize for the best reader contribution.

¹¹² Arthur Henderson was particularly prolific in writing and propagating such ideas in various union journals and LP publications, such as 'Labour Outlaws War'. Also see, for instance, Noel-Baker, *Hawkers of Death: The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, (London, 1934).

¹¹³ Anon., 'The Cost of Armaments', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (November, 1932), p. 245.

¹¹⁴ A. Hayday, 'The Vested Interest in War.' *Electrical Trades Journal*, (September, 1932); 184.

¹¹⁵ Anon., 'Disarmament Campaign', *The Clerk*, (February, 1931), p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Anon., 'The Peace Year Book', *The Clerk*, (March, 1931), p. 46; Anon., 'Year Book, The Peace Year Book', *The Clerk*, (March, 1935), p. 18.

motion criticizing the TUC's policy of supporting a 'capitalist war' if 'approved by a capitalist League of Nations', and also for shelving 'agitation and preparation for a General Strike and other forms of working-class activity against war'.¹¹⁷ However, on this particular issue they represented a minority voice in the labour movement.

Thus, the political cultures of the various trade unions, representing a range of socialist thinking, was evidenced in their journal articles, Conference resolutions, and discussions around disarmament and peace. The issues lay outside the industrial sphere, and therefore what is normally considered the remit of the unions. However, the journals presented such questions as extremely pertinent to their members, and liable to directly impact them and their families going forward.

International Fraternity

International fraternity extended beyond seeking to prevent war and workers killing workers. As with many issues in the journals, events brought matters to the fore. Thus, India became topical as a consequence of the partial Self Government for India Bill. The British Government's imperialistic behaviour was criticised, especially with regards to the suppression of the non-violent Indian Nationalist movement. Colonialist attitudes and ideas concerning racial superiority that prevailed in Britain at that time, were absent from the journals. The *AEU* published sympathetic profiles of Gandhi, Subhas Chander Bose, V. J. Patel and the Indian National Movement¹¹⁸ and highlighted the Meerut case to underline the injustices imposed on colonial workers,¹¹⁹ and implicitly the injustices the ruling classes imposed on all peoples not of their class, including the British working classes.¹²⁰ Moreover, as the decade progressed and fascism and international tensions rose, the situation was increasingly framed in terms of 'democracy versus dictatorship'. The *AEU Journal* highlighted the disingenuousness nature of the debate, as insofar

¹¹⁷ Anon., 'The Annual Conference', *The Clerk*, (September, 1935), pp. 54-63.

¹¹⁸ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window. An Indian Ambassador', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1932), p.43; R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: Gandhi Apostle of Non Violence.' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1932), p. 52; R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: A Voice of India', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1936), p. 24.

¹¹⁹ The Meerut Case - trade union leaders of an Indian Railway strike were given extremely harsh sentences on flimsy evidence; Anon., 'The Meerut Case', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1933), p. 62; Anon, [Morning Post], 'How to Govern India', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 149.

¹²⁰ Jack Tanner (subsequently AEU President) was involved in the Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee (the Chairman, Alex Gossip NAFTA Secretary), which the LP branded a Communist satellite organisation.

as India was concerned; Britain was the dictator, and the new constitution amounted to an alliance of the ruling class and feudal Lords under the Viceroy's dictatorship.

The *NUGMW Journal* accorded with the *AEU* and others (for instance, *The Clerk*) and the majority of the LP movement insofar as the India Bill was concerned. The Bill embodied restricted suffrage, constrained constituent evolution, abandoned Dominion status, and entrenched privilege, which were all considered unacceptable.¹²¹ The *NUGMW* condemned the attitudes of those like Page-Croft and Churchill's 'Die-Hard Group'.¹²² They bolstered their anti-imperialist argument by exposing the imperialist record; Indian life expectancy was 23 years, maternal mortality 2.5%, and infant mortality 22.3%. Moreover, only 2% of Indian women and of 8% men were educated, and only 3d per head was spent on education. In contrast some £43 million was spent on the Indian military. The pay and conditions of workers were dire and reportedly many mothers resorted to drugging their children whilst they were at work.¹²³

As part of their advocacy of international fraternity both the *AEU* and *NUGMW journals* also featured articles on foreign countries and peoples, highlighting the commonality of the human condition, with differences represented as interesting rather than sinister. The international industrial sphere was also explored, and misinterpretations and scapegoating of foreign manufacturers were tackled. For instance, the *AEU Journal* countered capitalists' false assertions that Russian dumping of cheap exports had caused the depression; they informed readers that in reality Russia accounted for 3.6% of world trade in 1913, falling to 1.6% by 1930, whilst Soviet imports from Britain increased from £6,900,000 (1929) to £15,000,000 (1930).¹²⁴ The international arena was also explored with regard to what lessons could be learned; the Russian system and the US New Deal were the most common examples cited as functional policies from which Britain could learn.

¹²¹ See for instance: W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1935), p. 211.

¹²² W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1935), p. 59.

¹²³ Dr D. R. Sagar, 'Women in India', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1935), p.169.

¹²⁴ Anon, 'Russian Dumping', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1931), p. 406. Similar misconceptions were corrected during the British–Japanese cotton negotiations. Japan was accused of dumping, when she had lower production costs than Europe consequent upon advanced machinery, poor social conditions, and horrendous terms and conditions of labour; 'W.W.C.', 'The Empire and Japanese Dumping', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1934), p. 19.

The Rise of Fascism, and the European Situation

Despite fascism's rise in Europe, the majority voice in the journals continued to promote pacifism as an expression of international fraternity up until the time of the Spanish Civil War. Nonetheless, all contributors (in common with the labour movement generally) underlined fascism's malevolent nature, and agitated against it.¹²⁵ Campaigning was international. For instance, the International Transport Workers Federation published their own journal *Fascism* dedicated to disseminating anti-fascist information and framing the debate to counter the escalating threat (published in English, German, Swedish and Spanish).¹²⁶ The individual TU Journals repeatedly called for vigilance and active opposition to prevent its spread. Concern was expressed that capitalists were directing their press towards acquiescence with Germany, and the establishment of an Italian style dictatorship in Britain as a defence against the threat posed to their position by democracy and freedom for the masses.¹²⁷ The journals studied here omitted to mention that those capitalists whose ideology had the liberal value of individual freedom as their core concept, would also have found fascism abhorrent.

Germany

As European Nazism rose, international fraternity and understanding embraced the German people. They were portrayed as the victims of the Fascists, whose international declarations of peaceful objectives were seen to be strikingly inconsistent with their domestic propaganda.¹²⁸ The links between fascism and the threat of war, capitalism, and finance were again reinforced. R. M. Fox, for instance, writing in the *AEU Journal* argued that,

Nowhere is militarism native to a people ... Without the reparations wrung from the poor it is quite likely that the German people would have turned

¹²⁵ In addition to journal articles, see, for instance: NCL and Co-operative Union, *Statement on Fascism*, (London, 1934); TUC, '*United Against Fascism*', (London, ca., 1931); TUC, *The Menace of Dictatorship*, (London, 1933).

¹²⁶ 'Fascism', *International Transport Workers Federation* (Amsterdam, 1934-1941),

¹²⁷ W. Sherwood, 'Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation Annual Meeting at Harrogate: Points from Presidential Address', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1933), p. 183.

¹²⁸ Anon., 'The German Outlook Relating to Peace and Understanding', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1934), pp. 307-8.

away from militarism in disgust. If Hitler leads them back to it now, the financiers of Europe and America must bear their share of the responsibility.¹²⁹

The Journals quoted authoritative figures who held ideological positions normally opposed to those of the trade unions, thus reinforcing their stance as a generally accepted position, not merely a socialist position.

Indeed, in late 1936 the *NUGMW* still retained this stance, citing the statement of Sir Walter Layton (*Economist* editor, *News Chronicle* editorial director, and Liberal politician):

... conditions that we most detest in Germany today are the by-product of a sense of injustice, and an attempt to keep the German nation permanently in a state of inferiority ... she has got into that condition because of external circumstances for which we must all bear some share of the blame¹³⁰

Hitler's rise in Germany, and his persecution and suppression of the Left, trade unionists and the Jews, were heavily reported in *AEU* and *NUGMW* journals. His rise was considered symptomatic of the German recession. Recruitment to the Brown Shirts, the *AEU* reported, was driven by the promise of 'pocket-money' and sustenance for the desperate.¹³¹ The immiseration of the middle class and the disaffection in the old German army (who had lost their status), were seen to have combined to produce an environment where Hitler could engender hope and unity through 'othering', and mobilising racism through anti-Semitism.¹³²

The journals reports were written with compassion for an oppressed people living in poverty, with worker's freedoms and rights curtailed, forced agricultural employment for ex-agricultural workers, and forced relocation of Berlin's unemployed to government schemes.¹³³ These were juxtaposed with the views expressed in the British capitalist press. For instance, the *Morning Post* declared that 'He [Hitler] has brought order where before was chaos.... He has so far displayed a restraint, which

¹²⁹ R. M. Fox. 'The World's Window: Germany at a Crossroads', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 45.

¹³⁰ C. Dukes, '1919 - Versailles, 1925 - Locarno, 1936?', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1936), p.107.

¹³¹ 'W.W.C', 'The Counter Revolution in Germany', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1933), p. 51.

¹³² 'W.W.C.', 'Studies in Fascism: National Socialism and the Middle Classes', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1933), p. 55.

¹³³ A Socialist Refugee, 'Blow after Blow to the Workers: New Concentration Camps for the Unemployed of Germany', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1934), p. 332.

bodes well for the future'.¹³⁴ The journals of other unions, such as the ETU condemned Britain's 'jingo press', which they considered to be 'full of empty and arrogant nonsense about 'foreigners''.¹³⁵ Thus, journal contributors reinforced the link between the capitalists and their press, and fascism; both were 'othered' as malevolent forces that acted against the best interest of the working classes.

The journals did not only report the Nazi oppression, but also opposition to it. For instance, the *NUGMW Journal* published a socialist refugee's account of Dr Goebbels's campaign against 'Carpers and Critics' which was alleged to have backfired, engendering anti-Nazi sentiment.¹³⁶ The journal published an account of the 'International Youth Against War Rally' (Antwerp October 1933) where some 65,000 people protested, illustrating to readers the active opposition on the Continent to fascism.¹³⁷ The *NUGMW* also reported the LP Conference fund-raising for Hitler's victims and pledges to boycott German goods.¹³⁸

Germany reoccupied the Rhineland, openly repudiating her obligations, stating that the French-Soviet Pact had terminated the Locarno Treaty. Such actions were reviled, and considered worryingly consistent with Hitler's avowed objectives in *Mein Kampf*. The pre-1936 atmosphere of impending war without a specific enemy (Italy and Japan had been considered most likely combatants) was replaced with a focus upon Germany.¹³⁹

Austria's fate was reported, including Chancellor Dollfuss's abolition of the Socialist unions (500,000 members), and catholic unions (100,000 members), and the confiscation of their funds. They were replaced with a Trade Union scheme that excluded anyone previously arrested for any 'offence or thought', or those who believed in class warfare.¹⁴⁰ The great tenements, symbolic of Vienna's Socialist

¹³⁴ Anon, 'Would Hitlerism Find any Friends in England?' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1933), p. 149.

¹³⁵ Anon. 'Disarm! and Disappoint the Warmongers! pp.14-15.

¹³⁶ The 'Steel Helmets' were ex-servicemen sponsored by large industrialists and landowners unhappy with Brown Shirts' interventions; A Socialist Refugee, 'Blow after Blow to German Workers', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1934), p. 332.

¹³⁷ Herbert Bullock, 'Great Continental Workers' Demonstration at Antwerp', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1933), p. 292.

¹³⁸ W. E. Yorke, 'Impressions by a Lay Member at the Hastings Labour Party Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), pp. 333-4.

¹³⁹ For instance: J. T. Murphy, 'The March to the Rhine and the Aims of German Imperialism', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1936), p. 24; F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: The Union and the Crisis.' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1936), p. 6; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: International Affairs and Domestic Questions', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1936), p.14.

¹⁴⁰ Anon, 'Dictatorship Tyranny', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1934), p. 146.

Municipal Government (and a signifier of the benefits of socialist administrations) were destroyed; this, the journals portrayed as epitomising the fate of the country and its people, and the danger fascism posed to all.¹⁴¹

Pen portraits were published, describing Nazi's domination and providing personal perspectives of events with which readers could empathise; socialists were scattered or imprisoned; Jews especially had reason to be fearful, and numerous 'respectable' people were reduced to hungry beggars. The politics of those in control was denounced, and their distinction from the ordinary people emphasised and romanticised. 'Austria is poor - terribly poor. And her people are not the business type, but artistic, music-loving, kindly, courteous and beautiful'.¹⁴² Other unions likewise used their journals to expose their readership to the dire conditions suffered by workers and trade unionists under fascism in Austria; all such articles carried implicit warnings. For example, the *Electrical Trades Journal* published an account by the Austrian Illegal Free Trade Unions of the Municipal and Transport Workers.¹⁴³

Italy and Abyssinia

As European fascism grew and became embedded, the journals provided a commentary on what they considered to be the increased likelihood of international conflict. This was illustrated by Mussolini's attitudes and policies, and embodied in his infamous declaration 'War is to man, as maternity is to woman'.¹⁴⁴ By 1934 the journals were reporting how the British capitalist press were exalting Mussolini's policies, whilst simultaneously withholding information on the real consequences of his rule: increased bankruptcies, increased unemployment, depressed wages, women forced back into the home, and the promotion of increased fecundity.¹⁴⁵ Such accounts of life under fascism served both to inform readers, and to warn of its dangers and consequences. Articles described extreme poverty (except amongst wealthy rent-extractors), high unemployment, and an atmosphere of fear,

¹⁴¹ For instance: Anon, 'House Destruction', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1934), p. 158; R. B. Suthers, 'Cleaning Up Democracy', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1934), p. 18.

¹⁴² Ethel A. Weaver, 'Impressions of Vienna', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1935), p. 9.

¹⁴³ Illegal Free Trade Unions of the Municipal and Transport Workers: 'To Workers in the Trade Union of Electricians in London', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (May, 1936, 110-111).

¹⁴⁴ C. Dukes, 'Italy and Abyssinia', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1935), p. 260.

¹⁴⁵ C. Dukes, 'The Failure of Fascism', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1934), p. 282; also see Cartoon – Mussolini distracting citizens from their economic problems with adventure into Abyssinia. *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1935), p. 258.

where police, army, secret agents, and priests (who were deeply embroiled in the system), combined to suppress freedom of expression.¹⁴⁶ Thus, *AEU* contributors concluded that fascism fears people speaking openly and truthfully.¹⁴⁷

The lead up to, and ultimately, the invasion of Abyssinia, was tracked in the journals, along with the actions (and inactions) of the other major actors involved. The journal authors unanimously and repeatedly advocated adherence to the Covenant of the League (in accordance with the British LP, International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) and the Labour and Socialist International).¹⁴⁸ Italian aggression was condemned unreservedly in all the journals analysed. However, the question of sanctions to prevent colonial exploitation drew a mixed response (late 1935-6); a minority advocated action independent of the League, others professed unshakable pacifism, whilst the majority sought active pursuit of the League covenant.¹⁴⁹

The journals, in accordance with their educative agenda, attempted to explain the complicated historical background, the interplay and interconnections within and between the European powers, the Balkans, and North Africa, both through articles, and reading recommendations.¹⁵⁰ The *A.E.U Journal* typically analysed issues in greater depth and scope than the *NUGMW*, including historical European colonial activities, their on-going impacts, and contemporary geo-political positioning around colonial interests. Temporal conditions meant there was a particular focus on Italy's history in North Africa, and on British and French interests in the surrounding states.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ 'W.W.C.', 'Ten Years of Mussolini', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1933), p. 48.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1935), pp. 304-306; Labour Party Conference resolution to back the League was overwhelmingly carried: 2,168,000 for, 102,000 against; H. S. Blackwell, 'The Labour Party Conference Held at Brighton, 30th September to 4th October, 1935', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1935), pp. 323-324; Also see cartoon: *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1935), p. 292.

¹⁴⁹ C. Dukes. 'Sanctions', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1935), pp. 333-334.

¹⁵⁰ For instance: J. T. Murphy, 'The Imperialist Aims of Fascist Italy', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1936), p. 10; J. T. Murphy, 'The March into the Rhine and the Aim of German Imperialism', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1936), p. 24; J. T. Murphy, 'Egypt's Dilemma', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1936), p. 15; J. T. Murphy, 'The Significance of Austria', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1936), p. 25.

¹⁵¹ This included accounts of Italy's history of colonial interests (Eritrea and Somalia) and military exploits in NE Africa (endangering British Empire routes and territories) and Italian desire to share the Suez Canal, which brought her into conflict with France and Britain. The AEU also elucidated Britain's history in Egypt, going back to the Five Powers Agreement 1882; J.T. Murphy, 'The Imperialist Aims of Fascist Italy', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1936), p.10; J.T. Murphy, 'Egypt's Dilemma', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1936), p. 15.

Both the *NUGMW* and *AEU journals*' recommended readings included G.D.H. and M. Cole's *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today*, and they published various articles about specific British interests in Egypt, especially the Suez Canal and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.¹⁵² Thus readers were informed how the confluence of the historical and geo-political context, combined with political manoeuvring, and issues of access to raw materials, resulted in Britain's accommodative policies regarding Italy. Journal contributors denounced the Tories in the National Government for offering friendship to Italy in pursuit of a Four Power Pact, despite their previous pledges.¹⁵³ The Hoare–Laval peace terms were framed in the journals as a betrayal of Abyssinia, undermining the League, and rewarding Italian aggression.¹⁵⁴ They reported that even the capitalist press criticised it. However, journals' contributors unanimously agreed that it should not be allowed to destroy the League (a position supported by the Nation Council of Labour).¹⁵⁵

The behaviour of Italy in Abyssinia was interpreted in the journals to be further evidence of the insidious and invasive 'tentacles of capitalism'. The *NUGMW Journal* reported on what they considered to be the disingenuous behaviour of the US during the Abyssinian crisis. The US repeatedly stated their desire to prevent war. However, they simultaneously intensified their exports of the 'Sinews of War' to Italy. Their exports of oil, copper, steel, motors, tractors and aeroplane engines increased 3,100% in a year (\$18,000 in November 1934 to \$584,000 in November 1935). Its vehicle sales increased \$6,749 to \$71,215 in same period, and its oil exports climbed from practically nil to \$451,348, thereby sabotaging the League of Nations' policy implementation.¹⁵⁶ The union journals argued that the malevolent hand of financiers and the hypocrisy of 'patriots' was evidenced in Abyssinia's Emperor Haile Selassie being refused a loan (considered too risky), whilst simultaneously Mussolini was expected to have no problem raising monies in London.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² W. Thorne, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1933), pp.13-14.

¹⁵³ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes; the Great Betrayal', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1936), p. 215.

¹⁵⁴ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben.' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1936), p. 10; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben.' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1936), p. 16.

¹⁵⁵ For instance: C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes: Looking Back – 1935', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1936), pp. 6-18.

¹⁵⁶ 'C.M.S.', 'Who Benefits from War?' *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1936), p. 87.

¹⁵⁷ McGiffin, 'Will he have Better Luck than Haile Selassie?' *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1936), p.234.

Oil became regarded by the journal contributors as a causal factor in wars. After WWI, Curzon had stated that 'The allies have floated to victory on a wave of oil'.¹⁵⁸ The *AEU* now presented oil to be fundamental to Mussolini's victory in Abyssinia, and a factor in the German demand for colonies, whilst the other Powers determined to retain access to oil for themselves.¹⁵⁹ The *AEU* condemned the British Government for supplying oil, facilitating its supply to Italian forces, and profiting from such through their Anglo-Iranian Oil Company holdings and increased Suez Canal traffic.¹⁶⁰ Thus, according to the journals, the peoples' fundamental security was subjugated to their rulers' desire to retain or gain access to raw materials, and thus wealth.

British Fascism

The journals coverage of the German and Italian situation conveyed implicit warnings of what could happen in Britain; additionally overt warnings were published.¹⁶¹ This related not only to Moseley's black-shirts, but also to 'creeping fascism' through the Government's increasingly planned capitalism and corporative tendencies, just as occurred under Mussolini and Hitler.¹⁶² Fascism was presented in the journals as the capitalists' response to threats of socialism, and was usually linked to militarism and imperialism. Capitalist democracy necessitated capitalist control of the means of production, and fascism, it was asserted, had risen to serve capitalists, who only endured democracy provided it did not impinge on their power. The *NUGMW* informed their readers that this necessitated the control of the state's armed forces to enable the pursuit of Imperialist wars for world market monopoly (including trade and currency wars), the suppression and exploitation of colonial peoples, and revolts among workers domestically.¹⁶³

Central and major banks were considered complicit; the Banks of England and France, the Federal Reserve, and Morgan Ltd, all rescued their own financiers when disaster loomed. The *fait accompli* of the Russian revolution was seen to have spurred the capitalist and financial classes into greater action to prevent

¹⁵⁸ J. W. Smith, 'Oil and Peace.' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1936) pp. 24-25.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1936), pp. 171-172.

¹⁶¹ For instance: Editor's Notes, *AEU Journal*, (June, 1933), p. 39; J. Brown, 'Fascism – the Rising Tide', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1933), p. 60; 'W.W.C.', 'Studies in Fascism Pt.2: The Fascist International', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1933), p. 55; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1934), p. 7; F. Harrington, 'The Fight against Fascism', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1934), p. 115.

¹⁶² A. H. Smethurst, 'Editor's Notes.' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1933), pp. 39-42.

¹⁶³ F. Harrington, 'The Fight Against Fascism' p. 115.

contagion. For instance, it was noted that in Poland, international finance backed General Pilsudski's dictatorship in crushing the revolution and a similar pattern played-out in Finland and Italy. Even the Hungarian dictator, Horthy (Hungary was supposedly an enemy state) was principally backed by the Bank of England.¹⁶⁴ Britain and France were presented as not yet having succumbed to this doctrine, but that they increasingly planned industry and agriculture to bolster the owners' interests (as opposed to socialist planning for the good of the whole society).¹⁶⁵ Thus, readers were reminded of the extent to which the capitalist classes and financiers utilised the state and its resources to further their own interests, without regard to the general population; if this could not be achieved through democracy, then it could be through fascism. R. M. Fox informed *AEU Journal* readers how 'the divine rights of industrial magnates' and their 'managerial prerogative' had replaced the 'divine rights of kings'.¹⁶⁶ The example was given of Thyssen becoming 'Lord of the Ruhr' controlling its coal, iron, and Siemens electronics, and who, it was noted, had in collaboration with industrial tycoons Krupp and Huggenbunrg, organised their fellow industrialists and financiers to bankroll Hitler.¹⁶⁷ For the majority of journal contributors, the condemnation of the state acting as agents of the capitalist class did not preclude their parliamentarianism and belief that the state would act as a neutral arbiter under a Labour Government; however, for a minority, the capitalist system needed to be dismantled before this could become the case. The establishment and activity of the British Fascist Movement under Sir Oswald Mosley foregrounded the 'democracy or dictatorship' alternatives in Britain.¹⁶⁸ The journal contributors were acutely aware of the threat such an organisation posed, especially to the youth through their employment of uniforms and

deliberate excitation of class antagonism among politically immature people and the inculcation of a political philosophy of violence which converts young people to the doctrine that a minority may seize power and rule by force.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Anon., 'Glasgow Trades Council's Report on Fascism', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1934), pp. 50-51.

¹⁶⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'Cleaning up Democracy', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1934), p. 18.

¹⁶⁶ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: King Kong's of Industry', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1934), p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ For instance: W. Sherwood, 'The Beginning or the End', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1933), p. 245; J. D. Lawrence, 'The Higher Politics of Trade Unionism Pt.8', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1932), p. 44; Herbert Tracy, 'Marx Died 50 Years Ago', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1933), p. 33.

¹⁶⁹ H. Hartley, 'The Trades Union Congress, Brighton October 1933', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 298.

Trade unionism was considered an impediment to the spread of fascism; thus recruitment, and the active inclusion of youth were presented by the journals as particularly important. A minority voice within the *AEU Journals* suggested that the socialists themselves employed uniforms, banners, and marches, as unifiers, and to counter the attraction of Fascists' regalia.¹⁷⁰ The labour movement lobbied the Government to follow the French and Belgian example and to proscribe non-state semi-military organisations.¹⁷¹ However, the majority considered that the British labour movement's history, with its pursuit of workers' rights in the common cause, enduring imprisonment, hard labour, and even transportations, had endowed it with an institutional strength and knowledge, so that if they united nationally and internationally, they could render the black-shirts impotent.¹⁷² Knowledge, fraternity and solidarity would prevail over the evil of fascism.

Background societal anti-Semitism was illustrated by an advert in *The Clerk's* 'small ads' for a holiday apartment that stipulated 'No Jews';¹⁷³ an editorial apology and disclaimer was subsequently published.¹⁷⁴ Despite its presence in the wider society, anti-Semitism was overwhelmingly absent in the journals. The Fascist marches and the London East End disturbances were condemned, as was the European fascists treatment of Jews. However, there were exceptions. Will Thorne suggested that wealthy Jews who had backed Mosley, 'have learned their lesson'.¹⁷⁵ Additionally the bringing down of the 1931 Labour Minority Administration was described as the conspiracy of, 'an unholy alliance of Tory politicians, Jews and financiers'.¹⁷⁶ The *NUGMW* published a cartoon which embodied the same sentiment.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, a supposed attempt (1933) by Jewish financiers to rig markets to prevent Germany from obtaining loans, was presented in the journals as fully justified.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ J. Brown 'Fascism – the Rising Tide', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1933), pp. 59-61.

¹⁷¹ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1934), p. 254.

¹⁷² Alexander M. Thompson, 'To your Ranks Engineers: Union is Strength', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1934), p. 18.

¹⁷³ Small ad, *Clerk Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 69

¹⁷⁴ 'Apology and Disclaimer', *Clerk Journal*, (December, 1936), p. 89.

¹⁷⁵ W. Thorne, 'Notes by the Way', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 357.

¹⁷⁶ T. Cain, 'The Crisis and its Consequences', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1931), p. 46.

¹⁷⁷ 'O 'God' Our Help in Ages Past' (Cartoon), *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1931), p. 592.

¹⁷⁸ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1933), pp. 37-40.

United Front and Communism

The rise and spread of fascism, the prevailing and cumulative events in Europe and their implications for workers, especially trade unionists, socialists, communists, and Jews, led some union journal contributors to call (1934 onwards) for a 'United Front' against fascism. Others were dubious, especially the anti-communists who interpreted it as merely a CP ploy to further the aims of the Communist International. To underline the malevolence of such organisations and alliances, the LP in its pamphlet *The Communist Solar System* claimed that the German Communist Party 'had made a *de facto* United Front with the Nationalists and Nazis in the Reichstag and State Parliaments'.¹⁷⁹ In a similar vein, when introducing the TUC Report of the General Council on Dictatorships, Walter Citrine sought to conflate communism with the political regimes of the USSR, and the Nazis.¹⁸⁰

Anti-communists dominated the upper echelons of the TUC, LP, and many unions, including the NUGMW. Clynes (NUGMW President) cautioned readers to consider all appeals for a United Front in the light of the communists' past behaviour: rejecting official decisions and resolutions, undermining unions and their officials and majority democratic rule, and criticising the LP.¹⁸¹ Fred Smith, (AEU General Secretary) concurred.¹⁸² Instead, unity in-line with Labour Party policy was advocated, with the only acceptable 'united front' being the three prongs of the labour movement: the LP, trade unions, and the Co-op.

Will Thorne (NUGMW) put the United Front into a longer-term context (also reflective of his formative experiences) by equating it and its advocates with the anarchists at the 1896 International Conference,¹⁸³ illustrating how the political cultures and clashes of the past influenced subsequent thinking. It was also

¹⁷⁹ *'The Communist Solar System: The Communist International'*.

¹⁸⁰ Although severely criticised by some delegates who sought the removal / amendment of the offending paragraphs and called for a Reference Back, the motion was adopted; Trades Union Congress, *'The Menace of Dictatorship'*.

¹⁸¹ C. Dukes, 'What is the United Front?' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 343; Anon., 'Extracts from the President's Address to NUGMW Biannual Congress at Harrogate, 22nd (May, 1934), *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1934), pp. 178-80.

¹⁸² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes, Fascism and the United Front', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1934), p. 6.

¹⁸³ W. Thorne, 'Some Political Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1934), p. 350.

suggested that the United Front should be rejected because some Liberals (rooted in laissez-faire capitalism and thus considered suspect) supported it.¹⁸⁴ However, the *NUGMW Journal* (1936) rejected the accusation that their intolerance of factional interests (endorsed by the LP Conference) amounted to 'steam rolling' minority interests'.¹⁸⁵

The positions taken by the protagonists and journal contributors with regards to a United Front were at times conflicted and inconsistent, as external conditions, their socialist core values, anti-fascism, anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, and their perceived need to defend Russia, all interacted and intertwined to shaped their various perceptions. Thus, ideas concerning affairs internal intertwined with the external event environment to shape understandings and ideological stances.

The *AEU Journals* presented a range of opinions. Some had reservations (as above),¹⁸⁶ others like J. T. Murphy considered that Government inaction made a United Front crucial to ensure collective action through the League, and halt the war trajectory.¹⁸⁷ The AEU President, J.C. Little, advocated that the whole labour movement should unite (despite regarding communists as disruptive),¹⁸⁸ and he moved the 1936 LP Conference Resolution in the AEU's name favouring a United Front against fascism (defeated 435,000: 1,805,000).¹⁸⁹ The *Electrical Trades Journal* advocated a similar stance.¹⁹⁰ United Front supporters considered their opponents to be aiding the Fascists, and instead advocated combining through Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) and IFTU against the common enemy. The IFTU's refusal was presented in the *AEU Journal* as serving the fascist cause.¹⁹¹

The United Front debate reflected attitudes within the Unions towards the CPGB generally. Nonetheless, the topics of communism and communists were irregularly

¹⁸⁴ C. Dukes, 'What is the United Front?' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 343.

¹⁸⁵ C. Dukes, 'Review of the Labour Party Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), pp. 329-330.

¹⁸⁶ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1934), p. 6; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1935), p. 7; 'Labour Party Conference Report', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 11.

¹⁸⁷ J. T. Murphy, 'Why I am for the People's Front?' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1934), p.6.

¹⁸⁹ R. A. Bridges *et al.*, 'Labour Party Conference Report', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 11.

¹⁹⁰ 'Resolutions Passed by ETU Conference, Scarborough, 1936', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (September, 1936), pp. 216-7.

¹⁹¹ W.H. Stokes, 'International Trade Union Unity', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1935), p.8.

raised in the journals, only becoming a feature in response to events and issues, such as the call for a United Front or votes for CPGB affiliation to the LP. *NUGMW* contributors often linked the ILP (post 1932 secession) to the CPGB and condemned it equally.¹⁹² The anti-communist stance of the labour movement's hierarchies was institutionalised through various rule changes and was disseminated through LP and TUC articles pamphlets and speeches.¹⁹³ Some individual unions also institutionalised anti-communism. The AEU rules prohibited their EC from circulating the correspondence of the CP Minority Movement through Branch or District Committees meetings (endorsed by the AEU's Final Appeals Court 1929).¹⁹⁴

The majority voice in the journals (especially the *NUGMW*) portrayed Communists as being as bad as fascists, fellow dictatorships in the 'democracy or dictatorship' paradigm.¹⁹⁵ The CP policy of infiltrating labour organisations and seeking office in order to disseminate their own ideology and to shape policies, was typically portrayed as a threat to the whole TU movement which had to be countered. Nonetheless, the CPGB's excellent organisation and the communist shop stewards' reputation for diligence, attracted some to the CPGB as a means of achieving electoral success, especially at the workshop level where they would be personally known to the workers. Indeed, Nina Fishman asserts that even passionate anti-communists like Bevin, were cognisant of the fact that 'without the efforts of the communists his own union would have fewer members and far less enthusiasm'.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, sometimes the CPGB, rather than supporting communists in union elections, nominated non-communist left-wingers to ensure a left-winger gained office by avoiding any anti-CP vote (consistent with the Popular Front strategy).

¹⁹² After the ILP ceded from the Labour party in, 1932), its members were regarded by the Labour Party as dissidents. See, for instance: Anon., 'Are Workers Straining for Action?' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1932), p. 247; 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 240; The Editor, 'Youth Listen!' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1934), p. 331.

¹⁹³ See, for instance: W. M. Citrine, 'Democracy or Disruption? An Examination of Communist Influences in the Trade Unions', undated; *The Communist Solar System: The Communist International*.

¹⁹⁴ 'Abstract Report of Council's Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1933), pp. 9-12.

¹⁹⁵ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1934), p. 206

¹⁹⁶ N. Fishman, *No Home but the Trade Union Movement: Communist Activists and 'Reformist' Leaders* (London, 1995), p. 107.

Intra-union ideological differences and anti-communist sentiment was evidenced when the AEU expelled a number of left-wing and communist members (later reinstated) who had challenged union officials' acceptance of an employer's wage offer without consultation. Letters were distributed to branches, and were also published in the *Daily Worker*. The formation of Councils of Action was called for, and they started their own publication, the *Monkey Wrench*. The *AEU Journal* Editor (General Secretary, Smethurst), countered: 'We are sure they will not mislead the membership, and their utterances will receive the contempt that they deserve'.¹⁹⁷ The Union took the view that the men involved, the *Daily Worker*, and the Minority Movement, were communist, and thus received instruction from outside, and sought the destruction of the union.¹⁹⁸ Those involved believed that, in accepting the employers' offer without consultation, the leadership had betrayed the members. Loyalty to the leadership and adherence to union rules and procedures are important parts of TU and socialist doctrine, but the rebels would have also been subject to competing values, such as truly representing the workers' interests, not allowing oneself to become incorporated into the capitalist system, and for some, loyalty to the CP and its dictates. Reports of these events were conspicuously absent from contemporaneous District or National Organiser's reports published in the journal.

Such was the anti-communism sometimes evidenced in the journals that, for instance, one of the *AEU's* contributors (C. W. Hallett) felt compelled to compare another (J. D. Lawrence) to the Tory press barons, Beaverbrook and Rothermere, and reminded readers that the rulebook stated that 'all men are brethren; not all men except Communists', that the Soviet Union was not the workers' adversary, and that the CPGB opposed the employers and their advocates in Government.¹⁹⁹ However, Lawrence's anti-CPGB attitudes did not reflect Tory, or even Liberal, or Labourist views. Indeed, he was a vehement advocate of workers' control which he considered to be inseparable from ownership. His employment as a regular contributor, alongside those theorising from alternative ideological positions, illustrated the *AEU's* editorial policy regarding the views it chose to disseminate and the contested nature of the concepts and issues being discussed. Lawrence's

¹⁹⁷ A. H. Smethurst, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1931), p. 43.

¹⁹⁸ 'Abstract Report of Council Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1931), pp. 4-16.

¹⁹⁹ C. W. Hallett, 'The Higher, the Lower the Politics of Trade Unionism', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1931), p. 56.

inclusion as a regular contributor, along with J. T. Murphy and other communists (for instance Wal Hannington and Edmund Frow) and anti-communist contributors, demonstrates the multiple-stranded ideological influences within communist, socialist and labourist understandings, that combined to form the political cultures contained in, and disseminated through, the journal.

Thus, it was not just the right wing dominated unions like the NUGMW that displayed anti-communist sentiment. Notably, even the *Electrical Trades Journal* promoted the National Council of Labour's pamphlet *The British Labour Movement and Communism*, sub-titled, *An Exposure of Communist Manoeuvres*,²⁰⁰ despite the ETU being known for its communist contingent. Such inclusions are indicative of the journal editor's efforts to mould their content so as not to alienate their readership.

Russia

Russia was only a minor topic during the 1931-1936 period. The vast majority of articles on the topic at this time, especially in the *AEU Journals*, were concerned with trade, such as the Trade Facilities Act,²⁰¹ and Export Credits.²⁰² The *AEU* contributors considered export bans to Russia in the early 1930s to be politically motivated and harmful to the British economy and to engineering employment²⁰³ (Russia purchased 80% of machine tool exports, and had not defaulted since WWI).²⁰⁴ The Government justified their decision on the grounds that Russian industry, being nationalised, would have a competitive advantage over British private industry.²⁰⁵ This for journal contributors was evidence of the superiority of a socialist industrial system over capitalism.

Russia's presence as an example of lived socialism, permeated the journals in their general discussions on industrial and economic topics. It influenced perceptions,

²⁰⁰ Anon., 'British Labour and Communism', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (August, 1936), p. 184.

²⁰¹ The Trade Facilities Act allowed for interest on principle to be guaranteed on loans derived in Britain for capital expenditure that promoted British employment.

²⁰² Guaranteeing payment on foreign orders up to £26 million on credit of less than 5 years.

²⁰³ This also extended to international treaties and trade agreements such as the Ottawa Agreement; as such Government choices were considered to impact workers, both directly and indirectly, as, in this instance, it resulted in the Government abandoning the Russian Trade Agreement.

²⁰⁴ A. H. Smethurst, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1932), p. 34; J. Crossley, 'The Russian Embargo and a Call for Action', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1933), pp. 57-57.

²⁰⁵ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1932), p. 42.

and comprehensions of socialism, as achievable as well as desirable; its possibilities and potential problems were explored, especially when implemented within a dictatorial system. One *NUGMW* contributor found visiting Russia a somewhat disillusioning experience, with wage inequality and poor standards of living and housing.²⁰⁶ Reports in the *AEU Journal* were more positive; contributors reminded readers that whilst wage-gaps existed, all profits went to the people – not the few capitalists as was the case in the capitalist world.²⁰⁷ Moreover, the sheer achievement of transforming the country from the equivalent of 13th century Britain with 90% illiteracy pre-revolution, to its current state, was highlighted.²⁰⁸ It was further suggested that Russia's 5 year Plan not only helped its 180 million people, but could potentially help all other peoples, as the removal of the private profit motive and planning for the common good reportedly increased production by 45% over pre-war levels.²⁰⁹ Similarly positive views were expressed in the *Electrical Trades Journal*.²¹⁰ The language used in relation to Russia and her internal politics was typically measured, in contrast to discussions around communism, it was devoid of emotion.

Worker Control

Divergent opinions were evidenced in the journals regarding workers control in industry. The union officials typically accorded with the TUC 1933 Brighton Conference (amended *NUGMW* resolution) that:

... wage earners of all grades and occupations have a right, which should be acknowledged by law, to an effective share in the control and direction of socialised industries²¹¹

on the grounds that:

If it is necessary, in the interest of justice and equality, to have direct Labour representation up in the governing bodies in the political sphere, it is equally

²⁰⁶ J. Brown, 'Another View on Russia', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1935), p.14.

²⁰⁷ R. Rallison, 'Lessons from Russia Pt. 2', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1936), p.18.

²⁰⁸ R. Rallison. 'Lessons from Russia Pt. 3', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1936), p. 3.

²⁰⁹ T' Young'un, 'On Planning.' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1931), p. 60.

²¹⁰ For instance, J. Wood, 'My Visit to Russia', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (July, 1936), p162.

²¹¹ W. E. Yorke, 'Impressions by a Lay Member at the Hastings Labour Party Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), p. 333.

necessary to have direct Labour representation upon the governing bodies in the industrial sphere.²¹²

The resolution was passed but faced criticism by some such as J. Jagger (Distributive and Allied Workers), and A. J. Dobbs (Boots and Shoes Operatives) who criticised the resolution for not going far enough, Jagger was particularly critical of Herbert Morrison's consideration that university educated administrators and technical experts belonged at the top with workers still below.²¹³

The *NUGMW Journal* published a 'Readers Forum' on the subject that showed rank and file enthusiasm amongst correspondents for the principle of workers' control went further than that of the leadership. Debates covered the different forms worker control might take. A very small minority took a reformist stance, suggesting, for instance, learning from The Ministry of Labour 'Works Committees' Inquiry 1919.²¹⁴ However, the vast majority advocated full ownership, not shared control, arguing that genuine control was indivisible from ownership (which would be resolved under socialism). They posited that capitalism needed to be usurped and the education system changed, pointing out that all traces of workers' control achieved thus far (for instance, employers' acceptance of Workers' Councils) were only accepted if they assisted managers, and did not encroach on managerial prerogatives.²¹⁵ Thus those NUGMW members participating in the Readers' Forum were ideologically significantly to the left of the journal contributors (typically their union officers). They were not necessarily reflective of the average journal reader as they were a self-selecting sample of those motivated enough to contribute. Nonetheless, the journal editors considered their opinions warranted publishing.

The subject of workers' control was rarely mentioned in the *AEU Journals* during this period (although very much in evidence from the 1940s onwards). This is a

²¹² Tom Swan, 'Our Reader's Forum; Workers' Control of Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1933), p. 350.

²¹³ W. Citrine, *Congress Discusses: Worker's Control*, (London, ca.1933).

²¹⁴ The Ministry of Labour, 'Works Committees' Inquiry, 1919, found wartime works and shop committees typically improved relations, and the Whitley Committee recommended their extension; J. Brown, 'Our Reader's Forum; Workers' Control of Industry.' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 32.

²¹⁵ F. Riding, 'Our Reader's Forum: Workers' Control of Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1933), pp. 351-352; F. G. Smith, 'Our Reader's Forum; Workers' Control of Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1933), pp. 351-352; F. G. Smith, 'Our Reader's Forum; Workers' Control of Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1934), p. 27; J. Rosemond, 'Our Readers' Forum', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1933), pp. 321-322; B. Powell, 'Our Reader's Forum; Workers' Control of Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1934), p. 114.

surprising omission given the proportion of left-wingers amongst the *AEU*'s regular contributors and its highly political commentaries, especially as the TUC was deliberating the matter, culminating in their detailed report to their 1932 Newcastle Congress and decisions at the 1933 Brighton Congress. The few discussions reported in the *AEU Journal* centred on the technicalities of transference of control from the private to the public sectors, and the different forms labour representation could take in future socialised industries.²¹⁶ Members' apathy with regards to the topic was blamed, illustrated by a report that 50,000 watched Arsenal play Albion at football, whilst nearby under 50 attended a lecture on factory control in their workplace.²¹⁷ The membership's views on worker control (bottom up) was juxtaposed with the example of Morrison's London Passenger Transport Bill and its 'Appointing Trustees' which selected the Board (the usual 'esteemed gentlemen', many knowing nothing of either London or transport).²¹⁸

Other unions took similar stances on worker control. For instance, Frank Foulkes (ETU) reminded readers of their journal that the ETU rulebook Clause 2, Rule 1, advocated 'supporting policies which will ultimately give the workers control of industry.'²¹⁹ *The Clerk* journal, when propagating the benefits of union membership, tied it to the goal of worker control: 'It is not a far step from trade unionism to workers' control. One leads to the other.' but he added the caveat that the time might not yet be right for it to become a reality (1932).²²⁰ Complete workers' control was rejected by the TUC and LP hierarchy, who typically favoured a Board appointed on merit by Ministers.

Education

Education was considered vital if political thought and policy ideas of the labour movement were to be operationalized, and not merely considered of academic interest. Education was seen as a means to practical ends, not merely as an end in itself. It imparted wider knowledge and deeper understandings, as well as

²¹⁶ A. J. Caddick, 'Modern Control of Industry. Part 2', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1933), p. 55.

²¹⁷ J. D. Lawrence, 'Prosperity and Plunder. Part 6', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1932), p. 57.

²¹⁸ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1932), p 41.

²¹⁹ Frank Foulks, 'Correspondence', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (January, 1931), p. 17.

²²⁰ 'ACT', 'The Market Value of a Clerk', *The Clerk*, (January, 1931), pp.12-14

benefiting others (such as serving in courts of referees, or disseminating knowledge at branch meetings).²²¹

Herbert Bullock (NUGMW) summed up the labour movement's educational objective:

Our first job is to get to **Know**. 'Knowledge is Power,' then we must **Feel** the import of what we have learned, and that should lead to **Action**. Unless we apply our knowledge it is all in vain.²²²

The ideology that underpinned their education policies entailed political action and the real world, and the preparation of an educated working class to play a proactive role in the predicted socialist future. Such aims, ideals, and educational training and encouragement, were shared with the LP, for instance, through their study circles, study guides, and other publications.

Both the *AEU* and *NUGMW* journal contributors stressed the need for effective working class education. The Workers' Education Association (WEA) and the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC) courses were promoted. Courses in working class history and Marxist economics were especially advocated to counter the indoctrination into class collaboration through the capitalist's misrepresentation of reality.²²³ Education, it was thought, facilitated the critical assessment of what was considered pernicious propaganda disseminated through the capitalist press. In this, the trade union movement saw itself as central.²²⁴ Moreover, a minority argued that education needed to be student centred and intensive in order to create a socialist 'advance guard'.²²⁵ J.W. Smith (*AEU*) advocated a Marxist education, and criticised the WEA which taught 'laws of diminishing returns', which he considered damaging; he also criticised the NCLC as catering for 'pedants and snobs'.²²⁶

²²¹ W. H. Hutchinson, 'Education Worth Paying For', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1932), p.145.

²²² H. Bullock. 'What is this education?' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1936) pp. 129-130.

²²³ *The Clerk* Journal reported that its Annual Conference recommended that '[t]he educational resources of the Trade Union Movement, including substantial financial assistance, should be mainly devoted to the general promulgation of Marxian economics among the workers through Trade Union Branches and other recognised working class agencies. See: The Annual Conference, *The Clerk* (September, 1935), pp. 54-63.

²²⁴ J.W Smith. 'Into the Struggle you Thinkers', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1932), p.53.

²²⁵ 'W.W.C.', 'Intensive Education and The Development of the Individual Man', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1932), p.43.

²²⁶ J. W. Smith. 'Intellectual Confusion.' *AEU Journal*, (October, 1932), p.49.

Nonetheless, there was overwhelming support for the education offered through the WEA and NCLC which the AEU and NUGMW funded, and regularly publicised. Other union's favoured one over the other, for instance *The Clerk* overwhelmingly promoted NCLC rather than WEA courses.

Courses offered to union members included: English Socialism - aims and origins; English - elementary and advanced (including article writing and Labour journalism); Public Speaking; Chairmanship; Working Class History; European Industrial History; Social History, Economics - Orthodox and Marxist; Economic Geography and Imperialism; Esperanto (Elementary and Advanced); Local Government; History of the British Working Class; and Industrial History of Modern Europe. Additionally, union and TUC scholarships and day, weekend and summer schools were made available. The journals published reports of members' participation at such events (always positive). The *A.E.U. journal* carried regular advertisements for books and educational courses outside the union structures; the persistence of these is indicative of them achieving a good response. Both journals published book reviews, although the *NUGMW* only published about a third of the number of the *AEU*. They both reviewed a number of books in common, such as: The Everyman's Library series; *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* by H. G. Wells; *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe To-day*, by G.D.H. and M. Cole; *Practical Socialism for Britain* by Hugh Dalton; and *Soviet Communism* by B. and S. Webb.

The A.E.U. strongly encouraged the auto-didactic tradition, encouraging readers to inform themselves, and recommended multiple books on economics and political economy, as well as classical socialist texts, for instance, Lenin, Marx, and books on labour history (as did *The Clerk Journal*). The *NUGMW* on the other hand focussed on the lives of trade unionists, or books that illustrated a point they had been making in the journals. For instance, J. B. Priestley's *No Coats for Soldiers* describing the destitution amongst those who fought in WWI and were then cast aside,²²⁷ or *Sawdust Caesar* by George Seldes which condemned the personality and actions of Mussolini, reinforcing the Journal's narrative.²²⁸ More surprising recommendations included Harold MacMillan's *Capitalism Abandoned*, although

²²⁷ Anon., 'No Coats for Soldiers', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1934), p.150.

²²⁸ S. L. Boulton, 'Sawdust – Caesar', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1936), p. 44.

this brought disapproval in the *NUGMW Readers' Forum*.²²⁹ Once the *NP* became established (1936 onwards) it had by far the greatest number of reading recommendations, overwhelmingly written from a communist perspective.

The education provided by the labour movement was considered a counter-weight to the prevailing education system, which served to elicit a mind-set and comprehensions that maintained and bolstered the capitalist system, rather than providing an understanding of the political-economic system they lived under. On leaving state education, students were socialised into believing that no fundamental change of the current system was necessary.²³⁰ Thus, although the employer class did not attain its position through education, education was needed to counter their power and the capitalist class society that maintained them. Nonetheless, within the *NUGMW Journal*, there were occasional reports of members' apathetic attitude towards education, accompanied by texts testifying to its importance.²³¹

²²⁹ Edward McGuinness, 'Our Readers Forum, Capitalism Abandoned', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1934), p. 392.

²³⁰ J. P. Millar (General Secretary of the National Council of Labour Colleges), 'Is Education a Failure?' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1935), p.173.

²³¹ J. Rosemond, 'On Education', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1932), p. 288.

Chapter 2. Conscription for Men But Indemnity for Wealth: 1936-1940

The Spanish Civil War

The 1936 election of the Popular Front in France, was welcomed in the journals. It illustrated the potential for socialist electoral success, and the advantages of having a government that represented workers (and implicitly the necessity to work for such ends). The Government's subsequent fall demonstrated to the journal contributors the dangers embodied in the forces of capital, which seek to prevent or crush such developments.¹ The fascist regimes in Italy and Germany provided the background against which, firstly the French Popular Front fell, and then the democratically elected Spanish Government suffered insurrection. Such an environment was perceived as ominous. Nonetheless, despite such events, and the poor British electoral results, the journals presented the labour movement in the late 1930s not only as a 'can do' organisation, but 'must do' if British workers were to avoid the repression their European counterparts endured.

The initial journal reaction to the victory of the Popular Front in the 1936 Spanish General Election was somewhat muted, they merely reported that the Spanish Republican Coalition Government was a Liberal Republican and intellectually dominated administration, in alliances with the trade unions, socialist and left-wing groups, not Socialist or Communist as British capitalist press reported. The subsequent uprising under Franco was interpreted as fascist by the Labour movement and Party, and denounced (notwithstanding the contested nature of this categorisation). It was held up as a warning of the menace fascism posed to organised Labour and democracy everywhere. An upswing of sympathy and support for the Spanish Republicans ensued. Hindsight shows that sympathy and funding for the Republicans peaked when the war was already lost (late 1936-January 1937). Nonetheless, in terms of the unions' political culture, the conflict was profound and pivotal; the post WWI vehement anti-war stance and 'never

¹ R. M. Fox, 'When France was Free,' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1940), p.282; C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes,' *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1940), pp. 97-100; Anon, 'IFTU Conference' *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1936), p. 259.

again' mind-set was squarely challenged (the rise of Hitler had already undermined this stance for a minority). The image of fascism as an 'evil' was amplified by Italian and German military activity outside their borders, leading some to believe that fascism had to be defeated by *any means* to protect democracy (and for some, to protect the USSR). Spain acted as a focus and catalyst, raising both political awareness and class consciousness within the British labour movement.² No mention was made in the journals of the pre-1936 attacks on the Spanish Republic's Government by leftist forces (anarchists of the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) / Federacion Anarchista Iberica (FAI) and socialists followers of Caballero), indicating the continuance of the 'them versus us' and 'good versus bad' schism that the journals employed.

The journals unanimously presented the Chamberlain Government as being ideologically sympathetic to fascists, and its response to the Spanish situation was interpreted as class motivated and embodying their antipathy towards any government that represented working-class interests. The *AEU* bolstered such assertions by reporting on how the British Government's benches in parliament greeted with 'malicious delight' the 1936 Republican military set-backs, how Franco's Mediterranean successes were 'greeted with Tory laughter',³ and how attacks on British ships were tolerated.⁴ The British Government reaction was presented as a betrayal of the Spanish people, democracy, and British seamen: 'They are gambling that a rebel victory will be won before the bombing of British ships forces public opinion to demonstrate its hostility to Mr. Chamberlain's leadership'.⁵ The other journals' analysed, concurred with this sentiment.

Sections of the British press (August 1936 onwards) were similarly accused in the various journals of ideological sympathy, and tacit and sometimes outspoken support for Franco. Lord Rothermere's press (*Daily Mail* and *Evening News*) was universally condemned by the journals for positing that 'only a fascist victory' could save Spain, that Spanish fascists represented 'a Christian, civilised, anti-Bolshevik

² See for instance: Anon., 'Spain,' *NP*, (September, 1936), p. 15; W. Thorne, 'Notes, by the Way,' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 315.

³ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben,' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1937), pp. 306-7.

⁴ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Parliamentary Politics as a Man Hunt', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1938), pp. 270-271.

⁵ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Help and Support for Spain,' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1938), pp. 266-268.

world,⁶ and for rebranding the fascist insurgents 'nationalists'.⁷ Moreover, the *AEU* accused the Rothermere and Beaverbrook Press of misrepresenting the Republicans as 'Reds' and 'Communists,' and sensationalising their brutality.⁸ Unlike the *AEU* and *NP* journals, the Labour Party and TUC leaderships were suspicious of Spanish socialists whom they considered to be of the far left by British standards. Such a stance accorded with the TU and Labour Party understanding that the capitalist press was aligned against them. Nonetheless, the whole left shared in their condemnation of the way the capitalist press framed issues, incorporating anti-labourist and anti-socialist views, whilst reinforcing capitalist understandings. The need to counter such capitalist framing was considered an imperative, and strengthened the perceptions about the importance of their own press and propaganda efforts. The journals were constantly engaged in this; their socialist framing of issues and policy promotions were designed to both reinforce their socialist readers' ideological understandings, and to awaken new understandings in those who had formally internalised the hegemonic capitalist views propagated through state institutions (especially schools) and civil society.

The conflict in Spain was presented as a 'civil war' in name only; instead it was considered to be two European fascist countries invading an independent state to aid a fascist insurgency in contravention of international law, offending natural justice, and raising the extremely ominous spectre of a European fascist empire.⁹ The overriding sentiment amongst the journals was typified in the *AEU* National Committee's resolution appealing to, '... members to give every possible assistance to our comrades and fellow workers of that country who are so heroically fighting the powers of international fascism'.¹⁰ (unanimously adopted). The *AEU Journal* (and *The Clerk*, *NUGMW* and *NP*) urged the labour movement's leaders to rethink their non-intervention stance (subsequently overturned).¹¹ Readers were advised to regard the 'Non-Intervention Committee' assertions in light of the British Government's position as agent for class-interests (concerned with business,

⁶ C. Dukes, 'Editor's Notes: Reply to Lord Rothermere's Press Campaign'. *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 265.

⁷ F. A. Smith, 'Suther's Column,' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 16.

⁸ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes, Spain,' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1936), pp. 6-7

⁹ J. T. Murphy, 'The Fascist Offensive Continues,' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1937), p. 157.

¹⁰ F. A. Smith, 'General Office Report,' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1937), pp. 430-432.

¹¹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (October, 1936), p. 6; 'Forte', 'Neutrality and the TUC – A Change of Policy Needed', *NP*, (October, 1936), p. 13; 'At the General Council Table,' *The Clerk*, (April, 1937), pp. 33-4.

investments, trade routes, and strategic military positions), and their desire to strengthen capitalism worldwide.¹²

The *AEU Journal* (and *NP*) in line with their educative agenda and their political framing of events and issues, presented the Spanish situation as part of a complex geopolitical whole, where ideology, Spanish domestic politics, economics, commerce, military expediencies, and ambitions all interacted.¹³ They reported on Spanish history, the Spanish Republican Government policy agenda, the fascist treatment of the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), fascist raids on left-wing parties and trade unions, and the confiscation of their press and their leaders' imprisonment.¹⁴ Such accounts reinforced the danger fascism posed, whilst also 'othering' the capitalist class backers. The message, explicitly and implicitly conveyed was that even when socialist democratic electoral victories were secured and socialist policies implemented, the capitalist class, domestically and transnationally, would attempt to pervert democracy if their interests were threatened. The *AEU Journal* utilised Chamberlain's policy towards Mexico to further elucidate and reinforce this perception.¹⁵ The *NUGMW Journal* largely accorded.¹⁶ International solidarity and fraternity in the face of fascist aggression were advocated in line with socialist doctrine.

Fighting fascism was deemed essential, as attaining 100% union membership was senseless when, if fascist expansion continued, the labour movement would be destroyed. Empathy was expressed for their Spanish 'brothers' who were 'bearing the brunt of the fighting ... resisting a dastardly and criminal attack upon democracy and freedom'.¹⁷ Similar attitudes were articulated in the *Electrical Trades Journal* and *The Clerk*.¹⁸ The dilemma facing individuals considering travelling to Spain to

¹² For instance, T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Sombre Reflections on Holidays in War-time,' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1937), p. 346; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1937), pp. 439-440.

¹³ For instance, S. Beare, 'Background to the Civil War in Spain,' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 8.

¹⁴ J. T. Murphy, 'The Storm Clouds of World War Are Gathering,' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1937), p. 311.

¹⁵ The Chamberlain Government supported foreign oil interests against the Mexican Government's nationalisation policy, and encouraged fascist insurgents; F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1938), pp. 222-225.

¹⁶ For instance, C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes,' *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1936), p. 301.

¹⁷ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1936), pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ For instance, 'An Appeal to European Public Opinion from Republican Spain,' *Electrical Trades Journal*, (October, 1936), pp. 238-9; 'E.', 'Grave and Gay, (Very Grave and Not So Gay),' *The Clerk*, (March, 1937), pp. 26-7.

fight, was addressed in the journals, both directly and through fiction, but remained unresolved.¹⁹ All the journals reported their unions / groups contributions to the International Solidarity Fund, Spanish Medical Aid, and the Voluntary Industrial Aid for Spain, which were framed to elicit a sense of duty towards the Spanish victims of fascism. Any atrocities committed by the Republicans were conspicuous by their absence, despite the prominence given to them in the international capitalist press in the early months of the conflict. The *AEU* contributors, in contrast to those who followed a strictly labourist approach, deemed non-parliamentary action as both necessary and justified, only the form this should take was debated.

In an article that exemplified the principal change in the political culture exposed in the union journals at this time (1936-7), NUGMW General Secretary Chas Dukes, a WWI conscientious objector, explicitly called for the Spanish Republicans to be supplied with war materials equal to those the fascists supplied Franco.²⁰

Nonetheless, this change was neither uniform nor instant, and multiple voices expressed positions which conflicted and mutated. Thus, Dukes' previous pacifist stance, was like many at the time, that of moral- pragmatism, whereby fighting fellow workers in capitalist / imperialist wars (like WWI) was rejected, but this was mutable in exceptional circumstances, like the imperative to halt fascism in order to prevent what they considered was a greater evil enveloping all. This stood in stark contrast to the religious pacifism (famously articulated by Landsbury).

Empathy, concern for the future and moral outrage, rather than political analysis, dominated much *NUGMW* coverage.²¹ British deaths in Spain were published:

... we must pay a tribute to a fellow worker who gives his life in defence of those things he held worthwhile ... defending ... the rights of common people to elect what Government they choose, and the right of all workers to build up a Trade Union Movement.²²

¹⁹ E. Archbold, 'The Decision,' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1937), pp. 154-155.

²⁰ 'C.M.S.', 'The Means Test: An Impressive Demonstration,' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 268; W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes,' *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1937), p. 39.

²¹ H. E. Mathews, 'Edinburgh Conference,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 331; C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes: Labour Party Conference, Edinburgh,' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1936), p. 301; C. Dukes, 'Review of the Labour Party Conference,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 329.

²² J. E. Eyles, 'Killed in Spain,' *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1937), p. 102.

In stark contrast to their normal stance, non-parliamentary action was presented by the *NUGMW* as justified; however, its expedience was questioned due to concern as to whether the Spanish situation could be isolated.²³

The *NP* summed up the imperative produced by the interconnected and overlapping nature of fascist policies as: 'Save Spain, Save Britain, Save Peace'.²⁴ The British Government's non-intervention policy was judged to be disingenuous, 'window-dressing' to avert a public backlash. The *NP*'s contributors considered the Government's policy towards Spain was consistent with its endeavours to undermine the League of Nations and collective security. Letters from a pilot attempting to travel to Spain to fight (after being refused a passport under the Foreign Enlistment Act) were published, acting to reinforce the urgency of the cause.²⁵ In line with their communist stance, non-parliamentary interventions were considered a necessary expedient in Spain to prevent a fascist outrage.

The journals recommended further reading (which reflected their ideological interpretations of the situations). The *AEU Journal* recommendations included: *The Drama of Spain*, by A. Romos; *The Truth about the Spanish Rebellion*, by London Trades Council (also recommended by the *NP*); *The Spanish Problem*, by TUC;²⁶ *Britons in Spain*, by William Rust; *Britain in Spain*, by 'Unknown Diplomat'.²⁷ The *NP*'s recommendations were typically written from a left-wing or Communist perspective, and included: *A Reporter In Spain*, by Frank Pitcairn; *The Drama Of Spain*, by Oliviera; *Arms For Spain*, by Harry Pollitt;²⁸ *Spain In Revolt*, by H. Gannes and T. Repard; *British Medical Aid In Spain*, by News Chronicle; *Forward From Liberalism*, by Stephan Spender;²⁹ and *Spanish Testament*, by Arthur Koestler.³⁰ There were also notable omissions, like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* or Franz Borkenau's *The Spanish Cockpit?* *NUGMW* did not recommend any books on the Spanish situation.

²³ C. Dukes, 'Review of the Labour Party Conference,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 329.

²⁴ Anon., 'Spain Conference,' *NP*, (May, 1938), p. 5.

²⁵ Anon., 'Spain Fighters – Letter,' *NP* (January, 1937), p. 11; Anon., 'Another letter from Spain,' *NP*, (February, 1937), p. 11.

²⁶ 'Garw', 'The Truth About the Spanish Rebellion. Three useful pamphlets,' *AEU Journal*, (October, 1936), p. 20.

²⁷ F. A. Smith, 'A Page About Books,' *AEU Journal*, (March, 1939), pp.102-3.

²⁸ Anon., 'Books to Read,' *NP*, (November, 1936), p. 14.

²⁹ Anon., 'Books to Read,' *NP*, (February, 1937), p. 14.

³⁰ Anon., 'Books to read,' *NP*, (February, 1938), p. 10.

Interpretations of the Wider International Situation and Britain's Responses

Increased international tensions and war fears made international affairs salient. The Italian offensives in Abyssinia, and the Japanese in China, exposed the disinclination of Britain and France to take decisive action through the League of Nations, significantly undermining its status. Indeed, the Government's actions and inactions were judged in the journals to have created a world safe for war-mongers, and their refusal to effectively back the League was perceived to have given the dictators a free-rein. The unions, in line with the rest of the labour movement, felt this must be reversed. The *NUGMW Journal* contributors complained that the League was deliberately starved of funds whilst 'the two largest democratic countries in Europe, France and England, spent £750 million on armaments' (1938),³¹ which, they believed, if spent on collective security (alongside monies from other members), would have meant peace could have been maintained. Collective security through the League was presented as both morally desirable, and the obvious means of achieving optimal outcomes for all concerned. There was no mention in the journals that the only League countries with significant forces at this time were France, Britain, the USSR, plus Poland and Czechoslovakia (pre-occupation). Instead, the impression given was that the whole collective carried importance. The viability of collective security, if the political will existed, was never questioned.

The journals unanimously advocated the League's re-empowerment to provide the infrastructure for adjudicating international grievances and thus avoid war. For some, this included, launching joint military actions against aggressor states if necessary.³² Unlike the *AEU Journal*, the *NUGMW* offered very little analysis on international issues, tending instead to make declamatory and evocative statements, and simplistic moral judgments, employing rhetoric, rather than evaluation. Thus, the texts embodied authorial intentionality; they sought to stimulate readers into taking note and acting accordingly, before it was too late.

³¹ H. Bullock, 'The League of Nations Union,' *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1938), p. 71.

³² For instance, R. Rallinson, 'Whither Europe?' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1938), p., 194.

Ideas around rearmament that were expressed in the journals began mutating from 1936-7, at which time they were somewhat fluid, reactive, and sometimes contradictory. They reflected the range of opinions expressed at the Labour Party Conference (1937), ranging from the small minority who accorded with George Lansbury's staunch pacifism,³³ to the majority 'realist' voice, expounded by Bevin, and shared by the NCL:

... in a world where dictators were showing no respect for the sanctity of treaties, and were breaking their pledged word without the slightest compunction, it would be madness for Britain to be unarmed.³⁴

However, notwithstanding Bevin's brutal denunciation of Lansbury's position, the *NUGMW Journal* presented his views as venerable, commenting:

Undoubtedly every delegate was as pacifist in outlook as the section led by Bro. George Lansbury ... but there was really no alternative, in the face of the attitude of some other nations.³⁵

This report, as all such reports, was mediated through the ideology of the listener-author, and thus reflected their understandings and was framed accordingly. *The Clerk* journal reported divergent opinions, including the condemnation of the LP, who as they supported rearmament, 'stood on a common platform with avowed enemies of the working-class ... Its internationalism had been lost'.³⁶

The *AEU* (and *The Clerk*) journals, in line with the trade union movement's educative imperative, explored geo-politics and foreign affairs, and how the histories of the relevant countries had fed into the prevailing situation. J. T. Murphy (*AEU*) wrote a series of articles framing the current context in terms of the imminent danger fascist aggression posed, adding Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and Japan to his coverage of Italy, Germany and Austria.³⁷ The *AEU* recommended

³³ 'H. H.' 'The Labour Party Conference, Bournemouth,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1937), p. 325.

³⁴ C. W. Gascoigne, 'Labour's Great Conference,' *NUGMW Journal*, No.173, (November, 1937) p. 342.

³⁵ 'H. H.' 'The Labour Party Conference, Bournemouth', p.325.

³⁶ 'Proceedings of the 48th Annual Conference,' *The Clerk*, (June, 1939), p. 94.

reading *World Affairs and the USSR* written (from a communist perspective) by W.P. and Zelda Coates.

Consternation was expressed throughout the journals at Soviet Russia's exclusion from the negotiations regarding Germany's territorial ambitions in Central Europe. This fact was brought into sharp relief as Britain was seeking agreements with fascist aggressors.³⁸ Moreover, any peace negotiated outside the League would require USSR to be included in any alliance, along with France, the US, and the smaller 'peaceful' countries.³⁹ The *NUGMW Journal*, framed the non-completion of an Anglo-Soviet Pact as encouraging the fascist Powers' continued aggression.⁴⁰ The *NP* concluded Britain's prevarication and procrastination was because she found alliances with socialist states unpalatable.⁴¹ No consideration was voiced in the journals over the difficulties bound up in ensuring that the USSR's Western neighbours allowed Soviet troops to occupy forward positions within their territory (although it did feature in the mainstream press).

Munich

Condemnation of the Munich agreement was common to all the journals, and Chamberlain's claim to have secured peace was deemed disingenuous in light of the ongoing panic about defences, and talk of conscription.⁴² The supposed public jubilation at war averted was never evidenced in the journals. Indeed, the *AEU* cited the work of Tom Harrison (British Mass Observation) which indicated the contrary was the case.⁴³

There was universal sympathy expressed in the journals for the Czech people as the victims of the Munich Agreement, and outrage at their betrayal, and the

³⁸ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Arms and the Man', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1938), p. 140.

³⁹ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Memoranda,' *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1939), pp. 480-484.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Anon, 'Secretary Reports Progress at Fourth Annual Meeting of A.S.S.N.C.,' *NP*, (June, 1939), p. 7.

⁴² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (October, 1938), p. 386-7.

⁴³ Tom Harrison (British Mass Observation) found that over 54% of the British public considered Chamberlain's negotiated agreement unjustified, adding that only 800 people congregated in Whitehall and 1,000 outside Downing Street despite concentrated Press, cinema and B.B.C. propaganda, promoting Chamberlain's achievement. 'Victlean,' 'Science Newsreel,' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1938), p. 452.

architects and advocates of that betrayal: 'Those who have derided the League and weakened Collective Security carry a heavy responsibility for the events of the last few weeks'.⁴⁴ Powerful capitalist interests, those who deemed democracy too expensive, and provided the fascists credit, were considered beneficiaries of the crisis.⁴⁵ The *NUGMW Journal* protested:

We are not permitted to disturb or stop fascism. ... And when steps were taken to claim Sudeten areas in Czechoslovakia, we bowed to the money-bags (just as we did in 1931 ...)⁴⁶

Contemporary events were linked with the Government's past behaviour, reviving memories of benefit cuts (blamed on the financiers), and the betrayal of WWI veterans who were discarded as surplus to requirement. Thus the journal contributors recruited recent history as a 'what do you expect' textual device.

The *AEU Journal*, continued their narrative that the Government acted as the agents of the moneyed classes under the 'Americanised, moneyed, sly, furtive, self-righteous influence of the Astor group' (the Cliveden Set).⁴⁷ The Foreign Office itself was deemed the 'commercial department' of transnational class interests.⁴⁸ Understood from this perspective, Chamberlain's appeasement policies, culminating in the Munich Agreement, his 'peace with honour', was deemed to be a triumph for class enemies.⁴⁹ The *AEU Journal* concluded that: 'There is in our ruling class a dangerous anti-democratic element, and they will interpret the Munich agreement as a pledge of solidarity with the Totalitarian regimes'.⁵⁰ They, and their ideas were portrayed as a danger to democracy, organised labour, and the working classes, and in voicing such concerns explicitly, the authors effectively presented a schism

⁴⁴ C. Dukes, 'The Crisis and After,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1938), p. 258-9.

⁴⁵ C. H. Kirkby, 'The Great Betrayal,' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1938), p. 264-5.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Cain, T., 'Beneath Big Ben: What the Change in Foreign Policy Means,' *AEU Journal*, (March, 1938), p. 98.

⁴⁸ H. L. V. Morgan, 'The Diplomacy of a King,' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1938), p. 228.

⁴⁹ The Cliveden Set was understood to be composed of fascist sympathisers who promoted a British accommodation with Germany and Italy, the abandonment of security through the League of Nations, and rejection of sanctions. The group was said to include Nancy Astor, Viscountess Astor, Geoffrey Dawson, Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian); Edward Wood (Lord Halifax); William Montagu, and Robert Brand; see for instance 'Beneath Big Ben; What the Change in Foreign Policy Means', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1938), p. 98; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Arms and The Man', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1938), p. 140.

⁵⁰ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1938), pp. 386-7.

between trade unionists who held the legitimate moral high ground, and the moneyed friends of fascism and their Tory allies.

The *NP* position was clear, printing their 1938 A.S.S.N.C. Annual Conference Resolution:

the pro-fascist policy of the National Government is responsible for the continued fascist aggression ... We therefore protest against and repudiate all suggestions for co-operation of the Trade Unions with this pro-fascist Government in the production of Armaments.⁵¹

In the years preceding the war, the *NP*'s stance (in-line with CP policy) was hostile to what they perceived to be the danger of another capitalist, imperialist war (akin to WWI), where British workers were exploited, sacrificed, and compelled to kill other workers. Despite sharing an anti-war agenda with much of the labour movement (pre-war), it was qualitatively different to those founded on pacifism. Indeed, they advocated collective security, embodying a meaningful alliance with the USSR, and implicitly condoned a war against fascism on this basis; a view increasingly expressed by contributors to the other journals analysed as the decade progressed.

Arms Embargos

Success in war is dependent on adequate supplies of hardware, munitions, and finance. Thus, the provision of finance for fascist regimes, including Government Credit Guarantees for Italian loans from Britain's private financiers, was denounced.⁵² The *NUGMW Journal* highlighted the extent of foreign loans originating in Britain (for private profit) which entailed huge national costs (funded by the tax-payer), for instance: the £20,000,000 lent to pre-Hitler Germany; £11,000,000 to Greece; £7,500,000 to Hungary; £3,000,000 to Danzig; £16,000,000 to Turkey, and in 1938 negotiations were ongoing for a £9,000,000 loan to Bulgaria; many of these loans were in default. Moreover, all the principal journals reported

⁵¹ From, 1938 onwards the *NP* (and occasionally the *AEU Journal*,) referred to Chamberlain as the 'pro-fascist' Chamberlain and the Government as the 'so called' National Government; Anon, 'No Co-operation: Third Annual Meeting on Arms Speed-Up', *NP*, (April, 1938), p.9.

⁵² For instance: F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1938), pp. 94-96.

that some loans given as Export Credits, were spent elsewhere, including in Germany and other anti-democratic states.⁵³ *The Clerk* journal blamed the capitalist's imperative to crush socialism for the fact that Britain's financiers chose to fund German rearmament, and for encouraging their aggression.⁵⁴ Thus, international finance and armaments manufacture were linked with the threat of war.

As military conflict appeared increasingly inevitable, calls for embargos increased,⁵⁵ particularly from the AEU, many of whose members were engaged in airplane, shipping, engine, and munitions production. The *AEU Journal* reported Germany's reliance on imports for their rearmaments program, and their pursuit of self-sufficiency. German scientific advances, including discoveries of substitutes for imported raw materials were tracked throughout the 1930s and 1940s in their long running columns, *A Science Newsreel* and *Modern Workshop Practices*. They presented an embargo as practical, as only about 20 minerals were essential for armaments, and the responsibility, risks, and costs could be spread over multiple countries⁵⁶ (the British Empire and the US being the principle suppliers).⁵⁷ Oil was an essential war material. The Russian – Italian dispute over non-payment for oil, led to Russia cutting supplies, thereby impacting fascist aggression 'rather than passing pious resolutions' (albeit financially motivated). Furthermore, as nine powers controlled 96.4% of oil production (all League members bar the US), oil embargoes were also considered practicable.⁵⁸ The *AEU* further postulated, that if labour movements combined:

... to tell their Governments that the workers will not produce, handle, or transport war material for other Governments to use for the destruction of freedom and democracy, then war will be prevented.⁵⁹

To underline this point they quoted Leon Jouhaux, (General of the Conderacion Generale du Travail (CGT)) who posited that, as trade unionists' only weapon against fascism was the workers' boycott: 'The trade unions, in their defence of

⁵³ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes,' *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1938), pp. 364-5.

⁵⁴ Anon., 'Youth and the War,' *The Clerk*, (December, 1939), p., 196.

⁵⁵ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1938) p. 134-137.

⁵⁶ 'International', 'How a Workers' Embargo would Work,' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1938), pp. 272-3.

⁵⁷ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1939), p. 142.

⁵⁸ J. W. Smith, 'Oil, the Key to Peace,' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1938), p.191.

⁵⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes. Wanted: A Policy for Action,' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1938), pp. 222-225.

liberty, should refuse to deliver goods which may be necessary for the fascist countries to carry on their campaign'.⁶⁰ The message was explicit; states acting through the League could severely impede fascist states' rearmament and thus aggression; workers also had this power, if they acted in unison, in accordance with the fundamental tenets of trade unionism. The journals sought to generalise this policy by reporting appeals from all parts of the labour movement for such Government embargos, and urged the Labour Party to pursue such policies.⁶¹

In addition to criticising the Government and capitalist firms, the *AEU Journal* also criticised the TUC's position, that there was 'no alternative' to their policy of attempting to influence the Government, and their rejection of requests for a conference to discuss the situation (1938). The AEU's General Secretary accused them of thwarting the Movement's desire for policy reconsideration. Such disagreements exposed the differing responses within the TU movement when values such as international fraternity, solidarity, nationalism, representing members' wishes, and political expediencies, came into conflict.

AEU Journal contributors highlighted Government facilitation of the export of materials whose short supply was supposedly impeding British rearmament; they backed this claim by publishing export figures,⁶² and directing readers to the *Daily Herald's* detailed accounts.⁶³ The link was made, implicitly and explicitly, between firms' pursuit of export profits and Government facilitation of such exports, shortages claims, and the appeals for workers to increase production in the national interest.⁶⁴ R. B. Suthers postulated that the proposed arms embargoes had been 'rejected by capitalists who grow fat on selling them [such] goods'.⁶⁵ The *NP*

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes. Wanted: A Policy for Action,' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1939), pp. 182-185.

⁶² The *AEU Journal*, published details. For instance, iron and steel exports amounted to 2.5 million tonnes worth almost £50 million, 1937. In the eleven months to December, 1937, armaments, and military and naval stores exports, amounted to £3 million, and aircraft exports totalled £3,938,111 in the first nine months of 1938, up from £1,956,368 in 1936. In March 1939, 6 warships worth £2,832,261, general armament worth £640,000, plus airplanes/ ships/ balloons/ parts worth £500,000 (£1.62million for first 3mths of 1939), were exported. In November 1939, £2,618,000 of vehicles, ships and aircraft were exported, plus £2.25million of iron and steel manufactures, and £300,000 of oils, fats and resins. See for instance: F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1938), pp. 9-11; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben, Conscripted Men and Immunity for Wealth,' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1939), p. 186; F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1940), pp. 8-9; Anon, 'The Money we Earn for Others,' *NP*, (August, 1939), p. 4.

⁶³ Editor's Notes,' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1939), p. 362.

⁶⁴ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Spanish Tragedy,' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1937), pp. 262-264.

⁶⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'Not a Very Good World that we Live in,' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1938), p. 76.

accorded, and *The Clerk* included the Labour Research Council's (LRC) *Engineers and Profiteers* in their 'Bookshelf' column.

The *NP* proposed embargoes on parts, engines, and planes exports to Japan,⁶⁶ but provided little detailed analysis. Incidents were reported, such as Glasgow and Southampton Dockers' refusal to unload Japanese goods, which was contrasted with the Government refusal to impose embargoes. The *NP* published export figures which disproved Government claims that slow progress in aircraft and munitions production was caused by a shortage of metal working machine tools.⁶⁷ Government policy choices, actions and inactions, combined with their decision to send an Air Mission to the US when there remained surplus capacity in Britain (with short-time working, unemployment amongst engineers, idle Shadow Factories, and the laying-off of staff),⁶⁸ were interpreted by the *NP* as being motivated not by need, but by Government desire to empower employers' in their endeavours to degrade worker's wages and conditions, and pressure workers and their unions into acquiescence⁶⁹ (although such imports soon became a necessity).

The *NUGMW Journal* did not analyse the embargo issues and the politics surrounding them in any depth. Nonetheless the topic was evidenced. They adopted a similar position to the *AEU*, informing readers that sanctions had already proved successful; for instance, the US's helium embargo against Germany, which it was thought to be stock-piling for war purposes.⁷⁰

Popular/ United Front

The United Front and Popular Front continued to be a divisive issue within the labour movement. The continuing differences of opinion were evidenced in the journals. The majority opposed a United Front, but a powerful minority, especially in

⁶⁶ Anon., 'Aircraft Support of Spain. Dockers Refuse to Handle Japanese goods,' *NP*, December, 1937), p. 4.

⁶⁷ For instance, Anon., 'The Money We Earn for Others,' *NP*, (November, 1938), p. 4; 'Airmail,' *NP*, (November, 1940), p. 4.

⁶⁸ Anon., 'Government Blackmail,' *NP*, (May, 1938), pp. 1-2; Also see: 'Airmail,' *NP*, (November, 1940), p. 4; 'London Conference Report - Production Experts Say Second Front Now', *NP*, (September, 1941), p. 1; Also see: 'Editor's Notes: Problems of Production', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1941), p. 45; 'Editor's Notes: Outlook for War', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 193.

⁶⁹ Anon., 'Government Blackmail', *NP*, (May, 1938), p. 1-2.

⁷⁰ C. Duke, 'A Workers' Embargo on War Industry', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1938), pp. 226-227.

the *AEU Journal* (like J. T. Murphy) and also *The Clerk*, considered the fight for socialism had to be subsumed to confront the reactionary powers that endangered democracy and sought to destroy all workers' movements.⁷¹ Thus, on this like many issues the union journals acted as advocates for the particular strand of labourism or socialism they backed, and attempted to convert readers to their particular ideological interpretations. The *AEU* and *The Clerk* journal contributors' majority voice sympathised and promoted the Socialist League's policies (before its 1937 disaffiliation), whilst the *NUGMW* followed the Labour Party leadership line, which they deemed 'realist' and practical.

The continuing differing interpretations and priorities by the unions and their journals contributors, was evidenced in their 1939 Labour Party Conference reports. The *AEU* reports focused on their own resolutions: the future socialisation of the engineering industry; increases to the old age pensions; the condemnation of conscription and condemning the National Service scheme as a pro-fascist forerunner to industrial conscription.⁷² Conversely, the *NUGMW* focused on disparaging Cripps and the Popular Front.⁷³ They called into play the 'class card', highlighting Cripps rise in the Labour Party and linking it to that of Oswald Mosley; both were deemed illustrative of the working-classes socialisation into deference towards the upper classes.

... these men attained cabinet rank in less time than would be required of a rank and filer to qualify for the post of ward secretary in a local party. Social standing and wealth can put a person right in the front rank of Labour over the heads of men and women who have given the best part of their lives to our movement.⁷⁴

The 'othering' of those born into higher social classes was recurrent in the journals; in this case the *NUGMW Journal* sought to discredit the Unity Campaign that Cripps promoted by discrediting the messenger.

The *New Propellor* advocated the United Front. Although the issue was not widely covered, they recommended readings including *London Gay - Healthy, Happy*, by

⁷¹ J. T. Murphy, 'Why I am for the Peoples Front', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1936), p. 23.

⁷² 'The Delegates', 'Report of the Labour Party Conference.' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1939), pp. 290-291.

⁷³ C. Dukes. 'General Secretary's Memoranda.' *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1939), p. 416.

⁷⁴ C. Dukes. 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1939), pp. 160-164.

the CPGB. (which called on Mr Morrison to engage in a United Front 'before fascism wipes us off the map'⁷⁵) and *Son of the People*, by Maurice Thorez, a French Communist leader, anti-fascist and United Front protagonist.⁷⁶ They also recommended *The United Front*, by Georgi Dimitroff (Head of Comintern), which focused on the Co-operative Movement's declaration for the United Peace Alliance, and for unity of action of Labour and progressive people.⁷⁷

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Notwithstanding the Soviet's desire for a defensive pact being thwarted, the subsequent Soviet– Nazi Pact, and the Red Army's advance into Poland and Finland shocked the journal contributors, challenging unquestioned assumptions about the world's only socialist state; it appeared incompatible with the Soviet's League of Nations' membership, Litvinov's peace agenda, and its previous vehemently anti-fascist stance.⁷⁸ A considerable anti-communist backlash was evidenced in the *NUGMW* and the *AEU Journals*.⁷⁹ Even the Left Book Club's Victor Gollancz published a pamphlet which appealed to communists to recall Hitler's atrocities, and that, notwithstanding German and British imperialists' similarities, if Hitler was victorious, the labour movement would be eradicated.⁸⁰ The *AEU Journal* highlighted the pamphlet. Until this point, the *AEU* portrayed Soviet foreign policy as peaceful, and her concerns defensive, and argued that had the British, French and US governments accepted Litvinov's invitation the previous year for a conference on collective measures to prevent fascist aggression, subsequent events would have been different.

The *NP* and *The Clerk* journals⁸¹ on the other hand encouraged readers to look deeper into the issues, and reminded readers it was a 'Non-Aggression Pact' forced

⁷⁵ Anon., 'Books to Read', *NP*, (February, 1937), p. 14.

⁷⁶ Anon. 'Books to Read', *NP*, (November, 1938), p. 10.

⁷⁷ Anon. 'Books to Read', *NP*, (June, 1938), p.10.

⁷⁸ J. T. Murphy, 'What Does the Change in Russian Foreign Policy mean?' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1939), p. 444.

⁷⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1939), p. 478.

⁸⁰ A. E. Reader, 'Review of *An Appeal to Reason on the Left*', by Victor Gollancz', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 196.

⁸¹ See for instance: Anon., 'Youth and the War', *The Clerk*, (December, 1939), p., 196; Even with regards to the Russian invasion of Poland, *The Clerk Journal*, attempted to provide a balanced

on them by circumstance, not an aggressive alliance. The widespread notion that the Soviet–Nazi Pact would cause communists to abandon their anti-fascist stance, was not evidenced in any of the journals, only the reactions of those who feared it.

The journals tracked the unfolding European crisis, particularly the Finnish situation, and expressed anxieties that Western Powers might instigate hostilities against Russia.⁸² The *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* denounced the invasion.⁸³ Nonetheless, even the *NUGMW* noted that Japan's action in Manchuria, Italy's in Abyssinia, and fascist action in Spain, all broke the League's Articles, but incited no forceful response. The crises in Albania, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland had similar outcomes. Yet, Britain and France sought decisive action through the League in respect of Finland, suggesting that only when the Soviets not the fascists were the perpetrators, resolute action was required.⁸⁴ This again reinforced the journals' narrative, that Britain's Government (and that of France) felt an affinity for the fascists, and remained hostile towards any government that represented workers' interests, thereby again linking the Government and the fascists as the hostile 'other'.

The *NUGMW Journal* quoted Stalin's speech of August 26th 1939:

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit. We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries ... for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.⁸⁵

He was accused of duplicity, and the Soviet Dictatorship was portrayed as equivalent to the Nazis, aggressive and seeking world domination. The Labour Party and the National Council of Labour (NCL) concurred regarding:

picture, see: The Editor, 'All About the War and what we kill each other for', *The Clerk*, (December, 1939), pp. 179-181; M. Joseph, 'Correspondence', *The Clerk*, (February, 1940), p. 26.

⁸² For instance: R. B. Suthers, 'Ought we to Stop Stalin Spreading Socialism', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1940), p. 92.

⁸³ J. T. Murphy, 'A Disservice to the Working-Class', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1940), pp. 64-65; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Crisis Reaches its Climax', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1939), pp. 365-366; Smith, F. A., 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1939), p. 478; R. B. Suthers, 'Are You Silently Building a New Order', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1940), p. 12; Fox, R. M., 'The World's Window: Outposts of the Baltic *AEU Journal*', (January, 1940), p. 24.

⁸⁴ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1940), pp. 97-100.

⁸⁵ W. Thorne 'Parliamentary Notes: The Swing of the Pendulum', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1940), pp. 6-8.

... the splendid achievements of the Finnish nation in social legislation and in the building up of a Trade Union, Co-operative and political organisation of the working-class on the foundations of true Democracy and calls upon the free nations ... to give every practicable aid to the Finnish nation ...⁸⁶

This interpretation, meant that many concluded that Soviet behaviour proved they should be categorised as dictators (such as Hitler) in the 'Dictatorship versus Democracy' paradigm, and by implication, so did all British communists. However, such interpretations of the domestic politics of Finland can be seen as illustrating the extent to which changing contexts can alter perception.

In contrast to the *AEU* and the *NUGMW Journals*' portrayal of Finland as a democratic state, the *NP* condemned it as a near fascist capitalist state. Moreover, the *NP* referred to the Finnish Prime Minister as 'Butcher Mannerheim', (the country's Chief Banker), and reminded readers that his General, Wallenius, led the Finnish Fascist Party. The *NP* recommended D.N. Pritt's book *Must War Spread?* which stated that the British Government considered that democratic Spain was not worth losing British lives over, but indicated that Finland was.⁸⁷ The British Government's motives in planning to send arms to Finland to help them fight Russia, which was not Britain's enemy, were questioned, especially given the repeated warnings regarding Britain's own arms shortages.⁸⁸ The *NP* also recommended Pritt's *Light On Moscow*, which blamed the Chamberlain Government for failing to procure an Anglo-French- Russian Pact, which, if secured, Pritt postulated, would have meant Britain seeking Russian occupation of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia.⁸⁹ Thus the *NP* readership was informed both directly and indirectly that the British Government's position, supported by many of the labour movement's leaders, was founded on anti-Soviet and anti-communist ideology, rather than the problematic of the unfolding international situation. The position of *The Clerk* contributors was nearer to that of the *NP* than the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals*.

⁸⁶ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Memoranda, Finland', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1940), p. 32.

⁸⁷ Anon., 'Books to Read', *NP*, (February, 1940), p. 10.

⁸⁸ Anon., 'Record Orders Mark First Issue of our New Paper', *NP*, (December, 1939), p. 1.

⁸⁹ Anon., 'Books to Read', *NP*, (November, 1939), p. 10.

The prevailing perceptions persisted after Britain declared war on Germany. The *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* continued to allege that Communists engaged in:

... furtive propaganda which aims at fomenting industrial unrest and magnifying every grievance ... with the objective of disrupting the movements solidarity ... taking their instructions from countries populated by a fear-ridden species which we have no desire to emulate.⁹⁰

This ideas environment meant the official union journals reinterpreted the long-standing aircraft industry wage claims (ongoing since August 1938) as communist plots to undermine the country and the war effort. However, no evidence of such sentiment was evidenced in the *NP*, who (pre-Operation Barbarossa) largely ignored the war situation, which the CPGB, following Moscow, depicted as an inter-imperialist war. They instead continued to promote workers' pay and conditions in industrial disputes in their customary manner. Nonetheless, the fall out meant many shop stewards and workers' representatives being silenced, disciplined or even prosecuted for merely expressing the same sentiments as 'Cato' had in *Guilty Men*.⁹¹ 'Nons' in particular were accused of enmity towards their left-wing workmates. Ignorance was blamed for their failure to recognise that socialist, Communist and the militant Trade unionists had most to fear from Hitler.

Conditions in the Fascist States

'Fascism', as an ideology was deconstructed in the journals as extreme capitalism, with rigid hierarchies and total suppression of organised labour and political opponents. The journals had a common interpretation of life under fascism, although with different foci. The *NUGMW Journal* concentrated on descriptions of life and working conditions; the *AEU* focused more on fascist ideology and its policy implications; whilst the *NP* explored the consequences of fascism for socialists, communists, trade unionists, and workers generally. The articles all contained implicit or explicit warnings of what would be awaiting the British population if fascism spread, and the imperative to challenge those Government policies which indirectly or tacitly supported or facilitated it.

⁹⁰ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1940), pp. 49-51.

⁹¹ Anon., 'Banned-Why?', *NP* (August, 1940), p. 2.

The journals' usual mantra regarding the inadequacies of British wages and conditions, was replaced with reports of the substantially worse conditions under fascism.⁹² Italian real wages (1935-1937) had fallen by a third and the fascist trade unions imposed on workers were not designed to defend living standards.⁹³ Japanese workers' dire position was described and blamed on Japanese ultra-capitalism, under which banking interests held tremendous power, and 70% of commerce was controlled by fifteen 'houses'. This was seen to have manifested itself as Japanese fascism, the force behind her armed aggression, and her economic imperialism imposed on China.⁹⁴

The persecution of Jews, trade unionists, and social democrats was exposed and condemned by all journals. The *NUGMW* reported on the Government White Paper, 'Papers Concerning the Treatment of German Nationals in Germany' (1939), which outlined Nazi tortures against those whose 'crime' was their political allegiance, religious faith, or race.⁹⁵ Reports in the *Daily Herald* and *Manchester Guardian* describing the horrific conditions at the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps were also cited, and readers were informed (December 1939) that the British Government had long held these reports.⁹⁶ It was noted that Nazi atrocities against the Jews were widely publicised and condemned, but the atrocities against trade unionists and socialists were largely ignored outside the labour movement;⁹⁷ their lives, it was concluded, were of no importance to the capitalist press; thus, by implication, neither would the lives of British trade unionists or socialists if fascism was to triumph in Britain.

The *AEU Journals* interrogated fascist ideology itself, and explored the use and misuse of the term 'socialism', including the pre-fix 'National', and thus elucidated the importance of political language in conveying meaning, and its control. The British and continental education systems were contrasted. British education was said to emphasise individualism; European education was reported to be community focused but became 'perverted into a fanatical belief in the state' in

⁹² Anon., 'International Labour Standards', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1938), p. 169.

⁹³ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1937), pp. 176-178.

⁹⁴ Tom Naylor, 'The Menace of the East', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1938), p. 140.

⁹⁵ 'L.P.S.', 'Nazi Terrorism', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1939), p. 750.

⁹⁶ 'W.H.' 'There, but for the Grace of God', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1939), p. 48.

⁹⁷ R. B. Suthers, 'The Fruits of Appeasement are not Apparent', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1939), p. 71.

fascist Germany.⁹⁸ Further reading was recommended to apprehend the intense and belligerent nationalism arising from ideas around an omnipotent State. The *AEU* recommended Robert Brady's *The Spirit and Structure of German fascism* and E. Ashton's *The Fascist - His State and His Mind*.⁹⁹ Nazis racial theories in relation to their interpretation of international law and associated rights was also explored, including how Russia was attributed no rights, and Democratic States' rights were dependent on their ability to fight.¹⁰⁰

The NP presented the dire conditions of working classes under fascism as common-sense assumptions. The actions of allied governments caused concern; the French Government crackdowns on organised labour provided a menacing forewarning of what the British Government might attempt to impose.¹⁰¹ This disquiet about Government coercion was reinforced by the wider context of British armed assaults on strikers in India and Rhodesia.¹⁰² Thus, the supposed pursuit of 'freedom and democracy' by capitalist governments was presented as embodying illegitimate, undesirable, and morally indefensible practices, that were an anathema to right thinking people; in short, it was the opposite of the political culture and policies embodied within trade unionism, labourism, and socialism.

The Impact of the International Situation on the Economic Sphere

The *AEU* highlighted the ideological nature of the National Government's policy choices. For instance, when increased armament production was required, capitalist firms (considered by Government as the natural providers) were engaged to undertake production, construct new factories (Shadow Factories), extend existing works, and to facilitate subcontracts, all financed at Government (tax-payer) expense.¹⁰³ The scale of public money going to the armaments industry was

⁹⁸ 'Victlean', 'Modern Education', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1938), p. 12.

⁹⁹ Anthony Curwen, 'Our Page about Books', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1937), pp. 364-5.

¹⁰⁰ S. Beare 'Germany has Become a Blooming Garden', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1937), p. 410.

¹⁰¹ Anon., 'Shop Stewards Appointed: French Trades Unions Dissolved', *NP*, (December, 1939), p. 6.

¹⁰² Anon., 'In War as in Peace: National Conference Report', *NP*, (April, 1940), pp. 6-8.

¹⁰³ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1939), pp. 94-96.

unprecedented; press and Parliamentary reports of its misuse resonated with the public who were being lectured about belt-tightening and increasing productivity in the national interest, whilst employers attempted to depress wages.

The *AEU Journal* highlighted the Committee of Public Accounts and the Select Committee on Estimates reports, which exposed non-competitive tendering, un-costed estimates, and suppliers refusing to facilitate price checking. Additionally, profiteering rings were alleged, with price-fixing and the organised sharing out of work.¹⁰⁴ The *AEU* drew parallels with war profiteering during WWI which they reported was estimated to have enriched some 3,600 people by some £3,000,000,000.¹⁰⁵ The private manufacture of arms continued to be denounced for its profiteering, bribery, and exports to aggressor countries (until proscribed). Beyond the pragmatic concern of not arming potential enemies, it was deemed that '[t]here is something morally repugnant in the thought that weapons made by British workmen should be used to kill British soldiers.'¹⁰⁶ Some considered that the Government's armaments policies amounted to providing exporters with huge profits at tax payers expense. For others, it was the disposal of essential armaments and material that would become vital to the national interest if war was to become a reality. This point was deemed particularly pertinent as the armed forces were suffering on-going supply problems from Government contracted firms (some of which were operating on short-time, which the journals attributed to deliberate management policies to increase prices). For the vast majority of *AEU* and all *NP* contributors, such issues bolstered the case for state ownership and control, and emphasised the need for better planning, in line with labourist and socialist thought.¹⁰⁷ Such solutions, in pursuit of optimum results for the nation and its workers, were presented as common-sense, natural, and obvious.

Armaments spending increases precipitated escalations in borrowing and the National debt. Various taxes were increased. However, notably for the journal contributors, the National Defence Contribution was not.¹⁰⁸ Borrowing continued to increase, but revenue lagged. In WWI Excess Profits Duty had initially yielded £140

¹⁰⁴ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1938), pp. 305- 307.

¹⁰⁵ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1937), pp. 147-149.

¹⁰⁶ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1937) pp. 262-264.

¹⁰⁷ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 193.

¹⁰⁸ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1939), p. 186.

million annually, and £420 million when the rate was increased to 80%.¹⁰⁹ In contrast, when it was introduced, the WWII Excess Profits' Tax and the National Defence contribution were initially forecast to yield only some £42 million and £28 million respectively. Even after the war commenced, Sir John Simon initially chose not to increase them; war 'profiteers', as arms manufacturers were dubbed, still retained 40% of their excess profits.¹¹⁰ The journals backed up such assertions with extracts from capitalist publications. For instance, the *NUGMW* reprinted charts and details from *The Economist's* study into company profits.¹¹¹ The *AEU* and *NP* conveyed the same message through publishing company results and tax expediencies.¹¹² Readers and their families could not avoid taxes, shareholders could. Inconvenient facts that might undermine the journals' principal message were omitted, for instance, no mention was made of the increase in Excess Profits Tax to 100%.

Nonetheless the Government needed funds. America's Neutrality Acts (1935, 1937)¹¹³ and 'cash and carry' requirement, was deemed by *AEU* contributors to be merely a financial expedient¹¹⁴ but meant that imports necessitated exports of gold or goods.¹¹⁵ The Government's National Savings and Defence Bonds Schemes were employed to help finance Government short-falls. The official union journals all promoted them and cited authoritative figures, like Douglas Jay.¹¹⁶ However, a minority voice urged caution, fearing that voluntary factory savings schemes might harm future wage negotiations, as employers would cite workers' savings records in attempts to show increased wages were not necessary. This topic resonated, and was shown to have establishment backing as indicated by Professor Beveridge's letter to *The Times* advocating the fixing of wages by Central Government (removing a primary function of the unions).¹¹⁷ The *NP* did not promote the National Savings scheme.

¹⁰⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1940), p. 160.

¹¹⁰ R. B. Suthers, 'The Rich Can Bear the Burdens of the Budget', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1940), p. 162.

¹¹¹ 'W.E.P', 'Unearned Income', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1937), p. 344.

¹¹² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1938), pp. 134-137.

¹¹³ This prohibited the sale of war materials to the belligerents, but not the minerals for creating them.

¹¹⁴ R. B. Suthers, 'Still Another Humdrum Budget', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1940), pp. 254-5.

¹¹⁵ Although America would not accept goods for oil, aeroplanes and armaments (over and above the £250 plus million already spent on US arms).

¹¹⁶ Douglas Jay was City Editor of the *Daily Herald* at that time. J.R. Clynes, 'Personal Economy an Instrument of Defence. A Call for National Savings', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 392.

¹¹⁷ Anon, 'What! No Ten Bob! Protests rising in Factories', *NP*, (January, 1940), p. 1.

The journals pointed out that although the wealthy claimed they could not afford more taxes, they were willing to lend the Government money in return for a good rate of interest. Similarly, journal articles discussed how purchase-tax was introduced, but no capital tax. They also discussed the privileged treatment of landowners. For instance, the Air Ministry paid £160/acre for 243 acres of de-rated agricultural land valued at £10/acre, justified on the grounds of the possible 'injurious affects' to the remainder of the owner's estate'; the journal pointed out that other locals got nothing.¹¹⁸ The disparities of treatment based on class were yet again underlined,¹¹⁹ and the case for land nationalisation, or at least paying existing agricultural prices for land required for public works (and thus not gifting tax-payer money to landowners), was brought to readers' attention.

The generous tax treatment of the wealthy was juxtaposed to the Government decision to include Co-operative societies in the flat 5% tax on company profits, whilst also extracting tax (indirectly) from co-operators.¹²⁰ This was interpreted as political, and was contrasted with Government producer subsidies, import duties, quotas/restrictions, and Empire preference, which were deemed to be enforced consumer and tax-payers' 'gifts' to shareholders.¹²¹ The contrast with Government treatment of society's needy was stark, and exemplified by the differences between, on the one hand, the ideological understandings and priorities of the socialism which the unions expounded, and, on the other hand, Government policies. This analysis was generalised in the all union journals and shop steward papers; it served not only to elucidate class based prejudices in Government policy formation, but it also embodied the imperative to secure a government that was not beholden to the ownership class.

The *NP* advised readers not merely to accept companies published profit figures, but also advised them on how to assess such profits (explaining profits secretion in 'stocks' and 'work in progress', fictitious advances, imaginary reserve funds, over-

¹¹⁸ Although the topic of unearned increments was foregrounded throughout this period, the land question generally was less evident than in the 1931-1936 period; F. A. Smith, 'The Case for Land Nationalisation', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1937), p. 67. Also see: H. Bullock. 'The Land', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1938), pp. 66-70; F. A. Smith, 'The Case for Land Nationalisation', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1937), p. 67.

¹¹⁹ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Conscription of Men and Immunity from Wealth', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1939), p. 86.

¹²⁰ J. R. Clynes, 'Co-operators and Taxation another Unfair Burden,' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1937), pp. 261-262.

¹²¹ Anon, 'Subsidised Industries', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1938), p. 116.

depreciation, miscategorisation, and non-declaration of all property (later capitalised with bonus shares issues).¹²² Multiple examples were given. They also exposed how, for instance, the Annual Report of the aircraft manufacturer Boulton Paul, stated that in addition to nearly quadrupling profits (largely based on Government contracts), 'should we find ourselves with redundant buildings or plant we shall be entitled to compensation'¹²³ from the public purse. Comparisons were made with the position of workers, who, when surplus to requirement, were discarded without such compensation.

The *NP* contributors believed that capitalist manufacturers and their Government advocates had disregarded the increasing threat of Nazism, except as a lucrative export opportunity. Although issues like tax avoidance and evasion were evidenced, the *NP* concentrated on the production inefficiencies and costs of capitalist armaments manufacture, for which the Government (and thus taxpayers) were grossly overcharged.¹²⁴ There was a presumption amongst the authors that this was a common-sense understanding that their readership shared, or would share, once exposed to the facts. The alternative, well-planned nationally owned production, was framed as the obvious solution (a policy prescription they continued to promote throughout the war).

The *NP* also exposed links between public policy, the policy-makers' private interests, and powerful commercial and financial interests. For instance, they informed readers that fifty-one Conservative MPs held 109 directorships in engineering, iron, steel and coal, of whom twenty-three had aircraft interests. Peers also had interests in lucrative Government contracts, such as Lord Austin, Lord Nuffield of Morris Motors, and Lord Perry of Fords (the latter two did not permit trade union activity).¹²⁵ Similarly, *NP* readers were informed that British Aluminium Company directors included Sir Ronald Charles, a member of the Council of the Army and the Home and Empire Defence League (established to engender public concern towards defence needs). Their profits increased £171,512 to £765,128 (1937-1938), net of the directors' fees.¹²⁶ Such links further reinforced the

¹²² Anon, 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (August, 1939), p. 4.

¹²³ Anon., 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (April, 1938), p. 4.

¹²⁴ Anon., 'The Private Manufacture of Armaments', *NP*, (November, 1936), p. 9; also see for instance, the *NP*'s monthly column, 'The Money We Earn for Others'.

¹²⁵ Anon., 'Books to Read', *NP*, (August, 1939), p. 10.

¹²⁶ Anon, 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (August, 1939), p. 4.

argument for nationalisation. Their readership could map networks of powerful individuals and interests within industry and Government, and thus judge their decisions, policies, and claims with a fuller understanding. Wider reading was again recommended including *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, by Phillip Noel Baker.¹²⁷

Food and Shelter

The *NUGMW* and the *AEU Journal* contributors considered it perverse that unprecedented resources were being invested in armament manufacture, and so little in food production and storage, especially as food shortages in Central Europe were an important factor in ending WWI.¹²⁸ Public welfare and sufficiency was central to the socialist thinking propagated by the journals. The 1930s depression was sufficiently recent to ensure that food security was in the working-class public's consciousness as war threatened. Moreover, the *NUGMW* and the *AEU Journals* informed readers of the prevailing widespread nutritional problems amongst the poor, even in peace time;¹²⁹ some 10,000,000 lived below the Rowntree minimum (family weekly income of 53s/wk.) required for the barest essentials. Consequently, the Government's professed concerns about the population's health, and its keep-fit campaigns of the late 1930s, were interpreted as pertaining to war readiness, not welfare issues.¹³⁰

Even amid the war fears of 1938 the Government opposed increasing agricultural production, believing it would endanger Empire trade and producer prices.¹³¹ The *NUGMW* reported the response of *The Times* (10th January 1938) to the 1938 bumper harvest, that 'the only solution is to restrict production'.¹³² The *AEU* implored the Government not to follow their favoured policy of destroying crops to maintain prices, and instead recommended storage akin to Germany. The *NUGMW Journal* used this example of food to exemplify the foolhardiness of production for profit and not for use. They noted that Soviet Russia had increased food production and reduced prices steadily in State and co-operative shops.¹³³ The veracity of

¹²⁷ Anon, 'The Private Manufacture of Armaments', *NP*, (November, 1936), p. 9.

¹²⁸ Anon., 'Mr. Clynes on Food in Wartime', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1938), p. 68.

¹²⁹ David Adams, 'Food, War and Peace', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1938), p. 326.

¹³⁰ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1937), p. 69.

¹³¹ R. Roberts, 'Too many Workshops in the World', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1938), p. 322.

¹³² J. R. Clynes, 'Another Crisis. Too much Food', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1938), p.74.

¹³³ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Memoranda', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1939), p. 224.

such reports went unquestioned, and the Soviet situation (as reported) in respect of planning, efficient production, and food supply, was presented as being very attractive and efficient.

The need for shelters in war-time existed along with the need for food. The widespread anxiety about aerial attacks and the bombings of civilians, brought the issue to the fore. The journals followed the work of Professor J. B. S. Haldane,¹³⁴ and the *NP* recommended his books *ARP*,¹³⁵ and *Science in Peace and War*,¹³⁶ and the *NP* and *The Clerk* recommended *Science and You*.¹³⁷ The *AEU* attributed air-raid shelters low priority to Government policy being shaped by the shelters cost, and the lack of exceptional profits available (unlike armaments) which meant that capitalists did not agitate for their construction. Moreover, the paucity of pre-war public shelters, when unemployment remained problematic, further reinforced ideas of Government pursuit of class, not public interests.¹³⁸

Employment Issues

The devastating unemployment of the depression left a legacy of regionally problematic and chronic 'forced idleness', as the journals described it. December 1936 saw Wales still suffering 15.5% unemployment, Northern Ireland 16.6%, Northern England 11.8%, and Scotland 10.2%. In contrast, London had only 3% unemployed, and the South-East even less.¹³⁹ The arms boom saw employment rise. The unions, and thus the journals, continued to be principally concerned with working members, but they campaigned for the revision of the Unemployment Assistance Act, to eliminate the Household Means Test, to improve allowances, and for the Government's Unemployment Insurance Fund surplus to be retained for future needs.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ For instance: R. B. Suthers, 'After all, we have Longer Heads than the Nordics', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1938), p., 195.

¹³⁵ 'Books to Read', *NP*, (October, 1938), p.10.

¹³⁶ 'Books to Read', *NP*, (November, 1940), p. 2.

¹³⁷ 'Books to Read', *NP*, (January, 1939), p. 10.

¹³⁸ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March 1939), pp. 94-96.

¹³⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1937), pp. 6-8.

¹⁴⁰ F. A. Smith 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1937), pp. 478-480.

The journals considered that the capitalist class benefited disproportionately from the economic upturn generally, and rearmament specifically. The *AEU Journal* highlighted how National Income rose by £300 million (1937), but wages by only £25 million. The contributors postulated that had wages accounted for a higher proportion of the National Income, effective demand would have increased, offsetting the risk of a slump.¹⁴¹ The journals regularly drew comparisons between the Britain and the US, where Roosevelt's New Deal had improved wages, increasing effective demand, and thus creating more, better paid jobs. Chamberlain's refusal to contemplate U.S. style public-works schemes was attributed by the *AEU Journal* to a 'fear of the lessons extensive public-works would teach',¹⁴² and a consequent public demand that public enterprises replace private. The assertion was supported, for instance, by reference to J. W. Spiller, Chief Engineer, Crown Agents for the Colonies, that 'A well-conceived programme of public-works is essential for colonial developments'. An editorial comment was added 'Can we be a colony?'¹⁴³ Thus, they made clear that talk of colonial development through British state actions sat alongside a 'do-nothing' policy in Britain itself. The benefits of public-works schemes was an unstated common-sense assumption generalised amongst the journals. The differences both within and between the journals was on the degree to which it was considered a necessary ameliorative, or that only a fully planned and socialised economy was the solution.

Army Recruitment, the National Register, and Conscription

From January 1937 onwards, the Government's army recruitment policy caused the journal contributors concern. Ministers had appealed to employers to grant workers leave of absence to attend Territorial Annual Camp Training, and to offer time-expired soldiers first chance of vacancies. The *AEU* and *NP* journals deemed that if companies could discriminate, then their claims of skilled labour shortages were false.¹⁴⁴ This combined with workers' experiences of short-time working and engineering unemployment, was used by the journals to show how claims that

¹⁴¹ R. B Suthers, 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Slump?' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1937), p. 310.

¹⁴² B Roberts, 'Why Not Make Great Britain a Colony?' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1938), p. 68.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ For instance: 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1937), pp. 102-104.

dilution was necessary were disingenuous.¹⁴⁵ The *AEU Journal* published, the 'Ministry of Labour Gazette' unemployment figures: In March 1938, some 80,000 registered for employment in engineering were jobless.¹⁴⁶ By mid-July 1938 it was 93,039, (up 37,410 on the previous year).¹⁴⁷

The *NP* published multiple letters from aircraft workers complaining that despite re-armament, some had been without work for months, and 'waiting time seems to be the order of the day (and night)'.¹⁴⁸ They also reported that Trade Union officials were being pressured to accept dilution and abandon hard won terms and conditions (as in WWI).¹⁴⁹ The *NP* condemned F. A. Smith (General Secretary AEU) for stating that workers should co-operate with the Government 'speedily and without friction in industry',¹⁵⁰ as dilution, and the degradation of workers' circumstances, were both unfair, and counterproductive, as tired workers were more prone to mistakes and accidents. Pilots' lives, the *NP* alleged, were being endangered through poor aircraft quality consequent upon skilled men being replaced by 'boys', and speeding-up, 'all for the sake of profit', and not through sabotage, as the capitalist press sometimes alleged.¹⁵¹

The *AEU* and *NP* Journals reported that thousands of engineering workers had received recruiting leaflets in their pay-packets stating that: 'The Company is prepared to give special consideration to Territorial Soldiers especially when taking men on for work in the out-of-camp season.'¹⁵² Moreover, notices were posted, for instance, at the Rolls-Royce Works, Derby, promising men attending Territorial Army, Army or RAF Reserves training camps, full rates plus war bonuses whilst away.¹⁵³ This was deemed to be symptomatic of the Government and employer's sense of entitlement, to direct workers free-time as well as their working time. Moreover, the *NUGMW Journal* highlighted how such policies differentiated workers according to their acquiescence with Government desires, limiting workers' free-

¹⁴⁵ For instance: F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1939), p.51; Harry Luckhurst, 'D.O. Reports, Division 3 Glasgow', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1940), p. 143.

¹⁴⁶ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1938), pp.134-137.

¹⁴⁷ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: industrial outlook', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1938), p. 348.

¹⁴⁸ 'Fairy Godfather writes', *NP*, (September, 1938), p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Anon., 'Sabotage and the Talks', *NP*, (April, 1938), p. 1; Anon., 'National Meeting: Campaign to 'Level Up' Goes On', *NP*, (February, 1939), p.7.

¹⁵⁰ Anon., 'The Tide is Flowing', *NP*, (March, 1937), pp. 1-2.

¹⁵¹ Anon., 'Sabotage and the Talks', *NP*, (April, 1938), p. 1.

¹⁵² 'Editor's Notes: Coercion?' *AEU Journal*, (March, 1937), pp. 102-104.

¹⁵³ Anon., 'National Defence', *NP – Special Issue*, (May, 1937), p. 7.

choices, and making the army the only route into employment for some, especially as army pensioners could accept lower pay.¹⁵⁴ It was considered retrograde, and an unwarranted interference in the jobs' market (a position that, for the unions, was context dependent, conflicted, and sometimes contradictory). Subsequently the *NUGWM* reported that employers further exploited their asymmetric power relationship to coerce workers into approved behaviours; for instance, the dismissal of conscientious objectors, exempted from conscription conditional upon continued local government service. Likewise, some industrial employers sacked such workers, despite their legal status.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the journal contributors, through their articles, made visible the often obfuscated power of the capitalist class and the Government, which they employed to ensure compliance with their dictates.

Chamberlain's appointment of Sir John Anderson as Minister for Air Raid Precautions (ARP), the National Register, and Industrial Conscription schemes, was considered ominous by the *NP*, who informed readers of his past career: Joint Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (at the time of the infamous Black and Tans actions); Home Office Permanent Under-Secretary of State when, in 1925, twelve CPGB leaders were gaoled for being Communists; and since his 1937 return to England, a director of Vickers, Midland Bank, and ICI, before which he was in Bengal (where he inaugurated the terror campaign against the peasants).¹⁵⁶ Exposing his record would have left workers in no doubt of his ideological stance (and that of those who appointed him), and the consequent danger he posed to workers' status and welfare.

The National Register was interpreted as a direct attack on workers' freedom by the *AEU*, *NP*, and *The Clerk* journals,¹⁵⁷ a precursor to industrial conscription, which they believed would inundate industry with dilutees, undermine trade unions, and depress wages and conditions.¹⁵⁸ The *NP* believe it underlay the rejection of the aircraft workers' pay claim. This they linked to the hegemonic concept of the

¹⁵⁴ Harry Harrison, 'Army Pension – Subsidy Stunt', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1937), p. 22.

¹⁵⁵ 'C.D.', 'There Must be no Victimisation', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1940), p. 306.

¹⁵⁶ Anon., 'This Man is Dangerous', *NP*, (December, 1938), p. 13.

¹⁵⁷ See for instance: Anon., 'Uniform Rates and Conditions: Acting Committee and National Meeting Report', *NP*, (November, 1938) p. 7; Anon., 'More Speed Wanted', *NP*, (November, 1938), pp. 1, 11; 'The Delegates', 'Report of the Labour Party Conference, Southport', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1939), pp. 290 -291; Anon., 'At the General Council Table', *The Clerk*, (January, 1939), pp. 4-6; 'Proceedings of the 48th Annual Conference', *The Clerk* (June, 1939) pp. 94-100.

¹⁵⁸ Anon., 'More Speed Wanted', *NP*, (November, 1938), p. 1.

'national sacrifice', which they judged was, in reality, workers being sacrificed 'on the altar of shareholders' dividends'.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, it was deemed to be another step towards fascism by the 'pro-fascist' Chamberlain.¹⁶⁰

The unions considered the subsequent introduction of military conscription to be a betrayal, given Chamberlain's previous assurances¹⁶¹. The irony of using compulsion in pursuit of 'freedom and democracy' was sarcastically highlighted; the *AEU Journal* noted that Chamberlain was never renowned for championing either, and Churchill's answer, whatever the problem, was military, including against British workers in industrial disputes.¹⁶²

The restriction of conscription to the human component of national resources was vehemently and unanimously condemned, especially as private wealth was exempt, a distinction considered both unjust, and motivated by class interest.¹⁶³ Moreover, conscription, the journals unanimously argued, meant the country's youth was forced to bear the consequences of eight years of Tory policy, which had wrecked the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference, and produced huge quantities of armaments, depriving the country of the means to finance public infrastructure, housing, education, and social services. Furthermore, conscription was considered unnecessary as some 258,384 Territorials existed with over 500 applications being received daily (April 1939).¹⁶⁴ Even the *NUGMW*, the most right-wing of the journals, complained that the Military Training Bill empowered the Government with:

... the right to steal from a defenceless section of the community their freedom to say whether or not they are prepared to give their lives to maintain a system of society whose main concern is the preservation of profit.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Anon., 'Our Reply', *NP*, (December, 1938), p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Anon., 'Limitless Greed', *NP*, (January, 1939), pp. 1, 11.

¹⁶¹ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Memoranda', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1939), pp. 352-355.

¹⁶² R. M. Fox, 'Barrack Square', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1939), p. 248.

¹⁶³ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary, £.s.d. and the War Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 346.

¹⁶⁴ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes: This Freedom.' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1939) p. 369.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The 24th August 1939 'Emergency Powers Bill' in essence, granted the Government near dictatorial powers,¹⁶⁶ and importantly for the unions, the 'Control of Employment Act' severely restricted skilled labour's mobility. Distrust in the Government was reinforced by speculation about press controls, and the expedient employment of the Official Secrets Act to protect Ministers from uncomfortable questions.¹⁶⁷ The *AEU* contributors highlighted the multiple secret parliamentary sessions that went unrecorded in Hansard, which they considered ominous;¹⁶⁸ conversely, the *NUGMW Journal* presented it as a necessary expedient.¹⁶⁹

The journals expressed deep concern at the poverty pay levels of conscripts. The *NP* through its letters pages debated whether workshop collections to relieve families' immediate needs should be pursued, or whether to agitate for increased allowances; 'Right not Charity'.¹⁷⁰ Opinion was divided. The *NUGMW Journal* reported how the union had made representations to employers, sometimes successfully,¹⁷¹ thereby illustrating that even in wartime, and with their members conscripted, the unions could still positively impact their members' wages and conditions.

The unions' ethos of inclusion and keeping members in touch with their working-class and trade union roots was evidenced in the *NP*'s decision to suspend conscripts' subscriptions, and send them copies of their journals.¹⁷² Some *NUGMW* branches established funds to send parcels, which apart from expressing fraternal sentiments, were thought might stimulate active interests in the TU movement, and the creation of a more equitable peaceful society. *NUGMW* also published some recipients' responses. For instance, 'it is not just ... paying your subscriptions ... but to know, that it thinks of its members outside working hours'.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the parcels countered their officers' preconceptions of unions as:

¹⁶⁶ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: Crisis Reaches its Climax', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1939), pp. 365-366.

¹⁶⁷ S. A. Inscoc, 'Your Freedom at stake', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1939), p. 67.

¹⁶⁸ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1940), p. 224.

¹⁶⁹ C. Dukes, 'The Union in War-time', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1940), pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Anon., 'Charity?' *NP*, (October, 1939), p. 2.

¹⁷¹ E. Elms, 'Tory Council Change their Mind as a Result of Trade Union Organisation', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1940), 218.

¹⁷² Anon., 'Conscripts', *NP*, (July, 1939), pp. 1 & 11.

¹⁷³ E. Keenan, 'From the Troops They Seemed Surprised', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1940), p. 192.

... a bundle of cut-throats whose main object is to push the country into all the strife they possibly can, and cannot see that it is the vast majority of workers who stand the brunt of this war and the trouble afterwards.

Publishing such correspondence highlighted trade unionism's community nature, and effectively reinforced working-class unity and support, whilst highlighting the officer (and bourgeois) classes' derogatory views and misrepresentations of them.

Women

The journals voiced concern about women workplace exploitation. There was typically no deliberate denigration or castigation of women; indeed, their treatment in the journals was largely divergent from typical accounts of the era, and the grievances voiced were normally at the firm or workshop level. Equal pay for equal work was prioritised. However, such articles often betrayed the fact that the pursuit of equal pay was primarily a protection mechanism for the male wage.

War made women's place in industry visible. Initially the expectation was that women would willingly relinquish their place in industry when male labour returned. The NUGWM and TGWU submitted policy statements to the Engineering Employers' Federation (1940) which included clauses specifying the temporary war-time nature of female employment, with normal practice to be resumed when hostilities ended, and assurances that suitable male labour would be prioritised.¹⁷⁴ No such conditions were suggested for men who were taken on at this time. There was no outcry from women evidenced in the journals (1939-41). The language employed embodied the infantilising of women, who were regularly labelled 'girls', and often referred to alongside youths. Articles like *NUGMW Journal's* 'A Word with the Wife and Mother: What Trade Unionism Means to you'¹⁷⁵ or the suggestion in the *NP* for a 'Women's Page' that proposed topics such as, aircraft workers' wives' letters, cookery hints, household tips, dress-making and knitting designs,¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ D. M. Elliot, 'Notes from the Women's Department: Employment of Women', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1940), p. 180.

¹⁷⁵ W. E. Yorke. 'A word with the Wife and Mother: What Trade Unionism Means to You', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1938), p. 127.

¹⁷⁶ 'B.D.B.', 'Air Mail', *NP*, (March, 1940), p.2.

exposed implicit assumptions that betrayed unconscious, 'traditional', unquestioned gender attitudes of patriarchy as the natural order. The explicit gender discrimination, the language used when referring to women, and the surplus meaning in the texts illustrated not only the widespread acceptance of sexism within the workplace, but also its acceptance as a cultural norm which was embedded in society and institutionalised, and which women generally (as well as men) internalised and with which they acquiesced. It is only with the passage of time that such received understandings and unquestioned assumptions, invisible to consumers of the texts at the time of their publication, are rendered visible.

The NUGMW traditionally included women members, and their monthly 'Notes from The Women's Department' principally dealt with the same industrial issues that concerned the men, focusing on different trades (laundry, nursing, and the establishment of Whitley Councils for sweated trades where appropriate). Thus, despite the gender discrimination that existed as an unquestioned common sense understanding, the union considered that they performed the same role for their female members as their male counterparts. In keeping with received understandings (and practice) of gendered roles, topics like nutrition, children's education (and scholarships aimed at women) were reserved for articles for women, and included reports of collaboration with the wider labour movement, Women's Councils, and Conferences.¹⁷⁷

Women's membership of the NUGMW reached 47,000 by January 1938, 11% of their total membership,¹⁷⁸ by mid-1940 it was over 60,000.¹⁷⁹ NUGMW women campaigned for equal Unemployment Insurance Fund contributions and benefits, and the resolution of the anomalies that disadvantage married women.¹⁸⁰ Like their male colleagues, women sought a gender neutral 'rate for the job'. Greater bargaining power was needed to garner rights, which itself required increased female organisation; the NUGMW (along with others) campaigned to recruit women entering the workforce and through the medium of the journal continually stressed the advantages for potential as well as existing members. *The Clerk* similarly pursued the equal pay agenda.

¹⁷⁷ Anon. 'National Conference of Labour Women', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1937), pp. 181-182.

¹⁷⁸ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1938), pp. 80-82.

¹⁷⁹ D. M. Elliot, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 388.

¹⁸⁰ D. M. Elliot, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1938), pp. 15-16.

The AEU was traditionally a bastion of male exclusivity. They rarely referred to women, and believed that women would not want to join them, and, implicit in their comments of the time, was the unavoidable conclusion that they did not consider them fit to do so; they were a craft union that focused on time-served engineers. Indeed, in response to a London press article (1934) about the AEU considering admitting women, the Journal editor retorted; 'This is news to us, and those responsible for the story betray little acquaintance with conditions in the industry or with the policy of the union.'¹⁸¹ The prevailing grass roots opinion was also expressed:

At every branch meeting we are grouching against encroachments ... Who does the encroaching? The unskilled workers and the women owing to the development of machinery.¹⁸²

However, rearmament and war forced changes. Initially, the AEU called for women to be organised by other unions, only deciding to admit women in 1942, (passed 117,233: 90,550, effective January 1943).¹⁸³ The District reports occasionally referred to specific cases of contested dilution, which were typically resolved locally. Just one article in this period was devoted to the position and progress of women over the previous century, and how traditional conventions were being dispensed with. Equality was seen as distant, but one contributor predicted that there was 'little doubt that this will be attained within the lifetime of most of us'.¹⁸⁴ However, even in an article on gender equality and increasing female wages, women's growing presence was presented as concerning and requiring careful monitoring, especially as the pre-WWI norms were never reinstated.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, by 1947, some 5% of AEU stewards were women.¹⁸⁶

The *NP* encouraged women to organise and had lobbied the AEU to open a women's section. Fred Smith (AEU President) was castigated by female *NP* contributors for promoting equal pay for women in engineering, whilst at the time,

¹⁸¹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1934), pp. 7-8.

¹⁸² J. T. Murphy, 'Can the AEU Become an Industrial Union?' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1934), pp.16-17.

¹⁸³ J. Tanner, 'Admission of Women', *AEU Journal*, September, 1942, p.226.

¹⁸⁴ S. A. Inscoe, 'Women at Work', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1938), p. 284.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Arthur Marsh and Edward E. Coker, 'Shop Steward Organization in the Engineering Industry', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1 :3, (1963), pp. 170–190.

his union (pre 1943) excluded them.¹⁸⁷ The *NP*, always presented women as equal by right, and promoted equal pay for equal work – but, tellingly, still referred to them as ‘girls’. Multiple examples of cross-gender support in industrial action were evidenced:

The support given to the girls by the men is a welcome sign of the new spirit in our industry, which is leading to all aircraft workers ... acting as one body in defence of and in securing improvements in working conditions.¹⁸⁸

The shared experiences of working under an exploitative capitalist system, and the common requirement for worker organisations regardless of gender was highlighted in somewhat optimistic terms:

... for the first time the girls ... recognise that their interests are identical with the men’s and are jostling them for a voice in factory affairs. The men are holding out the welcoming hand and are eager to assist in the solution of the girls’ problems.¹⁸⁹

The need for effective shop stewards for women was also expounded.

Notwithstanding this, there were multiple occurrences of male industrial action when they were replaced with women dilutees. For instance, 600-700 AEU members struck at Rolls Royce when sixteen women were put onto machines previously manned by male youths in breach of the Procedure,¹⁹⁰ suggesting the rank and file were not as open to equality as the *NP* contributors’ accounts suggested.

War

The war and its context driven expediencies and consequences were evidenced in the journals in multiple forms, from wartime legislation, to Union offices being bombed, and paper rationing affecting journal output. For instance, the *AEU Journal’s* book reviews ceased (resuming December 1945) and international coverage was dominated by the war context. The *NP* was subjected to an export

¹⁸⁷ Toni Wilmsloe, ‘Air Mail: Women Writes’, *NP*, (February, 1940), p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ Anon., ‘Glosters’ Stand for Women Trade Unionist’, *NP*, (April-May, 1937), p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ Anon., ‘A.R.P. Canteen Wages Concern D.H. Workers’, *NP*, (December, 1939), p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ Anon., ‘Crewe Fight Dilution: Strike at New Rolls Royce Works’, *NP*, (May, 1939), p. 7.

ban; its editor was under threat of conscription (deferred). Wartime ushered in publishing delays for the journals due to the Censors.¹⁹¹ Wall newspapers were mounted in workshops to supplement limited journal runs, including *AEU Journal* articles, the *Daily Worker* (except when banned under Regulation 2D), and the *NP*, in full, or just the cartoons.¹⁹² It also saw all the official union journals filled with patriotic rhetoric. The *NP* was an exception; they emphasised that optimum production required strong Trade Union representation and consultation, appropriate ARP measures, and decent working conditions.

WWII was known as the 'Engineers War'. Yet, despite five years of rearmament, four White Papers, and the recognised need for consultation with unions (1936 White Paper), journal contributors believed wartime labour planning barely existed outside a few meetings over labour supply to fulfil armament production. The *AEU Journals* expressed resentment.¹⁹³ A 'Central Joint Advisory Council' for liaison, co-operation, and consultation to optimise wartime productive capacity was established, but its 'strictly limited' remit, and usefulness were questioned.¹⁹⁴ Nonetheless, multiple regional boards and committees with TU and employer representatives were established, bringing the unions into closer working relationships with both government and the employers, increasing their influence on, or incorporating them into, Government and employer organisations. This enabled the unions to inject their own ideological understandings and policy prescriptions at multiple levels into the Government itself, through participation on various boards and commissions and consultations, as well as through their traditional industrial work. The NUGMW's leadership regarded this incorporation as source of pride and a reflection of the direction of their political ambitions:

Our own Trade Union through the TUC, unlike the last war, is in close contact with the Government day by day ... The PM desired the co-operation of the trade unions in the national effort ... We are now recognised as partners in the national effort.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Anon., 'D.O. Reports', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1940), p. 238.

¹⁹² Anon., 'Wallpapers Blue Print Process' *NP*, February, 1943, p.2; A.B., 'From our Postbag' *NP*, February, 1943, p.8.

¹⁹³ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: War', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1939), p. 405.

¹⁹⁴ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1939), pp. 438-441.

¹⁹⁵ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Memoranda', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1939), pp. 672-75.

The *AEU Journal* continued to give voice to a range of socialist political cultures which promoted diverse and contradictory ideas. For instance, W. J. Smith declared:

... socialism is dead in the interests of another war and because we are all too busy helping the ruling class to win it when the war on the worker still goes on.¹⁹⁶

Other *AEU* articles condemned those who had impeded and opposed the peace movement, the League, and collective security, urging readers not to submit to simplistic race hatred.¹⁹⁷ Conversely, I. Haig Mitchel condemned the *AEU* for publishing articles denouncing the Great Powers' failure to address fascist aggression in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.¹⁹⁸

Nonetheless, the labour movement generally promoted national unity, and the majority voice deemed the war to be a necessary evil. Contempt for the wealthy was unanimous, the 'pseudo-patriots' who boasted of having a 'stake in the country', but filled *The Times* classified columns, letting their houses as they abandoned the cities, whilst simultaneously pontificating that workers must remain in the national interest.¹⁹⁹ These were the same wealthy individuals whose tax evasion schemes the journals revealed 'the wealthy ... and the Noble Dukes, whose patriotism is now at fever pitch ... and the clever gentlemen in the financial laundry business'²⁰⁰ who combined to pursue self-interest at the expense of the state. Thus, the journal contributors sought to continue to politicise such issues whilst highlighting the malevolence of capitalism within an environment where war loomed (and became a reality) by exposing the hypocrisy of those with power and influence who professed patriotism as a self-seeking expedient. Moreover, the idea that having a stake in the country (owning property) made one intrinsically more patriotic, was challenged. Such re-framing of issues sought to expose the readership to realities that the capitalist classes sought to obscure. In doing so the journals (especially the *AEU* and *NP*) attempted to raise class consciousness and

¹⁹⁶ W. J. Smith, 'Equality of Sacrifice', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1940), p. 232.

¹⁹⁷ John McHale, 'This Period of Jitters', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1940), p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ I. Haig Mitchel, 'Why the League of Nations Failed', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1940), p. 128.

¹⁹⁹ 'Gadfly' 'Deeds of Derring – Dough!' *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1939), p. 583.

²⁰⁰ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1937), p. 152.

engender an imperative to challenge the system that they saw as being maintained and propagated by the bourgeoisie, in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The *AEU Journal* accused the Government and employers of utilising the capitalist press to engage in misinformation, and of feigning a shortage of engineering workers. For instance, Sir Patrick Hammon (Conservative MP and director of five engineering firms) stated that trade union leaders refused to accept women workers, except under conditions which made their employment impossible; he left unstated what 'conditions' he considered 'impossible'.²⁰¹ Such allegations were considered profit motivated, as the union's principal 'condition' at the time was equal pay for equal work. Monitoring dilution was reportedly difficult and depended on shop stewards' presence and vigilance.

Collective bargaining continued to be vigorously pursued, and the sliding scale was rejected as it was deemed to undermine bargaining rights. The message that 'Labour must continue in war as in peace to press its rightful claim to share in the prosperity of industry, was reinforced.²⁰² The *AEU Journal* indignantly reported (embodying a 'what else do you expect' stance), that some employers were 'playing upon the ignorance of the workpeople regarding the various legal enactments and regulations', attempting to enforce overtime and clamping down on any trade union activity.²⁰³ The majority voice in the *AEU Journal* (unanimous in the *NP*) looked to the workers' long term welfare and deemed that depressed wages and conditions when labour demand was high, would mean further deteriorations post-war. A small minority voice dissented. For instance, J. Finney condemned the AEU National Committee for pursuing a 3d/hr wage claim against their EC's advice, as irresponsible in war-time.²⁰⁴ In this context the AEU and NUGMW leadership continued to deter unofficial strikes, appealing to the core concepts of solidarity, obligation and loyalty which underlay the labour movement.

The journals continued their longstanding call for the nationalisation of both the Bank of England and joint stock banks in the interests of the population, especially as banks were considered to have overcharged the Government for credit at a time of national emergency, creating inflation for the public, and rewards for their

²⁰¹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1940), pp. 119-121.

²⁰² C. Dukes, 'The Union in War-Time', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1940), pp. 2-3.

²⁰³ C.V. Berridge, 'D.O. Reports', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1940), p. 183.

²⁰⁴ J Finney, 'The Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1940), p., 192.

shareholders.²⁰⁵ The Government ignored calls for war material industries to be directly controlled and instead established individual committees to oversee each commodity. In WWI, such controllers were independent. In WWII controllers with strong vested interests in the commodity they oversaw were appointed. The *AEU Journal* informed readers that, for instance, the Head Controller for Aluminium, was Hon. G. Cunliffe, Director, British Aluminium Company Limited; for alcohol and solvents, A. V. Board, Chairman, British Industrial Solvents Limited; for iron and steel, Sir A Duncan, Chairman, British Iron and Steel Federation.²⁰⁶ Railway shareholders also had their welfare ensured; the expected cost to the tax payer was £40 million.²⁰⁷ Thus, the journals made clear that all was political, and that Government policy choices presented as expedient means of dealing with particular situations, should be analysed. In practice, such analyses generally exposed the pursuit of class interests, to the detriment of the workers.

The establishment and capitalist press were condemned for framing of wage issues, whereby wage-earners who sought pay rises were portrayed as 'wicked' in the war context; the role of wage increases in causing inflation was emphasised, and repeated appeals were made to workers to curtail their spending and invest in war bonds. The journals sought to challenge such interpretations and exert control on the discourse and language. The *AEU* drew attention to 'employers who interpret patriotism as a readiness on the part of the workpeople to accept low wages and bad conditions without protest'.²⁰⁸ They advised their readers that real-wages were falling and reported on shareholder returns outstripping wages. Suthers somewhat superfluously commented 'Such is equality of sacrifice'.²⁰⁹ Any suggestion of trade union organisation or recognition was characterised as impeding national effort and destroying national unity.²¹⁰

Although the ideas and understandings around the exploitation of the working classes by the capitalists remained unchanged, the language and framing of that exploitation mutated; capitalists as parasites living off workers' labour were re-cast in the war context to become capitalists exploiting the nation's plight for their

²⁰⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'The Remedy for Inflation is More Rationing', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1940), p. 62.

²⁰⁶ Jack Carney, 'It all Depends who you are', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1940), p. 131.

²⁰⁷ R. B. Suthers, 'We May be at War with France', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1940), p. 333.

²⁰⁸ C. V. Berridge, 'Division No. 20', *AEU Journal*, (April 1940), p. 151

²⁰⁹ R. B. Suthers, 'Ought We to Stop Stalin Spreading Socialism?' p. 92.

²¹⁰ C.V. Berridge, 'D.O. Reports', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1940), p. 151.

personal enrichment. This itself was underlain with the idea that capitalism as a system, coupled with the determined maintenance of hierarchies and policies of competition rather than co-operation, and the promotion of private interests not public, both in Britain and imposed at Versailles, combined to create the war situation. The *NP* recommended the book *War Profits; Trade Unions Policy in War*, by Maurice Dobb.²¹¹ Thus the message was disseminated that lessons must be learned from the failures that led to war, and for all to be politically aware, and prepared to stand together to ensure that the policies that facilitated the rise of continental fascism were never permitted to be repeated.

Education

The rise of fascism and the dangers of the evolving international situation 'where millions of people are instructed to ignore their heads and think with their blood'²¹² accentuated the need to understand the complexities, problems, and possibilities, of domestic and international affairs through education. Both the AEU and NUGMW maintained their educational provision, principally in collaboration with the NCLC, and WEA. They arranged free or reduced fee courses, postal courses, weekend and summer schools, and awarded scholarships, and advertised TUC and other bursaries. War meant the Labour College was transformed into a hospital, precluding residential courses but the Colleges correspondence courses continued. The dynamic and challenging international environment and the growth of fascism resulted in new courses being introduced.²¹³

Notwithstanding the prevailing preoccupation with issues emergent from the war context, long standing courses grounded students in the socio-political and

²¹¹ Anon, 'Books, *NP*, (July, 1940), p. 2.

²¹² 'H.B.', 'Reflections of the W.E.A. Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1938), p.364

²¹³ For instance: 'The U.S.S.R. and Europe', 'Germany and Europe', 'The Problem of World Peace', 'Fascism v Communism v Democracy', 'International Affairs', 'Britain, Europe and the Far East', 'Czechoslovakia and the Crisis', 'The World To-day'; 'Is there Despair in Democracy?' 'American Labour through British Eyes' 'The Labour Movement Since The War', 'The TUC In War-Time; 'The Labour Party in War-Time', 'The Co-operative Movement in War-Time', 'Liberty in Wartime', 'Workers' Education in War-Time', 'Socialism in War-Time', And 'Freedom and Democracy', 'The U.S.S.R. and Europe'; 'Germany and Europe'; 'The Problem of World Peace', and on a more optimistic note: 'The Economics of War and After', 'Social Reconstruction and Planning', 'Industrial Organisation in Wartime and After'.

economic issues that shaped lives, and also those topics that would enable them to become effective as future activists within union and labour politics (as outlined in Chapter 1).

Education of children and youths was similarly considered important by the unions and they agitated for changes in the law. The Education Act, 1936 (effective from 1st September, 1939) raised the statutory school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen years. However, the exemption of 73,000 children from this provision on grounds of going into 'beneficial employment' outraged the journal contributors (especially in the *NUGMW Journal*).²¹⁴ They had instead advocated that: all secondary education should be free; school leaving age increased to 16 years (without exemptions); maintenance grants paid; universal multilateral schools under a single administration established; and greater access to, and facilities for, higher education.²¹⁵ Both the *AEU* and *NUGMW* journals denounced the prevailing system for disadvantaging working-class children, and its role in maintaining capitalism, the class system, and the structures that supported them. The *NUGMW* typically concentrated on the beneficial effects of continued education as well as the knock-on reductions in unemployment, whilst the *AEU* provided more detailed analysis of the consequences of the education system.

The inequities in education, and therefore the life-chances of working-class children were considered self-perpetuating and structural within the class economy, and therefore unjust. The education system exemplified the 'them and us' divide. The £15 per child, per annum, of public money spent on elementary education was deemed insufficient, a fact confirmed by employers who complained that many school leavers were functionally illiterate.²¹⁶ The *AEU Journal* readers were also informed of how workers' children were further disadvantaged by the dearth of scholarships for secondary education, 13.7% (1937) benefited (rather than the 13.2% in 1929). Moreover, many state school places were occupied by fee-paying middle-class children of below scholarship standards, displacing more intelligent working-class children. The academic research of Gray and Moshinsky was cited; they found that 80% of the most intelligent children came from state schools, 20%

²¹⁴ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1939), p.323.

²¹⁵ D. M. Elliot, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1939), pp.549-552.

²¹⁶ S. A. Inscoe, 'Education or Training', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1939), p.114.

from private preparatory schools. Of high ability children, seven fee-paying pupils went on to receive further free education for every one non-fee-payer, and that half the high ability working class children were deprived of secondary education due to insufficient places.²¹⁷ Equality of education was presented as a necessary condition for a fair society, without which the dynamics of domination were liable to continue.

The *AEU Journal* further underlined this point by citing Professor John Hilton, whose studies concluded:

The rule is, the old school tie for the old school posts ...Of 55 Bishops, 52 were at public schools. Of 24 Deans 19 were at a public school; of 156 County Court Judges, Recorders, etc., 122 are public schoolites: of 210 home Civil Servants receiving more than £1,000 a year, 152 have old school ties; of 82 directors of the Big five banks 62 were at public schools. Take the present cabinet, there are 21 Ministers, 20 went to public schools, and of those 13 went to Oxford or Cambridge.²¹⁸

Thus, the dominant state ideology facilitated inequality, and the ideological state apparatus was perceived as institutionalising that inequality, and thus ensuring that it was self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing.

It was not just the access to education that was criticised in the journals, but also its content and function. The *AEU Journal* reported the NCLC assertions that the education children did receive acted to shield and justify the capitalist system. It was therefore postulated that if a new social order was to be established, the Working-Class Movement must develop appropriate education.²¹⁹ Effective working-class education was therefore considered a necessary condition to dispel the fears that the ruling classes employed to restrict workers' freedom. True freedom was possible, obtainable through education offered by the Labour Colleges, the Left Book Club, trade unions, the Labour organisations, WEA, and the Adult School Movement.²²⁰ The prevailing educational system, of private education, social class, and the privilege of wealth, was perceived as preventing effective democracy. One contributor posited that 95% of people had been conditioned into either a servile

²¹⁷ R. Rallison, 'Education for Democracy Pt.1', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1938), p.360.

²¹⁸ 'Victlean', 'When will we Learn?' *AEU Journal*, (December, 1938), P.486.

²¹⁹ Tom Williamson, 'A Chapter in Working-Class History', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1940), P.370.

²²⁰ S. A. Inscoe, 'Your Freedom at Stake', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1939), P.67.

mind-set, or misplaced, blinkered snobbery.²²¹ Thus, education was portrayed as being fundamental to counter the hegemonic ideology of the ruling classes that was institutionalised in the education system, and the social and political systems more generally.

²²¹ R. Rallison, 'Education for Democracy Pt. 2', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1938), p.404.

Chapter 3. No Going Back: 1940-1945

Winston Churchill's 1940 statement: 'If the British Empire lasts another thousand years, this will always be our greatest hour', was met with incredulity by the journal contributors. Rather, the *NUGMW* prophesised, that a century hence:

No Foreign Office will blow the trumpets of war to arouse the passions of the little people. No back-stairs meetings, secret sessions, suborned agents, spies and ambassadors to cheat and finesse. The whole corrupting system will be swept away... Socialism will have removed the causes of friction between nations. ... By the simple process of Education, Example and Evolution, in that order. By eliminating the sordid system which breeds individuals whose fetid mentality only sees in the rows of crosses in a soldiers' graveyard, plus marks on the credit side of the ledger recording their success in the lust for power and wealth. ... History has only proved ... force of arms is the most unpractical way of securing either Peace or Justice.¹

Thus, Churchillian rhetoric was met with socialist rhetoric steeped in the understandings of the inter-war period. The sentiment was generalised throughout the different journals.

A basic, somewhat sparse, narrative of the war provided the backdrop for all other activity. The journals, being monthly, tended to provide key updates and comment. The *NUGMW* was keen to demonstrate that the Labour movement had sought to curtail Hitler before the war. J. R. Clynes declared:

Our Union may claim definite association with the policy of re-armament ... at the Labour Party Conference in 1937 it was I who moved the re-armament resolution at the request of the Party Executive.²

Although Clynes was being truthful, this position was contrary to the overwhelming sentiment expressed in the *NUGMW Journal* at that time (and the previous position of the Labour Party and movement), which stressed that national rearmament never prevented conflict, and advocated collective security through the League (as

¹ A. J. Parkes, '1940 - and All That', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1940), p. 641.

² J. R. Clynes, 'Our Demands to Resist Hitler', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1942), p. 378

discussed in Chapter 2).³ Some contributors continued to argue that had democratic states acted in unison, Nazism would not have triumphed, and that the League did not fail, but was killed by states which prioritised self-interest, self-protection and economic nationalism over international co-operation and world peace.⁴ The message of strength through unity was reinforced, and shown to be evidenced internationally, as well as in the domestic and industrial spheres.

There was a concerted effort to show this war was different from the last. When J. McHale (AEU) complained in 1941 that the British Government's war propaganda was substantially poorer than in WWI,⁵ it elicited the response that WWI's unpopularity necessitated propaganda, requiring:

... every conceivable device - official and unofficial. Flappers gave white feathers to skilled men who had been specially exempted; Kitchener pointed his finger ... Horatio Bottomley ... invoke[d] the aid of God Almighty; and famous actresses gave free kisses ... on condition that they joined up. The real winner, however, was 'Poor little Belgium.'⁶

Such propaganda was deemed unnecessary in the fight against fascism.

War conditions precipitated growth in union membership and funds, and an increased sense of their own significance. The unions used their journals to publicise their influence on a wide range of issues: unemployment benefit; workman's compensation; women's pensions; as well as influencing industrial policy through ministerial consultation, seats on National Advisory Boards, joint committees, and the National Labour Supply Board.⁷ Additionally, the National Arbitration Tribunal was established,⁸ and changes to the Fair Wages Clause for firms engaged on Government contracts achieved.⁹ The *NUGMW* contributors

³ See for instance: C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1936), p. 176; A. S. Dopson, 'Weekend School on British Foreign Policy', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1936), p. 246; C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1936), p. 248; C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', (October, 1937), p. 293; 'Chairman's Address to Congress: Liberty and Dictatorship', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1938), p. 44.

⁴ See for instance: C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes. The League of Nations in war time', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1941), pp. 24-26.

⁵ J. McHale, 'What's Wrong with the Propaganda Machine?' *AEU Journal*, (March, 1941), p. 75.

⁶ W. McLaine, 'What is Wrong with the Propaganda Machine?' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1941), p. 130.

⁷ A. J. Caddick, 'Our Movement has Power', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1941), p. 12.

⁸ The National Arbitration Tribunal was directed to record changes in industrial practice and act as Arbitration Court post-war to avoid the type of difficulties experienced post WWI type with regards to the restoration of trade union practices.

⁹ Anon., 'Why not Now?' *NP*, (October, 1942), p. 4

boasted that the trade union movement was never before as highly esteemed or accepted as a pillar of the national life,¹⁰ 'second only to Parliament itself, in regulating the means whereby we shall see this war through',¹¹ a position that was unimaginable in 1931. The *AEU Journal* concurred, stressing their role in maintaining stable labour relations, and arguing that the engineers' importance to war production meant they deserved a greater voice in national governance. Thus, the union leaders publicised the extent to which, through working with the Government and engaging in corporatist policies, unions' power, influence, and reach had been augmented. Despite their mistrust of the National Government (apart from Bevin *et. al.*), it was hoped that the idea of trade unions as partners in running industry would become reified and extended. This would have been an influential factor in activists' and officials' understandings (to varying degrees) of the potential possibilities for corporatism post war. The publication of such issues in the journals served to reinforce in the minds of members and potential members, ideas of trade union power and utility.

The Economic Environment

The ongoing theme of inequality of sacrifice continued to be generalised throughout the journals. Contributors highlighted examples that would resonate with their readership; such as the £5,000 annual salary of the Unemployment Assistance Board Chairman, and other high officials' remuneration.¹² These figures were published alongside accounts of moneyed interests calling on the Government to introduce wage stabilisation programmes 'in the national interest', and to counteract a supposed wage push inflationary cycle. The journals pointed out that wages lagged behind price increases.¹³

¹⁰ Anon., 'The Trades Union Movement', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1941), p. 577; J. R. Clynes, 'Trades Unions and Peace Plans, World Trades Union Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1945), p. 100.

¹¹ 'C.M.S.', 'Ourselves at the TUC', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1942), pp. 352-355.

¹² I. Haig Mitchel, 'The Open Door', *AEU Journal* (August, 1940), p. 265.

¹³ C. Dukes, 'Danger of Inflation', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1941), p. 376.

The exemption of industrial profits from compulsory savings and tax avoidance devices available for capitalist but not workers,¹⁴ compounded perceived disparities. Much of the coverage was general, reinforcing the message of unfairness in the current system, and the employer classes' utilisation of Parliament to legislate to protect their position, whilst burdening the workers. However, specific policies were also proposed in the journals; F. A. Smith (AEU General Secretary) suggested company reserves should be invested in a National Depreciation and Renewals Fund until required for peace-time repairs and renewals.¹⁵ The Government took no such action.

Perceived misallocation of public funds was reported in all the journals, but was a particular focus for the *NP*, which highlighted cases like English Electric's take-over of D. Napier & Co. (with £750,000 of public funds) through the Government purchase and lease back of company assets for the duration. Napier's shareholders and directors were offered £1 English Electric stock (value 46s.) for every five Napier 5s. shares (value 36s.3d.), and Napier directors also received compensation for loss of office. The deal was arranged by Lazard Brothers & Company, which had connections to both parties.¹⁶ (The same Lazard which brokered the 2013 Post Office share sale.)

The *NP*'s long running column, 'The Money we Earn for Others', continued until August 1942 (resurrected in 1947), but they continued to publish company results outside this period, (the *Electrical Trades Journal* covered similar topics, but typically focused on the electricity industry,¹⁷ the *AEU* and *NUGMW* chose not to published company results in the war period).

The *NP* highlighted the Chancellor's 1941 White Paper which disclosed that total company profits in 1938 (during the armaments boom) were £1,117,800,000, whereas by 1940 they stood at £1,514,000,000,¹⁸ which was presented as war profiteering, and implicitly companies' obvious ability to increase wages. The *NP* considered company claims that the Excess Profits Tax (EPT) 'robs them of

¹⁴ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Wages, Profits, Prices', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1940), pp. 362-3; A. W. Pepper, 'Something Rotten in the State of Denmark', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1944), p. 244.

¹⁵ F. A. Smith 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1940), pp. 304-5.

¹⁶ Anon., 'Generous Terms for Naps', *NP*, (January, 1943), p. 2.

¹⁷ For instance: Anon., 'Company Structure in the Electricity Supply Industry', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (January, 1945), pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ Anon., 'The Budget', *NP*, (April, 1941), p. 3.

incentive', were highly disingenuous in the increasing profits environment (the national interest was not considered an incentive insofar as capitalists were concerned).¹⁹ The 1941 decision to give a 20% post-war rebate on EPT, whilst increasing Income Tax rates and lowering personal allowances (bringing many lower-paid workers into Income Tax for the first time) was deemed illustrative of the burden of war cost being forced onto ordinary workers.²⁰ Moreover, the *NP*'s continued publication and framing of company results, in addition to highlighting disparities of sacrifice, provided a conduit for disseminating their particular interpretations and understandings, as opposed to competing strands of socialist, labourist, or trade unionist positions articulated in the other journals.

The Impact of War on Industry

Many of the unions provided the Government with interest free loans. The *NUGMW* promoted this action as illustrative of their patriotism, highlighting the lack of such initiatives from corporations and wealthy individuals with available finances.²¹ The official union journals continued to promote the National Savings schemes.²² The unions secured an agreement with the Government and the Employers' Confederation that workers' wartime savings would be excluded from wages negotiations and Means Test assessments. Nonetheless, the *AEU* contributors argued that the monies lent to the Government through these schemes by between seven and eight million individuals, were to be repaid largely out of taxes taken from those same people.²³ Readers were warned that if voluntary savings were insufficient, compulsory savings schemes might be introduced.²⁴ Schemes like Keynes' Compulsory Savings Plan were discussed in the journals and analysed in

¹⁹ Anon., 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (December, 1940), p. 2; Anon., 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (February, 1941), p. 2.

²⁰ See for instance: T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben: The Tax Payers as Toad Under the Harrow', *AEU Journals*, (May, 1941), pp. 120-121; Anon., 'The Budget', *NP*, (April, 1941), p. 3.

²¹ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes: the NUGMW in War-Time', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), pp. 480-484.

²² Government advertisements were published as well as articles. For instance: Anon., 'Trades Union Congress and National Savings', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1942), p. 182; Anon., 'Savings Appeal: Necessary in War and Peace', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1943), p. 329; H. N. Harrison, 'Dockyard Workers and War Savings', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1942), p. 103.

²³ R. B. Suthers, 'You can't Judge Cigars by the November Picture on the Box', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1943), p. 106.

²⁴ T. Williamson, 'Municipal Services and National Savings' *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), p. 496.

classist terms, then forcefully condemned as further advantaging the moneyed over the workers.

From their very inception, the restoration of war-time suspended trade practices concerned all the unions, and readers were reminded of the post WWI experiences. Concerns extended to non-industrial legislation, such as Regulation 18B (detention indefinitely without trial), which, it was predicted, might prove difficult to rescind (mirroring Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) post WWI), and was potentially applicable 'against a quite different class of persons'.²⁵ The AEU considered the attitudes of wartime Government, TUC, and the LP's to be autocratic, dictating to the unions predetermined policies. They complained of the ineffective joint consultation machinery, for instance, regarding female labour, or skilled men's reserve occupational status.²⁶ Nonetheless, the AEU's and NUGMW's policy was to acquiesce in the wartime legislation, but the AEU remained vociferous in attempting to hold the government to account, ensuring that policies to maximise war production were effectively and fairly implemented, and that legislation was founded on need, not capitalist class interest.²⁷ Such journal content carried the implicit message that the unions were actively seeking to protect the workers' interests despite the wartime context.

The Joint consultations between Mr. Bevin, the TUC, and the Employers' Confederation, resulted in compulsion being applied to labour. However, the *AEU Journal* predicted that:

They will ignore, ...the real 'bottle-neck' - the placing of contracts, the allocation of materials, the provision of machine tools ... planning of production, the full utilisation of industrial plant, the clearance of output ... the equitable distribution of 'national work' ... in accordance with a general plan.²⁸

The journals, especially the *AEU* and *NP*, reported that Government and industry's planning failures resulted in misallocation of skilled workers, raw materials, components, machinery workshop layout and conditions; these problems were then

²⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'December Promises to be a Lively Month', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1941), p. 319.

²⁶ For instance: F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (1941), pp. 285-6; A. H. Bone, 'Creeping Paralysis', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1942), p. 209.

²⁷ W. H. Thomas, 'The Essential Works Order', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1943), p. 181.

²⁸ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Conscripted of Labour?' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1941), pp. 34-5.

exacerbated by inept foremen, officials, and management, and poor co-operation between the Government Departments.²⁹ They evidenced their claims not only on reports from the workshops, but also cited the Select Committee Reports into labour in the aircraft industry³⁰ and the Beveridge Committee investigation into 'uses made of skilled men in the forces'.³¹

The Essential Works Order (EWO) covered 7,000,000 workers by 1942. In its first year, one in 10,000 workers were prosecuted, and one in 50,000 imprisoned. A few employers were prosecuted, but none imprisoned. Occasionally, managements who disregarded the Order were removed or threatened with de-scheduling and loss of their workers,³² and (infrequently) replaced.³³ Such disparity of treatment was deemed to be political, and the anger expressed against it was scathing in the *AEU* and *NP* journals. This was highlighted through the example of the anti-fascist trade unionist, J. Mason, who was imprisoned without charge under Regulation 18b³⁴ (after a works' clerk reportedly mislaid his sick-note).³⁵

The EWO procedures elicited discontent, as they precluded the worker's right to dissent, circumvented democracy, and imposed bureaucratic rule.³⁶ Moreover, the machinery for avoiding dispute's judgements were considered biased, and themselves a cause of industrial unrest (for instance, in the 1943/4 Engineering and Allied Trades Award claim).³⁷ H. N. Harrison (NUGMW), Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' President, considered the judgement inadvertently incited unofficial stoppages and served to encourage employers to prolong negotiations.³⁸ Calls were made for a re-examination of compulsory arbitration and Tribunal powers, especially as the wartime Industrial Truce precluded other options.³⁹ The *NP* recommended reading *The Rights of Engineers*

²⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1942), pp. 33-34.

³⁰ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Problems of Production', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1941), p. 145; F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1942), pp. 201-2.

³¹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: We Told Them So!' *AEU Journal*, (March, 1942), pp. 62-3.

³² H. S. Dickenson, 'The 1941 War Baby', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1942), pp. 362-3.

³³ Anon., 'Management Changed by Workers Pressure', *NP*, (January, 1942), p. 2.

³⁴ The same Regulation under which Sir Oswald Mosley was imprisoned.

³⁵ Anon., 'Sheffield Demands Free J. Mason: Anti-Fascist Imprisoned, no Charge Brought', *NP*, (August, 1940), p. 1.

³⁶ Jack Yarwood, 'Majority Rule', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1943), pp. 340-1.

³⁷ John C. Mc.Vicar, 'Trouble! Trouble! Everywhere. Why?' *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1944), pp. 40-41.

³⁸ 'The Address: Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions Annual Meeting', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1943), pp. 133-135.

³⁹ H. N. Harrison, 'National Arbitration', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1943), p. 236.

by Wal Hannington, and D. N. Pritt's pamphlet, *Regulation 1AA; Guide to Engineering wages and conditions*.

The *NUGMW*, whilst acknowledging the hardship and restrictions on workers, presented the EWOs as necessary, and rallied members to acquiesce, whilst promising to fight to ensure fair play.⁴⁰ War-time industrial action was minimised.⁴¹ Thus, accusations that Communist agitators (pre-Operation Barbarossa) were instigating industrial unrest, was either highly exaggerated, or the communists were extremely ineffective in this pursuit, or both.

Workers, especially the engineers, were cognisant of the fact that victory depended on them. Maximising production through fully utilising labour and equipment, and minimising waste were considered imperative. The *AEU Journal* contributors however, made clear that a necessary condition for maximising production was that the workers believed their efforts were in the national interest and not just shareholders' profits.⁴² The inefficiencies of capitalist production continued to be elucidated, and state ownership and direction promoted. The *AEU Journal* cited Clement Davies in *The Times* who complained that the Government 'refuses to control or direct the industrial and productive units, but leaves them to fight for existence as in pre-war days'.⁴³ Moreover, the structural conditions imposed for war production increased industrial concentration, advantaging big business, and further extending monopolies, facilitating their potential to 'rationalise' post-war, to the workers' detriment.⁴⁴ Thus, issues around production were framed to emphasise both overtly and implicitly the inefficiencies of capitalist production, and how planned socialist production would be more efficient and would therefore better serve the national interest, whilst also creating a fairer society. Moreover, texts dealing with the asymmetric treatment of the different classes contained much

⁴⁰ H. N. Harrison, 'Shipbuilding and Ship-Repairing Industry: Industrial Registration', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1941), pp. 146-7.

⁴¹ Bevin reported that between EWO's introduction and 27th January, 1943, 1,034 trade disputes were reported; 498 were disposed of without reference to arbitration, and only 366 had been referred for settlement to the National Arbitration Tribunal (and some 170 ongoing). However, the press only reported on the few cases which were problematic. In reality under 2,000,000 days were lost through trade disputes, compared to 12,000,000 days in the last two years of WWI. For discussions in the journals, see, for instance: Anon., 'Trade Disputes', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1943), p. 70; C. Dukes, 'Trade Unions and the War', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1942), pp. 25-28; T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1941), pp. 204-5.

⁴² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes: Man-Power and Production', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1941), pp. 62-3.

⁴³ R.B. Suthers, 'Appeasement is Ended at Last', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1941), p. 206.

⁴⁴ R.B. Suthers, 'The Right Time for a General Election', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1941), p. 94.

surplus meaning aimed at inciting and reinforcing class consciousness, in order to elicit support for socialism.

Excessive hours were a cause of concern in the journals, especially as it was found that long hours failed to increase production.⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the production imperative, the journals defended wage increases and absenteeism. The press and some politicians cited high wages as causing apathy, but the unions countered, situating the blame in the realities of the war circumstances: black-out working; longer hours; speed up; arduous conditions; reduced time off; limited rations and travel; and the difficulties for women to access food shops when in full-time work.⁴⁶ Implicit within such accounts was the understanding that the capitalists, their press, and their advocates, would always blame the workers for any production problems, rather than analysing the situation.

The *NP* attacked what they considered to be the counterproductive policies of the Government, such as the '10% plus-cost' basis for armament industry payments, which rewarded inefficiency and encouraged the over-pricing of jobs.⁴⁷ The prioritisation of capitalist class interests over national interests was also denounced. For instance, Tory MPs campaigned to cancel Regulation 54C.A,⁴⁸ which had production implications, but also embodied class disparities as 'Workers may be moved from job to job by the Minister of Labour. But not ... the directors'.⁴⁹ The *NP* informed its readership about the business interests of the group's leader, Mr. O. E. Simmonds, MP.⁵⁰ Mr Lyttelton, Minister of Production, decided to refer the matter to the Craven Committee, where the two protagonists were big industry advocates, Sir Charles Craven (Chairman) and Lord Weir.⁵¹

⁴⁵ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: Hitlerism in Industry', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1942), p. 150.

⁴⁶ T. Williamson, 'Absenteeism', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1942), pp. 146-7.

⁴⁷ See, for instance: Anon., 'Resolutions Adopted at the London Meeting: Cost Plus 10 %', *NP* (September, 1941) p. 1; Beacontree AEU, 'Airmail', *NP*, (July, 1940), p. 4.

⁴⁸ Government's right to nominate directors of war plants with unsatisfactory production - as occurred at Fairey Aviation and Shorts Bros.

⁴⁹ Anon., 'Mr Simmonds Prays', *NP*, (May, 1943), p. 2.

⁵⁰ Anon., 'London Meet to Launch Trades Union Legal Recognition Campaign' *NP*' (March, 1943), p. 1.

⁵¹ Anon., 'Mr Simmonds Prays', p. 2.

Women

The Minister of Labour established a Women's Consultative Committee to advise on women's recruitment and registration and the various legislative changes. Such changes, as indeed all industrial matters, led to calls for all women to be unionised. Female NUGMW membership increased, exceeding 70,000 by April 1941,⁵² and 257,000 by the end of 1942, (out of 720,000 total membership).⁵³ Miss D. M. Elliot attributed rising membership, in part, to established trade unionists being evacuated from large industrial centres and disseminating the union message.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, there were accounts of local resentments. For instance, complaints from male union officials that 'the average woman war-worker needs to be reorganised after every transfer and every suspension. They are not really trades unionists,' and the organisation of women was described as involving the 'trifling task of changing human nature', amidst complaints that under half of them intended remaining in industry post-war.⁵⁵ It was further suggested that:

... the woman worker is generally superior to the male worker on jobs of repetitive monotony. Few men have that faculty. If the job is not sufficiently difficult to compel their interest, they get bored, 'fed up,' and, finally, rebellious ... [the] health and happiness of our people depends on an acceptance of, and a return to, the old principle of the male doing the great bulk of industrial labour.⁵⁶

Thus, patriarchal attitudes and sexual discrimination permeated these trade unionists' thinking explicitly as well as implicitly. Despite their self-identification as socialist, for such contributors, the core socialist concept of equality did not extend to women. Indeed, the depth of the discrimination is most evident in the surplus meaning within the texts, for instance, at a conference when the improved position was noted, it was noted that:

... still some few ... say that women are a nuisance ... Glad I am that we have now come to the day when it is the minority who say it openly. What you say secretly, I do not know. I do ask that you will be patient and that you

⁵² D. M. Elliott, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1941), pp. 148-50.

⁵³ Anon., 'Membership-Plus 122,000', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1943), p. 97.

⁵⁴ Anon., 'Women in Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1941), p. 307-312.

⁵⁵ J. Yarwood, 'Northern Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1945), p. 90.

⁵⁶ William Brider, 'Light Industries – the Snag', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 139.

will realise that if women are a nuisance they are only a nuisance because they care and want to get things done.⁵⁷

Men who similarly sought improved conditions were not considered a nuisance.

Notwithstanding their discrimination on gender lines, the NUGMW fought to counter problems regarding overwork,⁵⁸ or lack of work.⁵⁹ They agitated for improved conditions including good day nurseries (near workplaces), shelter provision for those bombed-out, requisition of empty homes, nursing and medical services aligned with shelters, canteens and food distribution, and evacuations.⁶⁰ The plight of the 10,000,000 women who were often invisibly engaged in domestic work was also raised: billeting munition workers; looking after evacuees; voluntary tasks; or part-time work, in addition to their family responsibilities.⁶¹

J. R. Clynes articulated a minority view, blaming unorganised women for their own predicament.⁶² However, this was not solely sexism, he equally blamed unorganised men for their misfortunes, casting them as enemies of organised workers, and as bad as the employers. The solution proposed, was to recruit women and educate them in trade unionism, and then agitate jointly for improved terms and conditions and a 'rate for the job'.⁶³ It was suggested in the *NUGMW Journal* (in complete contradiction to much of their commentary on women's place in industry) that members learn from the Russian example, where women effectively perform men's jobs.⁶⁴

As the war progressed, women's post-war status became increasingly topical. Women considered that they had earned their place in economic life, including equal access to employment, and, where appropriate, retraining.⁶⁵ The equal pay for equal work mantra continued in all the journals. Nonetheless, a minority of

⁵⁷ Anon., 'Women in Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1942), pp. 259-261.

⁵⁸ D. M. Elliott, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), p. 457.

⁵⁹ D. M. Elliott, 'Notes from the Women's Department: Membership', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1940), p. 465.

⁶⁰ N. Vickerstaff, 'National Conference of Labour Women', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1940), pp. 703-4; D. M. Elliott, 'National Conference of Labour Women', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1940), pp. 615-617; T. W. Kerry, 'Midland and East Coast Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1941) p. 99.

⁶¹ Anon., 'Women in Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1942), pp. 259-261.

⁶² J. R. Clynes, 'Women and their Work', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1941), p. 368.

⁶³ A. J. Laws, 'Lay Member's Opinion', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1941), pp. 188.

⁶⁴ Anon., 'Our Members and the Production Drive', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1942), pp. 76-78.

⁶⁵ See, for instance: D. M. Elliott, 'Notes from the Women's Department', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1942), pp. 228-9; M. Taylor, 'The Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 389; 'Abstract Report of Council's Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), pp. 165-167.

women feared equal pay might result in their gradual exclusion from industry.⁶⁶ As war work diminished, women were redirected back into the cotton mills, much to their displeasure, as wages were low and conditions poor. Those so directed determined to ensure their children escaped that fate.⁶⁷

A minority voice in the *AEU Journal* welcomed women's inclusion and the equality principle.⁶⁸ The majority sought the protection of the primacy of skilled men. Female 'dilutees' entering the industry continued as a live issue for the AEU. National Women's Agreements were signed (22nd May, 1940),⁶⁹ but female recruitment, especially when male labour was available, continued to cause workplace resentments and non-co-operation.⁷⁰ By June 1943 the AEU had some 65,000 women members. Special Central Conferences with the Engineering Employers' Federation, and National Women's Conferences were instigated.⁷¹ Nonetheless, female AEU members were not treated as equals. For instance, the five women elected to attend the 1943 National Committee, were only given non-voting delegate status.⁷²

F. A. Smith made clear the androcentric nature of the AEU, stating that the union had made:

a moral and a political pledge to the men who have left the industry to serve the nation ... They have a first claim ... of employment in the industry when demobilisation begins....the only alternative would be an unthinkable form of sex war, with the possibility of many employers using the skill of the women as a lever for enforcing wage cuts.⁷³

The fate of women AEU members post-war was not a major concern.

Equality and fraternity were usurped by male self-interest, and patriarchal norms (sometimes bordering on misogyny) both within the workshop and the society in which they were embedded. Thus, what had previously existed as an invisible common-sense part of social and industrial relations evidenced principally in the

⁶⁶ J. Yarwood, 'We Exhibit the Union Machinery', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1944), p. 298.

⁶⁷ Alice B. Horan, 'Unwinding', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1945), p. 98.

⁶⁸ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Window: Marching Women', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1943), p. 12.

⁶⁹ W. M. Irvine, 'D.O. Reports', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1941), p. 22.

⁷⁰ J. Tanner, 'Central Conference', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1943), p. 36.

⁷¹ 'Abstract Report of Council's Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 143-145.

⁷² B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes: Labour Party Conference', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1943) pp. 174-5.

⁷³ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1942), pp. 229-30.

surplus meaning within the journal texts, was given greater prominence and thus visibility by the prospect of peace, and the perceived threat women posed to male domination in the industrial workplace, and its potential knock-on consequences for societal gender relationships.

Unlike the majority voice in the other journals, the *NP* continued to advocate gender equality, stressing organisation and unity. They reported occasional instances of overt discrimination, and commented on its unacceptability.⁷⁴ They also began a women's section and column, encouraged female readers to submit letters,⁷⁵ and dealt expansively with women's bread and butter issues.⁷⁶ A small minority female voice blamed women themselves for their failure to garner a National Wage Agreement; again, this was attributed to past failures to engage in trade unionism;⁷⁷ a position Stafford Cripps also adopted.⁷⁸

Joint Production Committees

The need to maximise production, interspersed with rhetoric around the necessity to defeat the fascist threat, dominated coverage.⁷⁹ Joint Production Committees (JPCs) were proposed as a means to these ends. JPCs were no great concern for the *NUGMW* contributors. When first established they were reportedly 'viewed with something akin to awe by members engaged on and in an industry where the old ideas still flourished'.⁸⁰ The *AEU* contributors took a contrary stance, believing they impacted on fundamental trade union and socialist principles; their desirability was contested. Some considered that big armament firms would be the main beneficiaries and suggested that war production and Russia would be best helped by agitating

⁷⁴ For instance: Anon., 'Clyde Workers Visit the City Council', *NP*, (May, 1945), p. 2.

⁷⁵ Anon., 'Time to Shop', *NP*, (March, 1941), p. 3.

⁷⁶ For instance: Anon., 'For Women', *NP*, (May, 1941), p. 3.

⁷⁷ 'Stewardess', 'Women at War', *NP*, (February, 1944), p. 6.

⁷⁸ 'Stewardess', 'Women at War: Equal Pay: Speedy Action Urged', *NP*, (November, 1944), p. 6.

⁷⁹ C. Dukes, 'We Must Not Lose Democracy', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1940), p. 658; C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1940), p. 680.

⁸⁰ C. G. Nation, 'Both Sides of the Table', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1943), p. 328.

for the abolition of all profit making in munitions, State control of the factories and banks, and then, and only then, would the whole working class become a real production committee.⁸¹

Alternatively, Edmund Frow presented the 'common-sense' argument that if production was to be optimised and waste minimised: 'co-ordinated direction of armies is necessary, so is the co-ordinated direction of production'⁸² For Frow, and his fellow communists, achieving both increased production and increased worker control, were steps forward, and by disseminating the rationality and expediency of their position, they hoped to enlighten readers, and even convert them to the cause.

Other contributors proposed that JPCs offered the opportunity for workers to gain management knowledge and experience that would facilitate their future encroachment on managerial function and potentially the occupation of management roles. However, readers were warned that employers might merely achieve a workforce disciplined by their fellow workers, and that employers would always defend their managerial functions: 'Remember 1922'.⁸³ Yet others suggested that limited liability companies with professional managers, meant managers could easily be transferred in the future to State employment.⁸⁴ Others, posited that JPC advocates were guided and motivated purely by their communism, not the best interests of Britain or British workers, and suggested that JPCs were aimed merely at aiding Russia, and 'only incidentally to rearm ourselves.'⁸⁵ Consequently the policy should be repudiated. After some months of debate JPCs were considered a welcomed expedient, and ultimately the *AEU Journal* recommended that they should be made compulsory in major industries.⁸⁶

The *AEU Journal* reported that the principal obstacles to JPC's success was management and employer mistrust, specifically their paranoia over managerial functions.⁸⁷ The opposition to JPCs of major industrialists, like Sir Alfred Herbert

⁸¹ J. T. Barrow, 'The Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1942), p. 6.

⁸² E. Frow, 'Production Committees', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1942), p. 13.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ J. W. Sutton, 'Production Committees', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1942), p. 35.

⁸⁵ Ernest Jennison, 'Production Committees', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1941), p. 326.

⁸⁶ 'The Delegation', 'What Happened at the Trades Union Congress', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1943), p. 264.

⁸⁷ Anon., 'A Guide to Workers on Production Committees', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1943), p. 64.

and Lord Nuffield, was deemed 'indicative of their willingness to retard the war-effort rather than lose privileges'.⁸⁸ Austin Hopkinson MP was quoted as stating:

I cannot look at the evil faces of some labour leaders without a deep sense of humility. How greatly must we capitalist employers have neglected our duty if the workers choose to follow not their natural leaders but men as these ... We want more autocracy. I am autocratic; because of my birth, my breeding and intelligence I am fitted to lead.⁸⁹

Similar attitudes were attributed to Alvis's Chairman, T. G. John.⁹⁰ The inclusion of such quotes in the journals illustrates how, in their constructed narrative, they utilised Tory and Capitalists' derogatory statements to elicit gut reactions from their readership, thereby reinforcing the 'them and us' schism, and elucidating the capitalists view of the workers (however highly skilled). Moreover, it aligned the minority of *AEU Journal* contributors who eschewed JPCs, with the capitalists, thereby discrediting them.

The *NP*'s position on JPCs accorded with the *CP*'s, and the *AEU Journal*'s communists and left-wing socialist contributors. It highlighted poor planning, the subjugation of efficiency to management's desire to retain their managerial function, the prioritising of profit over production, and employer neglect of workers' health and safety. A unified plan for production was advocated, with Regional Boards, compulsory JPCs (made up of shop stewards not appointed workers' representatives).⁹¹ The *NP* considered that the consequences for the shop steward and trade union movements of such wartime industrial structures was potentially very positive:

... one of our greatest gains has been the training of thousands of workers to become capable negotiators at the source of grievances - the factory ... The shop stewards of today may well be, indeed must be, the legislators of tomorrow.⁹²

⁸⁸ 'Editor's Notes: JPCs', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1943), pp. 92-3.

⁸⁹ Anon., 'Guardians of Privilege: Austin Hopkinson', *NP*, (August, 1942), p. 2.

⁹⁰ Anon., 'Guardian of Privilege', *NP*, (June, 1942), p. 2.

⁹¹ Anon., 'Acting Committee; A Single Plan', *NP*, (February, 1942), p. 6.

⁹² 'A Midland Shop Steward', 'Gains and Losses', *NP*, (September, 1944), p. 4.

Thus, reflecting the confidence in the movement that their elevated status and voice would continue and further increase post-war.

Until Operation Barbarossa the *NP* had largely ignored the war, except insofar as it impacted on worker's freedoms through war-time regulations, conscription, and the direction of labour, ARP, and daily difficulties. However, Russia's entrance into the war precipitated the *NP* losing its political cutting edge, and subordinating political, welfare and victimisation issues, to production maximisation. In Freedon's terms there was some rearrangement of core concepts. Thus, whilst socialist core concepts and the welfare and interests of the workers, class solidarity (and related 'othering' of the management / ownership class) remained central, they were as a temporary expedient, supplanted and marginalised by the imperative of defeating Hitler and defending the only existing Socialist state, as well as their own country, and the socialist and labour movements (and themselves).

Attitudes to Communists

The 'People's Convention', a CP organisation established before Germany invaded Russia, embodied the shared common-sense understandings that the journals propagated regarding post-war aspirations. The AEU's National Committee's passing of a resolution supporting negotiations for the 'Peoples Convention' precipitated a mixed response from contributors. The People's Convention's CP sponsorship meant it was automatically denounced by many anti-communists, and its 'People's Peace' element was, for some, an anathema in the war context.⁹³ Others defended the Convention, highlighting widespread press misrepresentation, and urging readers to consider it dispassionately, and in its entirety. 'The People's Peace', its AEU advocates stated, was a long-term policy 'without conquest or capitulation', which did not recommend negotiating with Hitler.⁹⁴ Moreover, they posited that the six point programme: raising living standards and providing dependant's allowances; adequate ARP; restoration and extension of trade union and democratic rights, and civil liberties; friendship with Russia; and a Government

⁹³ A. J. Caddick, 'National Committee Nonsense', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1941), p. 203.

⁹⁴ J. C. Clokey, 'National Committee Nonsense: A Reply to Bro. Caddick', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1941), p. 234.

truly representative of the working people, were all policies that the whole labour movement should support, and which the author attempted to persuade the readership to adopt.⁹⁵ In this pursuit, the article obscured the fact that whilst such policies in broad terms had widespread appeal, the specifics the CP desired, diverged from those coveted by non-communist socialists, labourists, and trade unionists.

The Clerk officially opposed the People's Convention, stressing that it was contrary to Labour Party and TUC policy, and rebuked a number of their prominent members who publicly supported it.⁹⁶ The *NP* contributors, in line with CPGB policy, were strong supporters. They recommended reading D. N. Pritt's, pamphlet *Forward to a People's Convention*.⁹⁷

Events intervened with the German attack on the Soviet Union, and all talk of the Peoples Convention ceased. British-Soviet relations were transformed. Churchill announced that the attack prefaced an invasion attempt on Britain, and promised the Soviets aid, making it difficult to disparage communists as fifth columnists. The journals generally reacted positively to Soviet help in the war. Some reconsidered their own ideologically driven preconceptions, but many, like Bevin and Dukes, and most *NUGMW* contributors, did not. Indeed, for some, their anti-communism increased, as worries emerged as to how the changed context might bolster communist influences in Britain.⁹⁸

Nonetheless, the *NUGMW Journal* generally subjected communists to very little scrutiny except when they perceived domestic communists to be a threat within their union or the wider labour movement. For instance, in 1940, the communists only featured in two articles: first, the reproduction of a *Manchester Guardian* article (11th April 1940) in which the CPGB blamed the British Labour and Trade Union leaders, Chamberlain, and Reynaud, for extending the war,⁹⁹ and second, Ernest Bevin's statement:

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Particular anger was expressed regarding a circular issued by H. W. Carver and J. Thomas on the People's Convention. For instance: Anon., 'At the General Council Table,' *The Clerk*, (January-February, 1941), p. 158; Anon., 'At the General Council Table,' *The Clerk*, (March-April), pp. 176-178.

⁹⁷ Anon., 'Books', *NP*, (December, 1940), p. 3.

⁹⁸ Anon., 'British Labour and the Communists', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1941), pp. 447-8.

⁹⁹ Anon. 'Apologists for Hitler', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1940), p. 372.

Let this be said for the working people, even the communists, there is no evidence in Norway, Holland, France, or Belgium, that any part of the working class, whatever their political party may have been, operated as Fifth Columnists. The Fifth Columnists came from higher up. The people I have lived with are under no delusions about Hitlerism. It is those who would be the first to be wiped out in every country. ¹⁰⁰

The article's author added: 'And so say all of us.' ¹⁰¹

The CP's desire for Labour Party affiliation caused particular antipathy and precipitated increased anti-communists rhetoric (1943-4) in the *NUGMW* and other journals, such as, (contestably) in *The Clerk*.¹⁰² Chas Dukes accused them of being divisive and fractional, and of exploiting the Russian Army's successes to promote their cause and candidates, to secure official control over, and finally, dictatorship of, the labour movement. He complained, 'They are intolerant of minorities, and those who cannot be pressed into their particular mould', proclaiming: 'the CP stands for a dictatorship ... Their policy is to liquidate their opponents, and not to convert them'.¹⁰³ Thus the *NUGMW*, like much of the right-wing of the labour movement, utilised the Soviet Government's dictatorial characteristics and actions (known and expediently ignored or disbelieved by many on the left), to disparage British communists and to 'other' them from the type of socialism they themselves promoted.

Other *NUGMW* contributors accused 'certain groups' (Communists) of undermining the Labour Party in parliamentary divisions, being behind the miners, docks, and engineering worker's unofficial strikes, and consequently responsible for the negative press the unions received, suggesting their behaviour was revenge on Bevin for wartime restrictions of organised workers. 'Anti-war' and 'Trotskyite' agitators were condemned (especially Trotskyists for coveting world revolution), and they were accused of wanting to establish nationally militant trade union

¹⁰⁰ "C.D." 'And so say all of us', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), p. 469; (also published in the AEU; J. W. Smith, 'The Filthy Column!' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1940), p. 288.)

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 469.

¹⁰² H. L. Bullock, 'Communist Affiliation', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 162; 'Comrades' *Daily Herald*, (12th May, 1943), cited *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 179; J. Yarwood, 'Adaptability', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1943), p. 239; J. Yarwood, 'Disruptive Elements', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1943), p. 45; 'Correspondence', *The Clerk*, (November-December, 1943), pp. 93-4; 'Correspondence', *The Clerk*, (January-February, 1944), p. 111.

¹⁰³ C. Dukes, 'Why we Opposed Communist Affiliation to the Labour Party', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1943), p. 111.

committees.¹⁰⁴ Those who in 1943 advocated Labour's secession from the electoral truce, or withdrawal from the Coalition, (principally supporters of the CP affiliation to the LP) were similarly denounced.¹⁰⁵ The ILP was accused of being Trotskyist inspired, and 'Independent Socialist' candidates were condemned for supporting a union of all Left parties: 'disintegrating forces unleashed by the fungus growth of this passing moment--this so-called 'United Socialist'.¹⁰⁶ Thus the *NUGMW* contributors, through rhetoric, sought to counter the positive fallout communists enjoyed from Soviet successes, and to 'other' communists as they did the employer class, in order to persuade readers to adhere to the line that they and the Labour Party promoted.

The *NP* and *AEU* journals were amongst those which repeatedly credited the Soviet Union army's successes and Russia's evident advances to the Communist system, suggesting that 'Moral purpose and a scientific planning are the secrets of Russian success'.¹⁰⁷ There is substantial evidence from opinion polls conducted during the war that most people came to similar conclusions.¹⁰⁸ The *AEU Journal* promoted unity against fascism, and advocated full trade union rights to Communist members at the Labour Party Conferences and TUC.¹⁰⁹ (A position also supported by *The Clerk*, but somewhat less enthusiastically).¹¹⁰ Jack Tanner told readers that the Communist International's decision to dissolve itself, removed the LP's main premise for refusing Communist affiliation,¹¹¹ and compared the antipathy some felt towards the CP to the antagonisms between America's AFL and CIO, which weakened US and international trade unionism.¹¹² The moral was clear, strength through unity. Nonetheless, the AEU hierarchy sought to distance itself from the communist leaning National Shop Stewards Council and other Shop Stewards' organisations.¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ S. Data, 'The Mischief Makers Seeking to Disrupt the Trades Unions: War Conditions Used to Foment Strikes', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 134;

¹⁰⁵ J. R. Clynes, 'A Lament', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 166-7.

¹⁰⁶ S. Data, 'The Mischief Makers Seeking to Disrupt the Trades Unions', p. 134.

¹⁰⁷ Anon., 'Dean of Canterbury on Soviet Anniversary', *NP*, (November, 1943), p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ P. M. H. Bell, *John Bull and The Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and the Soviet Union*, (Hodder Arnold, 1990),

¹⁰⁹ 'Report of the Delegation to the Trade Union Congress', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1942), p. 260.

¹¹⁰ Anon., 'Hitler Wont Like This: Report of The Annual Conference', *The Clerk* (July-August, 1943), p. 52.

¹¹¹ J. Tanner, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 146-7.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1941), pp. 285-6; 'Report of the AEU Delegation to the Annual Meeting of the Labour Party', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1943), p. 184.

The *NP* supported CP affiliation to the LP, and for all political levy payers to be eligible as trade union delegates at the Labour Party conferences.¹¹⁴ They repeated Harry Politt's appeal for Labour and progressive forces to unite, the desirability of an electoral truce,¹¹⁵ and supported the AEU National Committee's resolution appealing to the Labour Party to convene a conference of progressive parties to achieve Labour movement unity.¹¹⁶

The International Scene

There was a received understanding that the British were able and moral, and the enemy incompetent, ruthless, and immoral. Nationalism rather than accuracy abounded, especially in the *NUGMW Journal*. This was exemplified in their description of the unmitigated disaster at Dieppe:

We were all thrilled when we heard and read of our own brilliant offensive raid on Dieppe. ...this action so dashingy carried out, with its perfect synchronisation of air, land and sea forces will undoubtedly result in the saving of thousands of lives.¹¹⁷

The US's position was considered crucial. American help, especially lend-lease, was welcomed;¹¹⁸ as was their refusal to recognise the transfer of European colonial possessions, and instead to hold them in trust.¹¹⁹ The journal contributors viewed the upcoming US election with apprehension, as, although Roosevelt's opponent, Wendell Willkie, offered all support short of war, he was backed by big business and the Nazis,¹²⁰ and was considered a reactionary enemy of the labour movement (although supported by the CIO's John L. Lewis):

American industrialists are heartily sick of the ... gallant President's gesture in the direction of a wider freedom and a fuller democracy. ...many of the

¹¹⁴ Anon., 'Scottish Trades Union Congress', *NP*, (May, 1945), p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Anon., 'Call for Unity', *NP*, (June, 1943), p. 7; Anon., 'AEU backs Unity', *NP*, (April, 1945), p. 4.

¹¹⁶ Anon., 'Unity Conference', *NP* (July, 1944), p. 8

¹¹⁷ J. Taylor, 'Victory is in Sight', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1942), p. 355.

¹¹⁸ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1942), pp. 14

¹¹⁹ F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1940), pp. 250-251.

¹²⁰ R. B. Suthers, 'We May be at War with France', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1940), p. 333

American commercial men are determined to get their own back as soon as the present emergency is over.¹²¹

The *NP* highlighted Henry Ford's refusal to manufacture 6,000 Rolls Royce Merlin Aero Engines for the British Air Force, and Hitler awarding him the 'Grand Cross of the German Eagle' in 1938.¹²² Thus, there was a generalised effort by journal contributors to again reinforce the link between capitalists (and their advocates) and fascist support internationally.

Such understandings were also applied to the defeat of France. The *AEU Journal* reported that France was 'betrayed by a self-elected Government dominated by fascists whose friendship of the Nazis has long been notorious'.¹²³ They theorised that France's 200 richest families, who 'practically control French finance and industry sold out in the hopes of saving their property'¹²⁴ (the same interests who the journal contributors held responsible for ousting of M. Blum). The *AEU* warned Churchill to guard against powerful British financiers and industrialists, who 'would rather lose the British Empire to the Nazis than permit the people of Britain to own and rule the country'.¹²⁵

In contrast the *NUGMW Journal* coverage on France's fall concentrated on what it meant for Britain and how to move forward to victory;¹²⁶ just one article accorded with the *NP* and *AEU* that 'The ruling classes of Belgium and France, in their anxiety to preserve their status and the right to exploit their peoples ... sold their common peoples into slavery.'¹²⁷ The *NP* went further, linking pro-fascism to anti-Sovietism and antipathy to the working classes. They described Paris's fall as a triumph for 'Fascist Vichyites and anti-Stalinites ... France and her people were betrayed by her Ministers, 5th columnists and big businessmen', facilitated by

¹²¹ H. L. Bullock, 'Goodbye old Year', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1942), p. 410; Also see: J. Shand, 'Roosevelt', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1941), pp. 118-119, & 142; R.B. Suthers, 'Are Reprisals a Question of Ethics?' *AEU Journal*, (October, 1940), p. 308.

¹²² Anon., 'The Money we Earn for Others', *NP*, (July, 1940), p. 2.

¹²³ R. B. Suthers, 'Mr Churchill Must Brace Himself too', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1940), p. 22.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ See for instance: C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), pp. 480-484; A. J. Parks, 'The Home Guard and the Trade Unionist', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1940), p. 565.

¹²⁷ H. L. Bullock, 'On with the War', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1940), p. 487.

those 'who had encouraged Hitler to build his armaments to fight Bolshevism ... and to crush the social aspirations of the French workers and peasants'.¹²⁸

The *NP*'s coverage of the war was insubstantial, other than reminding readers of the pro-fascist attitudes of the inter-war Tory (and National) Governments and their incapability of making public policy choices that benefited those outside their own class, with disastrous consequences for ordinary British people and the world.¹²⁹ The *NP* unvaryingly propagated positive interpretations of Soviet policy. Articles detailed visits of union and other delegations to the USSR, describing the Soviet industrial set-up, trade unions, collective bargaining, and the Soviet worker's experiences.¹³⁰ They depicted Russia's industrial unions as the 'ideal form of organisation'¹³¹ and reported on Soviet Production Conferences,¹³² Soviet factory inspectors, efficiency and care for the welfare of workers,¹³³ and the care provided for Soviet Servicemen and their dependents.¹³⁴ Throughout such coverage they sought to ensure their typically socialist readers, were exposed to, and perceived issues through, a communist understanding.

Incidents in the course of the war that resonated with the contributors' socialist aspirations, were seized upon. The French resistance / insurgent movements, 'the Council of Resistance', and its non-cooperation with German policy, were praised.¹³⁵ The *AEU Journal* contributors celebrated with much rhetoric the ousting of the Yugoslav Government 'by the idealism of the common people ... They have told the Nazi Goliath that they prefer to die as free men than slaves'.¹³⁶ Reports of strikes by Italian workers at Germany's Siemens, and various Italian aircraft works, were publicised.¹³⁷ The need for workers solidarity to defend themselves against class enemies – the natural sympathisers of Hitler, was made clear. This was reinforced by the *AEU* and *NP* regarding the allies' relationship with Admiral Darlan,

¹²⁸ Anon., 'Nazi's were Invited into Paris', *NP*, (February 1943), p. 5.

¹²⁹ For instance: Anon., 'Lord 'Catchpenny' Simon', *NP*, (April, 1943), p. 5; Anon., 'Guardian of Privilege: Man of Munich No.2', *NP*, (October, 1942), p. 2; Anon., 'Lest we Forget', *NP*, (August, 1943), p. 5.

¹³⁰ Anon., 'Cameos of Soviet Life: to the Last Breath', *NP*, (October, 1942), p. 5.

¹³¹ Anon., 'Factory Committees in the Soviet Union', *NP*, (February, 1942), p. 5.

¹³² Anon., 'Soviet Production Conferences', *NP*, (April, 1945), pp. 4-5.

¹³³ Anon., 'Soviet Factory Inspectors', *NP*, (March, 1945), p. 5.

¹³⁴ Anon., 'Caring for Red Army', *NP*, (July, 1943), p. 4.

¹³⁵ Anon., 'Europe Strikes at the Nazis', *NP*, (June, 1943), p. 5.

¹³⁶ R. B. Suthers, 'The Right Time for a General Election', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1941), p. 94.

¹³⁷ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1943), pp. 202-3.

(under whom Dakar had allied itself with Hitler).¹³⁸ The *NP* described this relationship as 'akin to Sir Oswald Mosley being made Prime Minister' concluding 'Anti- Fascist wars cannot be won with the help of Fascists'.¹³⁹

Attitudes to the Second Front

Russia's new status as an ally bolstered the positive attitudes most journal contributors afforded her (except when attempting to malign domestic communists). Soviet war-time successes were publicised, and were employed to illustrate the disingenuous nature of the pre-war capitalist press's reports denigrating Soviet engineering. To reinforce their point, they continued to report on Russia's transformation from a backwards agricultural state in Tsarist times,¹⁴⁰ and noted that these advances occurred despite world economic boycotts and continuous threats from capitalist states in both the east and west.¹⁴¹ Thus, journal contributors could point to a concrete example of socialism as a lived reality and also note its remarkable achievements, which illustrated the potentialities of a people, once the profit motive is removed and effective planning implemented. All such articles carried the implicit message that such potentialities were applicable to Britain if socialism was introduced.

Throughout the duration of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the majority of *AEU* contributors continued to be disinclined to believe that Russia betrayed its Socialist ideals to befriend Nazism,¹⁴² and until Operation Barbarossa, they reported the communists' belief that Russia would remain neutral in the 'imperialist war'. J. T. Murphy's *AEU* articles included the history of Soviet foreign policy, focusing on the post 1917 foreign intervention which provided the background for her subsequent policy choices. Russia's desire to normalise diplomatic and trade relations, her entry into the League of Nations, and her fear of a Nazis led capitalist attack, were deemed to have motivated her calls for a United Front against Nazi aggression. Murphy, like

¹³⁸ Anon., 'Darlan: The French Quisling', *NP*, (December, 1942) p. 5; R. B. Suthers, 'People who Fear the End of the War', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1942), p. 319.

¹³⁹ Anon., 'Collaboration with the Quisling Darlan', *NP*, (December, 1942), p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ For instance: J. Maginniss, 'A Glasgow Worker Looks at Soviet Russia', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1943), p. 310; 'Victlean', 'Why the Soviets Astonished the World -Pt.1', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1942), p. 14; 'Victlean', 'Why the Soviets Astonished the World-pt. II.', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1942), p. 68.

¹⁴¹ H. N. Harrison, 'Impressions on a Visit to Russia', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1942), pp. 2-4.

¹⁴² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1941), pp. 174-5.

most *AEU* contributors (and all *NP*), considered her Pact with Germany was an expedient pursued only after collective security through the League became unrealisable. Thus, Murphy asserted that Russia's principal peaceful aims remained constant.¹⁴³ Although writing from pro-Stalinist perspective, and thus striving to elicit positive perceptions and judgements of the USSR, Murphy's interpretations accorded with the majority *AEU Journals* voice at this time. The *NP*'s analyses corresponded with Murphy's; their recommended reading included *Soviet Peace Policy. Four speeches*, by V. Molotov.¹⁴⁴

The *AEU Journal* backed the Second Front. Jack Tanner stated that, 'No other issue has the same importance.'¹⁴⁵ He highlighted the Trafalgar Square rally which sixty thousand people gathered to support. This illustrated to readers the policy's widespread following (contrary to Bevin's advice, and the NUGMW's position).

The *NP* cited Churchill's 1942 declaration that 'the Russian danger is our danger' and bemoaned the unfulfilled promises to open a Second Front that year, which they blamed on the 'Munichite and Isolationist circles' who had supported Hitler, and followers of the 'Moore Brabazon line of the 'desirable' mutual exhaustion of the Soviet and Nazi Germany'.¹⁴⁶ The *NP* further warned readers to:

... guard against being misled ... by certain critics in Parliament, ... pro-Fascist elements, the Empire-first Johnnies, and demagogues who are attempting to use the serious [North African] situation as a cloak whereby they can weaken the new pact.¹⁴⁷

The *NP* asserted that the Second Front, in addition to striking Nazism, would impact the British 'Old Gangs' policies.¹⁴⁸ The *NP* profiled anti-Second Front protagonists, like Conservative MP Commander Robert Bower, a pre-war fascist sympathiser, leading figure in the 'Friends of National Spain' and the 'Anglo- German Fellowship'.¹⁴⁹ By linking anti-Second Front views with fascist sympathies (in other words, everything any 'right thinking' person would revile), the *NP* contributors

¹⁴³ J. T. Murphy, 'When Russia Will Come in,' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1940), p. 336.

¹⁴⁴ Anon., 'Books', *NP*, (May, 1941), p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'They'll be Taking the Mud out of Muddle', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1942), p. 208.

¹⁴⁶ Anon., 'Second Front Commentary', *NP*, (October, 1943), p. 5.

¹⁴⁷ Anon., 'Vital Issues', *NP*, (June, 1942), p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Anon., 'Battles to Come', *NP*, (February, 1944), p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Anon. 'Guardians of Privilege', *NP*, (October, 1942), p. 2; Also see, for instance: Anon., 'Lord "Catchpenny" Simon', *NP*, (April, 1943), p. 5.

sought to discredit the anti-Second Front message by discrediting the messenger through association.

However, it was not only Tories and industrialists who opposed the Second Front. *NUGMW* contributors never supported it, rather they defended its non-implementation on grounds of expedience, postulating that had forces been diverted from North Africa, the Nile would have been lost.¹⁵⁰ At the 1942 TUC, the platform also opposed the Second Front, backed by the TGWU and *NUGMW*. Conversely, the AEU, ETU, Mineworkers, and others, supported it (the AEU amendment succeeded).¹⁵¹ Such policy discrepancies highlighted the multi-stranded nature of trade unionism, socialism, and labourism, and the journals function in disseminating the different perspectives and efforts to elicit adherence to their distinct visions.

Based on his past record, the *AEU* concluded that Churchill's public proclamations, that he desired friendly relations with Russia, were disingenuous. His supporters' dissemination of anti-Soviet propaganda about a 'Bolshevisation of the Balkans', and his Foreign Minister's encouragement of anti-Soviet Polish reactionaries in London, was considered to amount to a 'frenzied Tory antipathy to any and every progressive regime anywhere.'¹⁵²

Internationalism

The journals revealed the deterioration of the already dire conditions experienced by many, especially Jews, socialists, communists, and trade unionists, under fascism. In 1942, the *NUGMW* described the deportation of Poles and Dutch workers for slave labour, the use of concentration camps,¹⁵³ and starvation as a punishment.¹⁵⁴

Although generally preoccupied with Europe, India remained a concern for journal contributors. The war's increasingly global nature and the British Commonwealth's shared sacrifices, were voiced.¹⁵⁵ The *AEU* and the *NP* journals drew attention to

¹⁵⁰ C. Dukes, 'Today and Tomorrow', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1943), pp. 176.

¹⁵¹ Anon., 'Common Sense', *NP*, (October, 1942), p. 4.

¹⁵² J. R. Scott, 'All Out to Defeat the Tory Menace', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 170.

¹⁵³ Anon., 'The Sad Plight of Poland, Speech by Jan Stanczy', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1942), p. 159.

¹⁵⁴ 'Labour Press Service', 'Failure of 'New Order' in Holland', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1942), p. 321.

¹⁵⁵ Anon., 'The War and Our Colonies', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1941), p. 107.

the devastating famine¹⁵⁶ (now known as the Bengal famine). They also continued to advocate Indian independence,¹⁵⁷ as both a moral imperative, and an expedience as independence would give her people 'something really worth fighting for against the Japanese'.¹⁵⁸

The King in his Christmas broadcast portrayed the Empire as 'one great family'; Suthers (AEU) cuttingly remarked 'We are all in the same boat, but first class and steerage are not merged.'¹⁵⁹ Thus, he highlighted the British Government's disregard of any real sense of equality, fraternity or human flourishing in relation to her colonial citizens, unlike the CP and much of the Labour Party. The *NP* recommended reading *Modern India*, by R. Palme Dutt,¹⁶⁰ and *British Soldier in India*, by Clive Branson.¹⁶¹

Conversely, some *NUGMW* contributors considered that the Indian Nationalist Movement created vulnerable points in Britain's defence: 'Deplorable as it may appear ..., Gandhi has had to be put away in a safe place, safe from his own dangerous pacifism, safe from his collaboration with Japan'.¹⁶² For such contributors, socialist core values were subordinated to British war-effectiveness, and *NUGMW* articles sought to persuade their readers of the expedience of such policies.

The End of the War in Sight

The dissolution of Allied Unity was noted from early 1943, along with discussions of how the Powers expected, or sought to be, positioned post-war. This, the journals juxtaposed with the ideals of the Atlantic Charter and the UN.¹⁶³

The Cairo Conference ordered Japan to return all territories obtained by aggression in the previous sixty years (including Korea). The *AEU Journal* noted that if similar

¹⁵⁶ T. Cain, 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 318; Anon., 'Dependents' Fund', *NP*, (July, 1943), p. 3; Anon., 'Indian Famine', *NP*, (November, 1943), p. 6; Anon., 'Million Dead', *NP*, (February, 1944) p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Anon., 'Coventry Steward Politics and the Trade Unions', *NP*, (December, 1944), p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ 'Shop Secretary', 'From our Postbag: India', *NP*, (May, 1942), p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ R. B. Suthers, 'Chickens still Coming Home to Roost', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1942), p. 10.

¹⁶⁰ Anon., 'Books', *NP*, (July, 1940), p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Anon., 'Book review', *NP*, (October, 1944), p. 8.

¹⁶² J. Taylor, 'Victory is in Sight', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1942), p. 355.

¹⁶³ R. B. Suthers, 'Lord Woolton brings us down to earth', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1944), p. 49.

conditions were applied to all nations, and backdated another generation, Britain would have had to relinquish Hong Kong to China, and many other Asian and African nations liberated.¹⁶⁴ The hypocrisy was made explicit.

The *AEU* contributors expressed concern about the Allies' apparent disregard of vanquished states right of self-determination. Mussolini fell, and Sicily was liberated. However, the Italian King and army head Badoglio, Fascist officials, police and administrators remained influential. The *AEU* attributed this to the Allies seeking to ensure a capitalist regime was maintained (this also applied to Darlan in North Africa).¹⁶⁵ The subsequent UN appointed administrators, proscribed Sicilian locals from engaging in political activities. The *AEU* postulated that 'The Italian people may desire freedom from the thralldom of Big Business and Landlordism as well as fascism'.¹⁶⁶ The Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories (AMGOT) had no trade union representation, but appointed as Chief of Civil Affairs, Lord Rennell (of Morgan Grenfell Bankers, formerly Bank of England Board, and Bank of International Settlements), despite the fact that 'No one can plead ignorance of the evil results of banking on unrepresentative forces in other liberated areas'.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the journals, especially the *AEU* and *NP*, implicitly and explicitly, disseminated the message that the 'old gang' of capitalists and the 'ruling classes', intended business as usual post-war.

The British (and American) policy ambitions to secure Royalist regimes with reactionary governments across Europe, to safeguard the forces of capitalism and suppress the people by effectively containing contrary ideas emerging from below, was considered by the journal contributors to be antithetical not only to socialist principles, but also everything the war was premised on, and the Allies position as liberators. The message was again reinforced that the capitalist class was untrustworthy abroad as well as in Britain, and had deep undemocratic tendencies unless they could ensure such democracy did not challenge their interests.

The Greek situation also caused the journal contributors concern. In December 1944 an army of 35,000 under General Scobie invaded Greece to prevent Ethnikos

¹⁶⁴ R.B. Suthers, 'They are Going to Restore Stolen Property', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1944), p. 13.

¹⁶⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'The Tables have been Turned', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1943), p. 235.

¹⁶⁶ R.B. Suthers, 'The Last of Sawdust Caesar', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1943), p. 207.

¹⁶⁷ 'Editors notes: The situation in Italy', *AEU Journal*, (August 1943), pp.202-3.

Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (ELAS) (which had driven out the Germans) from coming to power, as ELAS contained Communists.¹⁶⁸ There were multiple calls in the *NP* for the British Government to support ELAS / Ethnikon Apeleutherotikon Metopon (EAM), rather than championing the Greek Royalists and anti-democratic forces.¹⁶⁹ The *NP* condemned the Political Warfare Executive for instructing BBC services (1st August 1944), that 'the PM has ruled that in principle no credit of any kind is to be given to ELAS or EAM'.¹⁷⁰ This fact also served to reinforce the *NP*'s claim (shared by the labour movement generally), that the capitalist and establishment press, including the BBC, were untrustworthy promoters of the capitalist cause. The *NUGMW* contributors noted that 'Democracy must be vindicated, otherwise the last 5yrs struggle, will be lost';¹⁷¹ a sentiment generalised throughout the journals. However, the *NUGMW* warned of potential political instabilities within ruined countries with collapsed economies, which would render the population vulnerable to propaganda (for the *NUGMW*, this meant communism).

International Organisations- Bretton Woods/ Atlantic Charter / United Nations.

The unions continued their support of the League of Nations and condemned the inter-war Governments for marginalising the League.¹⁷² Despite the League's failure to maintain peace, the *NUGMW Journal* (1941) asserted:

We cannot blame the machinery of the League for not averting war. Governments of the Great Powers refused to make proper use of it. ...the League is the proper body, or something like it, which will be greatly needed after the War, and that experience must not be wasted.¹⁷³

The inception of the League's successor international organisations was, according to the journals, attributable in part to socialism in Russia offering an ideological

¹⁶⁸ J. Callaghan, *Great Power Complex. British Imperialism, International Crises and National Decline*, 1914 - 51 (London, 1997).

¹⁶⁹ Anon., 'Greece, Protests Bring Action', *NP*, (January, 1945), p. 1; Anon., 'Engineers' Pledge', *NP*, (February, 1945), p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ 'Stewardess', 'Women at War: New Wages Council Bill Marks Advance', *NP*, (February, 1945), p. 6.

¹⁷¹ C. Dukes, 'War Breeds Revolutions', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1945), pp. 80-81.

¹⁷² For instance: H. L. Bullock, 'League of Nations Union', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1945), pp. 2-3.

¹⁷³ C. Dukes, 'General Secretary's Notes: The League of Nations in War Time,' *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1941), pp. 24-26.

alternative to capitalism. The democratic states sought in these new institutions to demonstrate that security and full employment was achievable without the loss of personal liberty experienced by Russian citizens. International planning and co-operation were considered essential to prevent future wars; this generalised sentiment fed into the establishment in the Moscow Four-Power Declaration, the Atlantic Charter, and the UN.

Some British capitalists, like Sir Patrick Hannon, professed unease over the Atlantic Charter.¹⁷⁴ The *AEU Journal* interpreted such sentiments to be indicative of a planned return to international competition for markets and resources, which would inevitably result in more wars. By mid-1945, the *AEU* reported that nations, including the Great Powers were, 'indulging in a game of imperialistic grab',¹⁷⁵ and warned that some in the US were campaigning to deploy the atomic bomb against Russia. Given the Western Powers attempts to destroy her post-WWI (a history in which the contributors were steeped), it was considered inevitable that Russia's old mistrust of the West was resurrected, and somewhat disturbing that Stalin had become concerned with 'pacts and spheres of influence of the kind that have landed us in two world wars'.¹⁷⁶

The UN was ostensibly based on 'the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States and open to membership of all such States ... for the maintenance of international peace and security',¹⁷⁷ and thus appealed to socialist ideals. Its formation was universally welcomed, but with reservations. For instance, Suthers (AEU) commented that:

... if the UN were one-tenth as well prepared to wage peace as ... to wage war, one might well rejoice¹⁷⁸ and that 'If it succeeds international trade will be robbed of its terrors, and financial gangsters will be out of business.'¹⁷⁹

However, these were presented as big 'ifs'.

¹⁷⁴ R. B. Suthers, 'People who Fear the End of the War', p. 319.

¹⁷⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'A Vote for Labour: is a Vote for a Fine Future', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 172.

¹⁷⁶ R. B., Suthers, 'The War to go on Indefinitely?' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1945), p. 12.

¹⁷⁷ Anon., 'Beneath Big Ben: National and international Affairs', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1945), p. 138.

¹⁷⁸ R. B. Suthers, 'Socialism is the Only Remedy', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1943), p. 151.

¹⁷⁹ R. B. Suthers, 'The Medicine has a Bitter Flavour', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 139.

The journals were full of rhetoric about establishing a socialist inspired international system, but gave few specifics beyond international labour co-operation through the International Labour Organisation (ILO), national and international trade union organisation, international minimum labour conditions, and international solidarity, with the British Labour Movement as principal mover. A minority voice expressed concern about 'native labour' and labour in 'backward countries' undermining Western workers' wages and conditions unless minimum labour conditions legislation was in place.¹⁸⁰ The TUC called a World trade union Conference in 1945. Representatives from forty-two countries attended, but the AFL refused due to Russian involvement. The *AEU Journal* countered by stressing the need for uniting all trade union bodies 'irrespective of race or creed, or of political, religious or of philosophical distinction';¹⁸¹ 'strength through unity'.

Attitudes to Germany

The *NUGMW Journal*, evidenced profound changes in attitudes towards Germans. Before the war, Chas Dukes's blamed the Nazis for German attitudes and aggression, and blamed Versailles and its aftermath for creating the conditions that facilitated Hitler's rise. By 1943 Dukes was condemning not merely Germany's leaders, but also the German Labour and Socialist Movement leaders and people, whilst only reluctantly conceding that some minorities opposed Nazism. He further posited that 'a few evil-minded men' could not seize power against the German people's will, alleging that 'Nations must at least be pre-disposed to a certain line of thought before the cleverest propagandist can hope to succeed in moulding the will of the people'.¹⁸² Moreover, he suggested, had such conditions occurred in Britain, British labour leaders (like him) would have organised effective opposition including general strikes.¹⁸³ (Although doubtless the readership were cognisant of Dukes, the *NUGMW*'s, and the LP's pre-war vehement opposition to a United Front against fascism, akin to the German Social Democrats and communists mutual antagonism).

¹⁸⁰ C. Dukes, 'The Unions and the International Labour Office', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1942), p. 328.

¹⁸¹ 'Editor's Notes: World Trades Union Conference', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1945), pp. 65-6.

¹⁸² C. Dukes, 'May Day 1943', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1943), pp. 144-5.

¹⁸³ C. Dukes, 'German Guilt', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1943), pp. 240-1.

The war-time vehement anti-German sentiment of the *NUGMW Journal* included all aspects of international trade unionism: 'It is not that the ideal is wrong, but ... it ignored the influences of race, which are deeper than association between peoples of different nationalities.'¹⁸⁴ The *NUGMW Journal* supported the 'Fight for Freedom Group',¹⁸⁵ warning that the alternative was a rearmed Germany. Dukes, expressing the NUGMW official line, moved a resolution at the 1943 TUC to this effect,¹⁸⁶ and at the Labour Party Conference, he accused those with contrary views, of being 'ultra-pacifists', who 'have become so infected with the germ of 'anti-Vansittartism' as to blind themselves to the realities of the present situation.'¹⁸⁷ He also claimed they were the same people who opposed sanctions against German and Italian aggression before the war.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, the *NUGMW Journal* posited that:

We must re-educate the Blonde Beast, the arrogant Nazi; ... The middle-aged German may be ready to accept the teaching willingly; they, at least for a short time knew the beauty of democracy, but the youth of Germany know nothing of the finer concepts of life, they may be completely unteachable.¹⁸⁹

The *NUGMW Journal* published no anti-Vansittartian articles. Their position was logically inconsistent with their utter condemnation of the imposition of a victors' peace at Versailles which, whilst embodying reparations, was in many respects, less draconian than the Vansittartian vision now proposed. Nonetheless, it was in keeping with the NUGMW's hierarchy's top down, somewhat paternalistic approach to their membership (in practice if not in theory). The abnormal context of two world wars, both attributed to the same nation within the authors' lifetime, and a genuine fear of its repetition, precipitated the subordination of the core values of socialism, trade unionism, and international fraternity, to nationalist concerns that were expressed through the perimeter concepts of Vansittartian inspired foreign policy. Such recommendations were then disseminated, illustrating the malleability of political cultures and ideology generally, and the common-sense understandings they embodied.

¹⁸⁴ C. Dukes, 'The Dream of the Last Century – What of the Future?' *NUGMW Journal*, (May 1944), pp.144-5

¹⁸⁵ The 'Fight for Freedom' Group, promoted Allied oversight of post-war Germany, judging the German people incapable of creating a peaceable democratic regime.

¹⁸⁶ C. Dukes, 'Treatment of Post-War Germany', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1943), pp. 326-7.

¹⁸⁷ C. Dukes, 'Germany on the Morrow of Defeat', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1943), p. 208.

¹⁸⁸ Anon., 'Post-war Treatment of Enemy People', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1943), p. 273.

¹⁸⁹ J. Taylor, 'Retribution', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1944), p. 203.

The *AEU* took a contrary stance, desiring 'a peace void of the seeds of future wars',¹⁹⁰ and consistently regarded Versailles itself as a gift to German reactionaries, 'the work of generals and diplomats hostile to workers control.'¹⁹¹ The ideological differences between the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* were underlined by the *AEU*'s condemnation of the 'Fight for Freedom' group. They branded Lord Vansittart and his followers 'ruling-class imperialists'¹⁹² who favoured Versailles type policies, which privileged generals over workers.¹⁹³ They suggested that British socialists should expose and censure 'the Vansittartite character and associations of some of its own prominent executive members' (like the *NUGMW*'s Chas Dukes), rather than obsessing about the CP¹⁹⁴ (thus associating Vansittartism with anti-CP fanatics). The *AEU* contributors underlined the common-sense nature of their argument, reminding readers that the 1943 Trades Union Congress attributed war blame to the Nazi Party, not the German people. Tanner asked, how then can the 1944 Congress condemn them,¹⁹⁵ and whether they intended to 'include those being freed from concentration camps or those who fought fascism' amongst those that must pay. Furthermore, the *AEU Journal* asserted, 'punishing German people just because they are German ... is as undemocratic and unreasonable as Nazism',¹⁹⁶ which they reinforced by citing Edmund Burke's comment on the American fight for independence: 'one could not indict a nation'.¹⁹⁷

R. M. Fox (*AEU*) stressed universal brotherhood and shared humanity amongst ordinary people, citing the example of the popularity of the sentimental song 'Lilli Marlene' amongst both Allied and Axis armies.¹⁹⁸ The *AEU* contributors declared that Nazi atrocities exposed in Belsen and Buchenwald's liberation did not shock them, as the Nazis 'perpetrated the same long before the war against Trade Unionists, Socialists and Communists, and our admirers of Hitler secretly approved.'¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless, they deemed General Eisenhower's decision to invite

¹⁹⁰ B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1945), pp. 33-34.

¹⁹¹ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows from Versailles to Vansittart', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1942), p. 186.

¹⁹² J. Tanner, 'Editor's Notes' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1943), pp. 92-3; also see 'The Delegation', 'What Happened at the Trades Union Congress', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1943), p. 264.

¹⁹³ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows from Versailles to Vansittart', p. 186.

¹⁹⁴ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1943), pp. 92-3.

¹⁹⁵ L. T. Ambrose et al., 'Planning for you at the TUC', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1944), p. 338

¹⁹⁶ J. W. Smith, 'Do we Believe in a Soft or a Hard Peace for the Germans?' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 180.

¹⁹⁷ R. M. Fox. 'The World's Windows: A Christmas Chord', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 320.

¹⁹⁸ A song about a German soldier's meeting with his girlfriend before receiving orders to fight; R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows, the Sign of a Song', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1944), p. 367.

¹⁹⁹ R. B. Suthers, 'The World is Watching San Francisco', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1945), p. 144.

ten British MPs to bear witness 'a master stroke', rendering the atrocities undeniable, thereby helping to insure against its repetition.²⁰⁰

The *NP* took a similar stance to the *AEU*, and lamented that some, like Herbert Morrison, identified the whole German people with Hitler, and contrasted this with Stalin, who considered the German people allies.²⁰¹ Thus they propagated the idea that international fraternity was a core value for Stalin, and that he empathised with the ordinary worker's plight, unlike many Western politicians, and even some in the Labour Party and the TU movement.

Hopes for the Post-War World

From 1940 onwards the *AEU Journal* had called on the Government to publish its 'war aims', and presented post-war planning as a priority to avert powerful influences 'who refuse to see that the genesis of Nazidom and the prevailing world conflict emanated from the basic economic conditions which they are endeavouring to re-establish post-war'.²⁰² When Randolph Churchill posited that it was sufficient at present to 'fight for victory and the preservation of what is good in the present system', Suthers retorted: 'Unfortunately, what is good in the present system failed to prevent this war and could not prevent another'.²⁰³

The journals portrayed a broadly shared vision of the hoped for post-war new order, with public ownership and policies premised on workers and society being the beneficiaries of labour, not just the capitalist classes. Such policies were seen as legitimate and morally desirable, the practical answers to the inefficiencies, inequalities, and conflicts of the pre-war capitalist system that led to depressions, hardships and wars. The wartime experience of planning, full employment, and co-operation in a common cause, enabled journal contributors to offer tangible lived examples of how the pre-war system could be bettered. Thus, contributors challenged received understandings regarding traditional social, political, and

²⁰⁰ B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1945), pp. 129-30.

²⁰¹ W. Bryn Thomas, 'Air Mail', *NP*, (September, 1941) p. 4.

²⁰² C. Dukes, 'Design for Living', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1942), p. 424. Also see: W. H. Woodman, 'Forward', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1941), p. 280.

²⁰³ R. B. Suthers, 'Can England Feed Herself?' *AEU Journal*, (December, 1940), p. 365.

economic arrangements; this now had far greater resonance than it would have done pre-war, and provided an opportunity to raise readers' political and class consciousness, persuading them to become part of the social transformation (in line with the unions' ideological agenda), rather than merely reflecting upon issues and events.

The Beveridge Report (1942) fed into this discourse. It was generally welcomed in the union journals, despite its goal of ameliorating need, not establishing a new socialist order. The 'freedom from want' it embodied, was universally supported, although it was not considered an end in itself; it was not socialism.²⁰⁴ The retention of voluntary hospitals and doctors' freedom to attend private patients would, it was predicted, preserve the old class distinctions.²⁰⁵ An equal right to life and health, unavailable under prevailing health care arrangements, was considered fundamental, a necessary component of the post-war 'new world'; the only fair system, it was asserted, was a unified system.²⁰⁶

Moreover, the *AEU* stressed Beveridge's underlying establishment attitude that: 'It is dangerous to allow benefits during unemployment to equal or exceed earnings during work',²⁰⁷ and the *NUGMW* highlighted the employers' organisations' attitude that:

It is imperative that the expenditure on social services must be directly related to the industrial performance of the country And that benefits they provide ... should not be such as to weaken the incentive of the population.²⁰⁸

Publishing such statements served to reinforce the perceived 'blame the victims' attitudes of the capitalist class, and thus prick readers' class consciousness; the journal contributors considered that the politico-economic systems, not individuals, were responsible for unemployment. Besides which, the journals all considered a Government dominated by 'reactionary Tories' was unlikely to implement Beveridge, as their position depended on 'class privilege' being maintained

²⁰⁴ F. Hughes, 'The Benefits of the Beveridge Plan: A Rejoinder to Critics', *The Clerk*, (May-June, 1943,) pp. 35-36.

²⁰⁵ R. B. Suthers, 'Democracy Means Representation', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1944), p. 78.

²⁰⁶ 'General Office Report. Union Resolution on Voluntary Hospitals', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1944), pp. 163-5.

²⁰⁷ R.B. Suthers, 'The Beveridge is Not a Revolution', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1943), p. 9.

²⁰⁸ J. R. Clynes, 'Changes to Follow the Charter', *N.U.G.M.W Journal*, (January, 1943), p. 3.

(although paradoxically their electoral success depended on the working class vote).

Regardless of the safety net that Beveridge promised, the journals deemed it intolerable that full-employment was normal in wartime when directed at destruction, but not in peacetime, when production was directed to satisfy the population's needs. The generalised journal conclusion was that unemployment could not be obviated by tinkering with capitalism, but required socialist policies,²⁰⁹ including a minimum living wage as: 'Freedom below the minimum requirements of life is a fallacy'.²¹⁰ The *AEU* and *NUGMW Journal* contributors promoted their conception of a 'better world', through rhetoric, ideological, and ethical arguments reinforced by authoritative sources, like Archbishop Dr Temple's plea for a fairer society,²¹¹ or the five Churches of Britain and the Pope, who posited that earth's resources belonged to all equally as a 'gift from god' (interpreted by the *AEU* as effectively a call for world Socialism).²¹² They also published articles on specific policy objectives, and on socialism, framed to appeal to a wide audience.²¹³ Evolutionary not revolutionary changes were advocated, with a planned political and economic order to ensure full employment, not the unrestricted privatisation of profits, whilst the state assumed their business's social liability. 'If ... the State is to accept the responsibility, it must also claim the right of determining the limits within which industry shall function'.²¹⁴ Such changes were necessary, *NUGMW* postulated, to obviate the previously commonplace hunger and malnutrition,²¹⁵ and a society structured so 7% of Britain's population owned 80% of the wealth: effectively 'stolen property' (echoed in the other journals).²¹⁶

Quotations from fiction and film were included to give a greater tonal depth to their rhetoric, for instance, Charlie Chaplin ('*The Great Dictator*):

²⁰⁹ R. B. Suthers, 'The Government to Find Jobs for All', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1944), p. 205.

²¹⁰ C. Dukes, 'The Price of Liberty', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1942), p. 296.

²¹¹ J. R. Clynes, 'What is the Fight for?' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1942), p. 181.

²¹² R.B. Suthers, 'Will, 1941 be a Happy Year?' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1941), pp. 8-9.

²¹³ C. Dukes, 'May Day, 1943', pp. 144-5; P. Cassidy, 'A Conservative Asks', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1944), p. 202.

²¹⁴ C. Dukes, 'Can Trade Board Machinery Be Adapted to Post-War Needs?' *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1944), pp. 112-13.

²¹⁵ A. Stephenson, 'Man and His Needs (1) Food', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1944), p. 328.

²¹⁶ R. B. Suthers, 'They are Going to Restore Stolen Property', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1944), p. 13.

The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way. Greed has poisoned men's souls; has barricaded the world with hate; has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed . . . Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical; our cleverness hard and unkind. The hate of men will pass and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people; and so long as men die liberty will never perish.²¹⁷

The message was clear; the very structure of society must change. Social planning and community welfare were considered the remit of the political side of the Labour Movement, which was continuously, implicitly and explicitly, promoted.

Amid the majority narrative of making socialism a lived reality, a minority advocated a cautious trade union based approach:

[T]o avoid losing the peace we must become a united whole. There is no time to experiment or to create new machinery. . . . The most suitable from every angle is the industrial movement. . . . The acid test for any idea, any projected policy must be . . . , will it in any way injure our unity? If there is any danger, any doubt, the idea, however attractive or promising, must be rejected²¹⁸

The journals dominant mantra had been 'No going back' since 1941, and as the war progressed they increasingly stressed that the essential role they and their members played in winning the war entitled them to be involved in planning the peace.²¹⁹ However, the *AEU Journal* informed its readers that the capitalists and the Tories disparagingly disagreed: The *Daily Telegraph* (21st March 1945) was cited: 'Trade unionists have done no more than fight for their own skins in this war, and deserve no special recognition or testimonial for good behaviour'.²²⁰ Citing such comments would have enabled journal contributors to raise and reinforce class consciousness, and ideas and resentments about 'them' as opposed to 'us'.

²¹⁷ Charlie Chaplin cited in R.M. Fox, 'The World's Windows, Wizard of Laughter', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1941), p. 66.

²¹⁸ A. H. Bone, 'Creeping Paralysis', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1942), p. 328.

²¹⁹ J. T. Early, 'Future tasks', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1944), p. 70; 'C.M.S.', 'Ourselves at the TUC', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1942), pp. 352-355.

²²⁰ 'Editor's Notes: Political class war', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1945), pp. 97-98.

The Clerk journal challenged the idea that workers had merely 'earned the right' to be involved in peacetime planning through their involvement in the war, instead positing that:

... the title of the workers to social and political justice rests now, as it always has rested, on the simple fact that it is they who create the wealth by which the community lives. This should be the foundation for Reconstruction from the Trade Union point of view.²²¹

Thus, the author sought to rally readers to demand what should be theirs by right, not ask to be rewarded for being good citizens.

The journals published critiques of *National Policy for Industry* (1942), published on behalf of 120 industrialists (with over 600 directorships) which advocated a profit motivated corporatist approach to industry with state capitalist tendencies, which excluded any worker's voice in the control of industry. The *AEU* expressed concern over its motivation, its anti-nationalisation, and pro-private enterprise stance, although they appreciated their acknowledgment of the social obligations of industry.²²² The *NP* interpreted *A National Policy for Industry* as a manifesto to ensure to 'a tiny minority ... the right to exploit the great majority'. Britain's main monopolies were to be the beneficiaries: steel, alloys, chemicals, electrical engineering, sewing, cotton, flour, and patent medicines. Their report conceded that unemployment was inevitable under capitalism, but sought to maintain and promote the system. Thus, the *NP* contributors condemned it, highlighting to their readers the incompatibility between unemployment and the social necessity of decent living standards.²²³ They sought to show the widespread public support for a socialist inspired economic future, citing a 1944 Gallup Poll which found 68% of people wanted post-war State control of industry, with only 14 % favouring control by private business.²²⁴ The *NP* asserted that if key industries and services were publicly owned in the interests of the people, then full employment, a guaranteed 40-hours week, and decent homes for fair rents, was achievable.²²⁵ In this respect, there was much commonality between the *NP* and the other journals regarding their

²²¹ J. Henry Lloyd. 'Reconstruction for What?' *The Clerk*, (November - December, 1943), pp. 83,91.

²²² F. A. Smith, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1942), p. 314.

²²³ Anon., 'Guardians of Privilege: 120 of Them', *NP*, (December, 1942), p. 2.

²²⁴ Anon., 'Control of Industry', *N.P.*, (September, 1944), p. 5.

²²⁵ Anon., 'Battles to Come', *NP*, (February, 1944), p. 4.

declared hopes for post-war economic structures; their underlying aspiration for a communist Britain was implicit within the policies for industry free from capitalism and the pursuit of the general good, rather than being overtly articulated.

Nationalisation / socialisation of all key industries and the Bank of England was central to unions' post-war aspirations and unanimously advocated across the journals, only the range and form differed. The *Electrical Trades Journal* declared that the electricity industry illustrated the benefits of public ownership, as the two-thirds of all electricity undertakings which were under local government control, consistently provided electricity cheaper than those under private ownership.²²⁶ The *AEU* supported Professor Hogben's recommendation for the inclusion of science, with scientists employed by Government to benefit the whole community, not private enterprise where innovation is employed competitively for profit maximisation.²²⁷ For the vast majority of contributors, nationalisation / socialisation was an ideological goal bound up with their core values, although for a small minority it was merely the pragmatic means to optimise production in societal and the national interests. There was a general consensus that it would improve productivity, expedite effective planning, end unemployment and boom and bust, and facilitate equality and fairness in society.

The *AEU Journal* ran a series of articles by other unions that articulated their post-war objectives. Amongst the unions involved were: The National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives';²²⁸ The Electricity Supply Industry;²²⁹ The Furnishing Trades;²³⁰ Post Office Workers;²³¹ The Building Trades;²³² Printing and Kindred Trades'

²²⁶ E. W. Bussey, 'Editorial Notes', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (July, 1945), p., 193.

²²⁷ R. Rallison, 'Problems of Reconstruction', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1941), p. 79.

²²⁸ The National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, 'Trade union planning for the Post-War future', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1943), p. 262.

²²⁹ The Electricity Supply Industry, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1943), p. 288.

²³⁰ The Furnishing Trades, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 326.

²³¹ Post Office Workers, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1944), p. 14.

²³² The Building Trades, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future,' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1944), p. 111.

Federation;²³³ The Footplate Men;²³⁴ and Iron and Steel.²³⁵ Their visions although different, had much commonality: full employment; industrial security with decent regular wages and conditions; worker participation in management; profits allocation /restriction; extended JPCs; waste reduction; and decent pensions and social security. Co-operation between the unions, Government, and employers, along with the importance of planning (including National Industrial Planning Boards), and education and training (including training for management) were covered. However, there were different visions, emphases, and levels of detail. For instance, the Iron and Steel Workers prioritised nationalisation/ socialisation in the shape of a public corporation run for the state's benefit (details to be worked out in the transition period).²³⁶ The Union of Post Office Workers' plans were heavily influenced by Guild Socialism, and involved the transformation of the Post Office's bureaucratically administered State monopoly under Ministerial control, into a public corporation with workers' control. Moreover, speaking from experience, they cautioned other unions that nationalisation was insufficient, as it did not necessarily incorporate workers' control.²³⁷ Such articles, whether heavy on rhetoric and light on details, or the converse, reinforced the message of socialist restructuring to a readership accustomed to Government direction of production, and JPCs being employed to increase output. The various plans presented positive visions of how the world could be constructed differently, with an implicit appeal that readers lend support to their unions (and the LP's) plans for a better world.

For the *NP*, nationalisation was a long-term goal which they had continually advocated. They recommended reading *Labours case for public ownership and control*, by Alex Massey.²³⁸ The *NUGMW* did not cover such issues at this time. *The Clerk* advocated worker control, but only engaged with the topic

²³³ Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-war Future', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 10.

²³⁴ The Footplate Men, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1944), p. 178.

²³⁵ Socialisation of Iron and Steel, 'Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1944), p. 206.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.206

²³⁷ Post Office Workers, "Trade Union Planning for the Post-War Future', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1944), p. 14.

²³⁸ Anon., 'Book review', *N.P.*, (March, 1945), p. 8.

occasionally.²³⁹ (Nationalisation, versus socialisation, versus workers control, was fully debated post-war, Chapter 4).

It was envisaged that the transition from war to peace would be problematic, with demobilised forces predicted to create labour market influxes, and commodity market uncertainties.²⁴⁰ The capitalist class reportedly believed the war was effectively won by early 1943, and both the *AEU* and *NP* contributors stated that industry, particularly the aircraft industry, had become primarily concerned with positioning itself for post-war trading, rather than war production and victory.²⁴¹ Although it was unknown to the contributors, the December 1942 formation of the Brabazon Committee,²⁴² at least partially substantiated their allegations.

In this context, readers were reminded that WWI saw increased trade union membership, successful wage claims, and trade union and Labour Party protagonists being invited into the Councils of Government. However, peace and subsequent depressions led to unemployment and poverty. Consequently, the retention of some war time controls was considered a necessary expedient.²⁴³ The *NUGMW* condemned as irresponsible anyone disregarding trade union officials' policy against stoppages, typically denouncing them as politically motivated. Moreover, they warned that although they suffered less unofficial actions than other unions, they were still liable to be 'tarred with the same brush'. Thus, in-line with their incorporative, Mondist understandings, they utilised their journal to attempt to persuade members not to take action that might alienate public opinion,²⁴⁴ or undermine the responsibility, prestige, and position with Government, garnered in the war.²⁴⁵

Late 1944 saw multiple lay-offs, redundancies, pleas to keep plants open, and calls for a planned transition from war to peace-time production. The *AEU Journal* maintained: 'Our value is proved, and we claim the right to work and to administer

²³⁹ See for instance: J. Henry Lloyd, 'Workers' Control in Post-War: Industry Bureaucracy, Red Tape, Efficiency, and all that: With Special Reference to Industry', *The Clerk*, (September-October, 1944), pp. 170-1, 174.

²⁴⁰ C. Dukes, 'Control or Chaos', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 376.

²⁴¹ 'Editor's Notes: JPCs', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1943), pp. 92-3.

²⁴² The Brabazon Committee was established in 1942 to investigate the opportunities and requirements for British and Empire's civilian aircraft post-war.

²⁴³ J. R. Clynes, 'What is the Fight for?' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1942), p. 181.

²⁴⁴ J. Yarwood, 'Northern Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1944), pp. 153-4.

²⁴⁵ C. Dukes, 'War and the Aftermath', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1944), p. 80.

upon equal terms with anyone',²⁴⁶ and drew an analogy between planning for society, and blueprints in engineering, to achieve a desired outcome.²⁴⁷ Questions were raised over the Shadow Factories no longer required for war work. The idea that private firms should be gifted State financed infrastructure (estimated at £675,000,000) caused resentments.²⁴⁸ Despite deputations to the Board of Trade reporting shortages of factory space, shadow factories were run down. *NP* contributors attributed this to capitalists pursuing policies to enable their cheap acquisition of the assets (at the taxpayers' expense).²⁴⁹

The optimisation of land use in the national interest was advocated, and the *NUGMW* supported the Uthwatt's Committee recommendations of State acquisition of Development rights outside built up areas, as a step towards the ideal of land nationalisation.²⁵⁰ The capitalist classes lobbied hard against it. The *AEU* lamented that:

... a couple of years ago even die-hard Tories were advocating far-reaching social and political changes. Unemployment and poverty, gross inequalities, ill-health, privilege, monopoly, profiteering, slums were all to go.²⁵¹

For instance, in 1940 the *AEU* cited *The Times* which was advocating a post-war co-operative society, where 'there is no room for mutual attempts at exploitation or for sharply differing levels of social and economic opportunity'.²⁵² Now peace was in sight, such ideas were rejected. The journal contributors took this as further evidence of the landed and capitalist classes' untrustworthiness, and their disregard for workers' efforts, sacrifices, and futures. Other contributors echoed the sentiment:

... it is only in the atmosphere of sacrifice and co-operation created by a war
... that social justice becomes a topic of burning interest; in times of peace

²⁴⁶ S. A. Inscoe, 'A New Earth', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1940), p. 341

²⁴⁷ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows: Behind the Post-War Plan', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1944) p. 235.

²⁴⁸ B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1944), pp. 1-2; Anon., 'Shadow Factories', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1944), pp. 326-328.

²⁴⁹ Anon., 'Coventry Steward Asks: Is there a Government Plan?' *NP*, (March, 1945), p. 6; Anon., 'Profit Sharks to Get State Factories', *NP*, (November, 1944), p. 7; Anon., 'Scots Conference Demands: use Government Plants', *NP*, (January, 1945), p. 3.

²⁵⁰ F. Marshall, 'National and Local Planning', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1943), p. 66-68.

²⁵¹ R. B. Suthers, 'No Far-Reaching Social and Political Changes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1943), p. 292.

²⁵² R. B. Suthers. 'Will the Bomb make us more Brotherly?' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1940), p. 280.

the wells of good nature in industrial and commercial leaders seem to wilt and dry up.²⁵³

Thus, the need for action, not wishful thinking, was repeatedly stressed:

The trade union movement is our strongest lever inside the industrial fabric, as the ballot box is our heaviest hammer outside. Let us make the fullest use of both and we shall not need to 'wish' ourselves better circumstances; we shall be able to insist upon them.²⁵⁴

The journal contributors collectively deemed it insufficient to seek public support for their ideas; people needed to be educated, and inspired to political action to ensure that their policy aspirations were enacted in the real world.

Education

The journal contributors' ideological position on education remained unchanged; that the ruling class, through the state education system, moulded peoples' frameworks of reference, common-sense understandings, perceptions, and paradigms, whilst obfuscating the realities of the social, political, and economic realms. Education and union organisation, they believed, offered the potential to break 'the unholy trinity of ignorance, indifference and traditional prejudice fostered and perpetuated by those in power',²⁵⁵ by enlightening them to the conditions of their own exploitation, and the underlying organisation of society that perpetuated the system where they worked and the capitalists profited.

Education in moral, social, political and economic spheres was also considered necessary to expose workers to the underlying causes of war and its purposes, including the concept of imperialism. 'Real' education, it was argued, promoted

²⁵³ 'Victlean', 'Xmas Thoughts in a World at War', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1940), p. 369.

²⁵⁴ A. Stephenson, 'Wishful Thinking', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1944), pp. 105-6.

²⁵⁵ F. Taylor, 'Can World's Workers Unite?' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1941), pp. 278-279.

human progress, countered nationalist ideas and racial prejudice, and fostered world unity.²⁵⁶

The war-time influx of new workers into industry created both a need and an opportunity for educating those without backgrounds in organised labour, to learn of the work and history of the trade union movement.²⁵⁷ The capitalist class understood the potential of education, and consequently opposed working class enlightenment, as informed workers would challenge the capitalist system. Instead, the journals posited, the ruling classes promoted commercialised entertainment to dull minds and engender apathy.²⁵⁸ The autodidactic tradition was promoted and encouraged, and recommended readings provided. People had the power to change things for the better through political engagement and the democratic process, if only they had knowledge and understanding.²⁵⁹ Moreover, it was proposed that:

... it is no longer necessary to challenge the validity of the old school tie philosophy; a year of war has revealed its emptiness. if this war should mean anything to the working class it should mean the death of a pernicious educational theory which claimed for the public schools the top rung on the ladder of social achievement.²⁶⁰

US Vice-President Wallace's ideas around the 'Century for the Common Man' which encompassed worldwide education, were employed by the *AEU*. However, they argued that this must include adults as well as children, as an understanding of the social, economic, industrial, and political spheres was necessary for one 'to exercise ... choice and veto, otherwise he is the slave to prejudice, blind unreason, persuasion and manipulation'.²⁶¹ Indeed, by 1944, with peace in sight, the need for education to inform societal change, was perceived as increasingly urgent, as peace would see Britain as a debtor, not a creditor nation, and thus less able to:

... carry, as in the past, a load of very expensive ornaments in our Society, i.e., an idle class at each end of the Social Scale. One lesson of the last

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ For example, 'Secretary's Notes', *NP*, (August, 1940), p.1.

²⁵⁸ H. Nicholls, 'Working Class Education', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 148.

²⁵⁹ H. Mather, 'Freedom and Democracy', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1942), pp. 79-81.

²⁶⁰ H. L. V. Morgan, 'The old, old School Tie, II', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1940), p. 377.

²⁶¹ R. Rallison, 'Towards the Century of the Common Man-III', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1943), p. 157.

five years must be learnt, the Nation that can create, equip and maintain itself in the face of a common danger in wartime can equally run its own business in peacetime.²⁶²

This involved an imperative to:

... rid the world of the evils that cling to the present economic system - monopolies, cartels and huge trusts which control supply and demand, to suit the whim and desire of a minority, and hold governments in bondage.²⁶³

Otherwise, it was asserted, whilst 'we may win the war, we shall lose the peace'. The *NUGMW* recommended reading *Education for a New Society* by Ernest Green (WEA General Secretary).²⁶⁴

Scholarships continued throughout the war, sponsored principally by the unions, with some from the TUC and other organisations. The unions continued their backing for the WEA and the NCLC, and free courses were available to members, although wartime considerations meant more was done through correspondence courses.²⁶⁵ There were specific courses for those wanting to work within the union, as well as for the membership generally. In addition to the established courses, new courses were developed with temporal relevance.²⁶⁶

The education of children and youths was also a live issue. This covered the range from academic to industrial and technical training. All contributors shared a vehement opposition to any class basis for education.²⁶⁷ Nonetheless, whilst the 1943 Education Bill's class based foundations was criticised for not tackling vested interests, nor providing a date for the school leaving age to be raised to sixteen

²⁶² H. L. Bullock, 'Educational Matters', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1944), p.270.

²⁶³ F. Pallister, 'Workers Education Association', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1944), p. 347.

²⁶⁴ H. Bullock, 'Education for a New Society', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1942), p. 151.

²⁶⁵ Anon, 'Our Union Educational Scheme', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1941), p. 572.

²⁶⁶ For instance, the N.C.L.C. Summer School-London 1940, covered: 'Co-operative Movement in War Time'; 'The Labour Movement Since the Last War'; 'Freedom and Democracy'; 'Socialism in War Time'; 'Labour Party in War Time'; 'Liberty in War Time'; 'the TUC in Wartime'. See A. Tweedale, 'N.C.L.C. Summer School-London 1940', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1940), pp. 600-601. Similarly, the TUC Summer School 1941, examined 'Wartime Changes in Social Insurance and Factory Legislation'; 'TUs in Wartime' by Sir Walter Citrine. See Anon., 'TUC Summer School 1941', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1941), p. 191. The W.E.A. also offered courses including: 'War and the Economic System'; 'USSR, Germany and Europe'; 'The Problem of Peace'; and 'Race, Nationalism and Politics'. See H. C. Shearman, 'War and the Economic System', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1941), p. 286. Then in 1943: 'Nationalism and Politics'; 'War and the Economic System'; 'Trade Unionism and the New Social Order'; 'The Colonial Empire and India'; 'The USA'. See H. L. Bullock, 'Our Educational Scheme', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1943), p.141.

²⁶⁷ Anon. 'Post-War Reconstruction', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1942), pp. 252-255.

years, its structural class biases were generally ignored, despite some protests.²⁶⁸ The majority voice in the journals accorded with H. L. Bullock, who, writing in the *NUGMW*, welcomed it as ambitious, promising and progressive, 'with the initial common school for all, and an equal opportunity for each child to develop all its latent faculties to the topmost capacity',²⁶⁹ despite it falling short of the objective of the Council for Educational Advance. Will Thorne employed an autobiographical account to highlight how the Act constituted, 'a degree of advancement, undreamt of in my youth. I never went to school and consequently never learned to read and write'.²⁷⁰

The expectation for the post-war age to be one where brains dominated brawn, resonated within the engineering industry. The Education Bill was welcome by the AEU, and was expected to promote scientific research. There was, however, some concern that it would lead to an oversupply of the technically trained who would look down on the engineering trades, although this could be overcome through co-operative and collaborative working.²⁷¹

1945 Election

The journals all stressed the importance of the political, as it affected all spheres of life. They disseminated the socialist message (of various strands) and sought to develop readers' political consciences' and working-class unity. The imperative to translate political thinking into action was promoted, and readers were encouraged to join their local Labour Party. Both the AEU and *NUGMW* sought to strengthen their relationships with their MPs, and their non-sponsored MP members,²⁷² and they carried journal articles written by them. All the journals stressed the preference for their MPs to have working-class and trade union roots, and thus experiences and understandings only indirectly available to those from other classes.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ H. L. Bullock, 'The New Education Bill--Now!' *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1943), p. 366.

²⁶⁹ H. L. Bullock, 'Let us Advance', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1943), pp. 6-7.

²⁷⁰ W. Thorne, 'Parliamentary Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1944), pp. 114-115.

²⁷¹ C. L. Blake, 'Science and the Engineer', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1944), p. 143.

²⁷² J. Tanner, 'Abstract Report of Council Proceedings. Meeting with the Union's MP s', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1943), p. 172.

²⁷³ John Barton, 'Trade Unions and Politics', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1945), p. 46; C. Dukes, 'Trade Unionists and Parliaments', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1942), p. 50.

The engineers lamented their limited Parliamentary voice (two MPs), whereas the miners had forty-two.²⁷⁴ AEU rules stipulated a ratio of 1: 15,000 sponsored candidates to members paying the Political Levy, and therefore periodically campaigned to increase the numbers paying (as did the other unions) to augment their potential voice in Parliament and on the various Government nominated boards. Additionally, increased funding would enhance the competitiveness of the Labour Party.²⁷⁵ In 1941 only 80,000 of AEU's 500,000 members were contributing.²⁷⁶ However, this increased throughout the war.²⁷⁷

The *NUGMW*, *AEU*, *NP*, and *Electrical Trades Journal*, all campaigned stridently for a 1945 Labour Party election victory (in contrast to their sparse coverage of previous General Elections). The *Electrical Trades Journal* stated that in order to ensure that the 'Old Gang' and their self-serving policies did not return, it was necessary to engage in an ideological war.²⁷⁸ Tory policy failures were highlighted, from the 'Geddes Axe', the Trades Disputes Act 1927, to the return to the Gold Standard, mass unemployment, the Means Test, and the depression. Tory empathy for fascists, and their inter-war foreign policy, their circumventing and disempowering the League of Nations and rejection of collective security, were all condemned.²⁷⁹ Thus, all that was wrong in the inter-war period and all that caused WWII was laid at the Tories door, with the explicit message that the election of another Tory Government would mean a repetition of the policies that had brought hardship and disaster.

A Labour Party electoral victory, on the other hand, was presented as ushering in a new post war world, where society was restructured to ensure workers, not merely capitalists, profited from their labour, and that the basic needs of the many were safeguarded. Thus, it was considered that if a Labour Government was elected, the socialist vision they had long hoped for would be brought into being. Nonetheless, the *NUGMW* and *AEU* journals were keen to point out that it was the 'right sort of

²⁷⁴ Anon., 'Tanner Demand Payment of Guaranteed Week', *NP*, (April, 1945), p. 2.

²⁷⁵ B. Fieldhouse, 'The Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1945), p. 54; J. Barton, 'Trade Unions and Politics', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1945), p. 46.

²⁷⁶ 'Report of the Labour Party Conference', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1941) p. 207.

²⁷⁷ B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes: Labour Party Conference', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1943) pp. 174-5; B. Gardner, 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1945), pp.1-2.

²⁷⁸ 'Labour Party Conference Delegates' Report', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (January, 1945), pp. 12-15.

²⁷⁹ See for instance: J. Tanner, 'Into Battle!' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 168; R. B. Suthers, 'A Vote for Labour is a Vote for a Fine Future', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 172.

socialism' that was expected. Suthers (AEU) made clear voting for the Labour Party would help disempower the CPGB whilst facilitating the establishment of a Labour Socialist Government. The prospect of socialist electoral victories in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, resulted in it being argued that, 'combined with a socialist British Empire, would give Stalin the shake-up of his life. If two of the Big Four had Socialist Governments ... the world would be saved',²⁸⁰ as socialism provided the means to achieve peace, and democratic socialism provided a real alternative to Bolshevism, as well as capitalism. Moreover, the journals (including the *NP*) predicted that a Labour Government would ensure British influence was employed to further a peace agenda.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ R. B., Suthers, 'The War to go on Indefinitely?' p. 12.

²⁸¹ R. B., Suthers, 'A Vote for Labour is a Vote for a Fine Future', p. 172.

Chapter 4. Optimism and Socialisms: Labour in Office 1945-1951

The 1945-51 period encompassed successive domestic and international crises, some of which also impacted the ideas environment. As ever, the domestic and international spheres intertwined, and the various themes within these spheres remained interpenetrative, as each informed the others. The economic legacy of the war would inevitably have caused Britain difficulties, but the decision of the US to end Lend-Lease three days after the defeat of Japan vastly exacerbated the problem. Much of the loan agreement negotiated by Keynes involved trying to make sterling convertibility work (enforced 1947). Shortages of labour, raw materials and food held back production and consumption. Circumstances dictated that exports were prioritised, and austerity ruled in Britain. In the international sphere, Soviet actions in Europe created tensions, and challenged the preconceptions of some; a situation subsequently exacerbated by events in Korea.

Nonetheless, the 1945 general election results were greeted with jubilation and marked a watershed in the evolution of the labour movement. The journal contributors considered that it represented the culmination of everything that had gone before in the political, economic, and industrial spheres, rather than merely a reaction to the war; the public had rejected capitalism, preferring 'communal services; coal and power, land, banks, transport, etc. ... run by the community for the people, and not for private profit'.¹ Optimism abounded, strengthened by a 'no going back' determination, no repeat of the post WWI betrayal. It was presented as a new beginning, a new order was to be constructed, a socialist state, with the unions as an estate of the realm and partners in government, forming part of a European move to the left. Idealism and optimism usurped reality. The *AEU* declared:

Everywhere the progressive forces are surging forward. The mighty Socialist State has emerged as a great world power commanding universal respect and admiration. Along with our other great allies, the USA and the USSR, Britain is pledged to co-operate in planning and building world prosperity.²

¹ H. L. Bullock, 'Six Years After', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1945), p. 298.

² 'District Circular: Labour Party Victory', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1945), pp. 228-9.

The unions considered that their continued progress would be inevitable. They had progressed from uniting workers to defend and promote their interests in a hostile environment, to their critical role in the war-effort and acceptance into the state at multiple levels. Now, with their political wing in Government (including 120 MPs with trade union backgrounds), it was presumed that their structural power and voice would be augmented through participation on boards, commissions, and through consultations. Moreover, it was thought that the relative proximity of the labour movement's protagonists to ordinary workers endowed them with an understanding of the workers' plight, and consequently an enhanced ability to formulate policies to satisfy their needs.

From the Government's inception, the unions utilised their deontic power to remind readers of their responsibility to ensure the administration's success. A new reciprocal relationship was deemed necessary,³ including a more positive and constructive approach to industry and changes to mind-sets within the unions. As the trade union movement coalesced with the Government as a 'loyal State partner' in the country's economic organisation, union leaders stressed the 'universal good', not just pursuit of the best pay deals for their members.⁴ Walter Citrine, George Isaacs, and Emanuel Shinwell, amongst others, promoted this message in the journals, warning that, 'Socialist principles are literally on trial'.⁵ Jack Tanner (AEU), posited that the new situation meant 'unions have got to cultivate organisers instead of orators, and encourage administrators rather than agitators'.⁶ The alternative, the journals repeatedly stressed, was a return to the inter-war situation.

Nonetheless, the economic conditions that the Labour Government inherited curtailed and pressurised policy choices and ambitions, bringing into tension the unions desire to support 'their' Labour Government, the unions' socialist ideals (especially the *AEU* and *NP*), and their primary function to further their members' interests. The differing political cultures within the unions steered their differing responses to this situation. Changes in the NUGMW hierarchy also affected the political culture the journal portrayed, as Tom Williamson's succession as General

³ C. F. Slade, 'Labour's Task', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1945), p. 374.

⁴ F. G. Moxley, 'Where do we Stand?' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1950), p. 42.

⁵ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1946), p. 321.

⁶ D. F. Bellairs, 'The New Unionism' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), p. 142.

Secretary (November 1946) precipitated a change in the journal's tone, from general support for the Government, to uncritical support, with all debate quashed.

Health and Social Policy

The establishment of the welfare state and NHS were iconic features of the 1945 Government. The provision of health, social, and welfare services in pursuit of the ideal of human flourishing were fundamental to socialism and the labour movement and was welcomed by the unions, albeit with caveats regarding the details. The Labour Party social security schemes including National Insurance, Family Allowances, National Health Service, National Assistance, and Industrial Injuries Acts, although directly relevant to union members and their families, were poorly covered by the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals*, especially compared to topics like the Anglo-America loan and the Marshall Plan. Similarly, the post-war housing crisis received little coverage.⁷ Notably, there was an absence of debate on the contributory nature of the social security schemes, which the *AEU* in particular, had challenged in the past.

However, the structure of the NHS and the influence of various vested interest groups were discussed. The replacement of 'the old vicious system' of charity funded local hospitals was welcomed.⁸ The *NUGMW Journal* considered that opposition to the establishment of the NHS was based on objections to 'the privileges so long in history cherished by the few' being shared by all.⁹ In contrast, the *AEU* contributors blamed such objections on doctors' interests clashing with the working classes' needs.¹⁰ They countered Tory accusations of mismanagement by the Labour Party Government, by highlighting the fact that Capitalist or voluntary hospitals administrative staff (who had opposed change) dominated the hospitals

⁷ Except for example: Anon., 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1945), p. 362; Anon., 'New Spirit on 100%', *MW*, (October, 1946), p. 4; Anon., 'Take Over Luxury Flats say Shop Stewards', *MW*, (October, 1946), p. 1.

⁸ W. Brotherton, 'Buy a Flag, Please!' *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1945), p. 235.

⁹ Reg G. Cook, 'Britain -The Welfare State', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1949), p.274.

¹⁰ A. W. Edney, 'Doctors or State Medical Officers', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 173.

executive councils.¹¹ Moreover, the Committees' dislocation from local government and democratic procedures was also considered problematic. The '*Metal Worker*' (*MW*, the rebranded *NP*) and *The Clerk* concurred, and, whilst welcoming the NHS, they criticised Nye Bevan for continuing to facilitate inequality by permitting specialists to keep private nursing homes. They instead recommended direct State employment of doctors. They (and occasionally the *AEU*) praised the local authority public health department organisation, and regularly advocated the health services' extension to include an Industrial Health Service (in-line with the Socialist Medical Association's recommendations).¹²

Women

As war-work unwound, a hardening of patriarchal norms was evidenced in the journals. Female job losses in industry and the Forces (July to December 1945), amounted to one million.¹³ Aggregate union membership fell, but the drop was highly gendered; by the end of 1945 male membership had fallen to some 7,803,000 (down 223,000 on 1944), whilst female membership fell to some 1,597,000 (down 214,000) in the same period.¹⁴

The previous sentiment (amongst both genders), that female labour was a temporary, reversible war-time expedient, was challenged by women who considered that their war work warranted their place in industry as equals. Incidents, such as the Metal Mechanics' Union's resolution (defeated) advocating married women's exclusion from their industry,¹⁵ were indicative of male fears and discontent. The *NUGMW* regular women's column continued, but gender antagonisms provoked Miss D.M. Elliot (*NUGMW*'s Chief Women's Officer) to appeal to trade unionists not to exacerbate the situation through 'fear or by prejudice' and reminded readers that some 6 million women were employed pre-

¹¹ J. McHale, 'Opponents in Your Health Service', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1949), p. 204; J. McHale, 'The Dead-Hand in Health Services', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1950), p. 143.

¹² For instance: Anon., 'Build Industrial Health Service on a Democratic Basis, says Industrial Doctor', *MW*, (December, 1947), p. 6; Anon., 'Industrial Medicine in the Future', *MW*, (July, 1947), p. 7; J. McHale, 'A National Health Service or Industry', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1951), p. 326.

¹³ Dorothy Coulthard, 'I Lose £4 a Week on Women's Rate', *NP*, (February, 1946), p. 6.

¹⁴ Anon., '7,803,000 in Unions', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1947), p. 176.

¹⁵ 'Women in Industry: D. M. Elliot's Address to Congress', *NUGMW Journal*, (June 1945), pp.206-208.

war, only rising to some 7.75 million at peak mobilisation.¹⁶ Nonetheless, some NUGMW male officials complained that the new light industries employed mainly women; they felt male employment was required, and cited a local radio journalist: 'There is no tradition here of women working while men are idle. It causes domestic unhappiness ... which must be taken into serious account by planners.'¹⁷ Such views reflected those common in wider society at the time. For instance, at the Labour Women's Annual Conference (1948), it was stressed that the Government believed mothers belonged at home when their children were young.¹⁸

The journals all presented gendered wage differentials as a problem for all, not just women. The unions, through the TUC, presented evidence to the Royal Commission on Equal Pay.¹⁹ A Majority Report (signed by 5 men and one woman) expressed major reservations, but conceded that equal-pay for equal work was feasible in the Civil Service, the Post Office, Teaching, and Local Government. The Minority Report (signed by 3 women) favoured equal-pay.²⁰ The *MW* considered the Majority Report's conclusions to be class based:

... reactionary and unscientific ... Whose ... concern is not to meddle with the employers' sacred rights to draw the greatest volume of profits from the exploitation of women as cheap labour.²¹

The fact that men had reoccupied women's wartime activities only reinforced the 'rate for the job' argument.²² The *MW* supported women in industrial disputes,²³ and recommended reader action to attain equal pay for equal work through lobbying MPs and submitting multiple resolutions. The *MW* reported that women on men's wage rates were being sacked, and then attempts were made to re-recruit them on the women's rate (58s/wk.).²⁴ The AEU National Committee (1945) adopted a

¹⁶ Anon., 'Women in Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1945), pp. 206-208.

¹⁷ J. Yarwood, 'Northern District Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1946), pp. 382-3; Also see: J. Yarwood, 'Northern Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1946), p. 351.

¹⁸ A. J. Caddick, 'Labour Women's Annual Conference', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1948), p. 328.

¹⁹ D. M. Elliot, 'Women's Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1945), pp. 284-5.

²⁰ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1946), pp. 353-4.

²¹ D. Coulthard, 'Equal pay – the Government Must Act', *MW*, (December, 1946), p. 6.

²² W. J. Smith, 'The Nemesis of Confusion', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1947), p. 208; A. J. Caddick, 'Conference of Unions Catering for Women Workers', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1946), p. 197; M. Macdonald et al, 'The [17th] Annual Conference of Representatives of Unions Catering for Women Workers', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1947), p. 233.

²³ For instance, The High Profile, 1946 Pay Dispute at Cossors. Anon., 'Cossors Put Women on the Front Page', *MW*, (April, 1946), p. 1.

²⁴ D. Coulthard, 'I Lose £4 a Week on Women's Rate', *MW*, (February 1946), p. 6. Also see Anon., 'If They Want us to Stay in Industry They Have to Pay us a Living Wage', *MW*, (May, 1946), p. 6.

resolution (40:11) that skilled trade-apprenticeships should be open to women.²⁵ Nonetheless, the tone of their journal content remained androcentric, despite superficial calls for equal pay on grounds of fairness.

Later, at the time of the Korean war rearmament drive, the *NUGMW* effectively acted as a Government agent in promoting female recruitment. They introduced additional articles written by and aimed at women; these varied from breaking monotony, to incentivising women, to utilising fiction to reassure women nervous of entering industry,²⁶ and even criticizing women for quitting their jobs ‘*on ... flimsiest provocations*’ in a time of national crisis.²⁷ Greater women’s involvement in the unions was the suggested solution.²⁸

The *NUGMW Journal* blamed unorganised women for poor female pay and conditions. Union attitudes to all non-unionists continued unchanged post-war, but considering that most workers were ‘nons’ (thereby reducing the unions’ potential effectiveness), sophisticated analysis of the problem was conspicuously absent. Only the *NUGMW* gave the issue a high profile (although the other journals raised the topic). The *NUGMW* principally tackled the issue through cartoons in the inter-war period, then *ad-hoc* articles including fiction, and from (January 1948 onwards), a new column, ‘A Question?’ by ‘A Candid Observer’,²⁹ was published, which consisted of opinion pieces about the ‘nons’ from multiple angles. However, the message was constant: ‘nons’ were morally or intellectually defective. Thus, the journal not only propagated the advantages of union membership, but attempted to employ workplace social pressures to shame ‘nons’ into joining.

Industrial Production and Planning

The transition from the war-time capitalist economy, to the (anticipated) socialist economy, was expected to take time. The journals sought to manage expectations with multiple calls not to expect too much too soon.³⁰ The *NUGMW Journal*

²⁵ Anon., ‘AEU Women Apprentices’, *NP*, (August, 1945), p. 4.

²⁶ Helen Sloane, ‘She Works in a Factory’, *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1950), pp. 138-40.

²⁷ H. Sloane, ‘She Wants a Change’, *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1950), p. 70.

²⁸ H. Sloane, ‘Women in Factories Dislike Monotony’, *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1950), p. 104; H. Sloane, ‘She Wants a Change’, p. 70.

²⁹ ‘A Candid Observer’, ‘A Question?’ *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1948), pp. 10-11.

³⁰ For instance: F. Pallister, ‘Loyalty is Required’, *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1945), p. 277.

continued their long-standing refrain against left-wingers, stressing that the labour movement had to prove that they were ‘realists as well as idealists’³¹ and co-operate with the Government to create the economic foundations for a better life. Pragmatism replaced wartime conjecture about a socialist post-war order and the euphoria of the General Election victory.

Economic security for all was considered foundational for the ‘new post-war order’. This necessitated full employment and increased production, which, the journals judged, necessitated planning. The essential industries could then be prioritised,³² rather than production decisions being left to the inefficiencies and caprice of orthodox economics and market solutions. Encouraged by the Labour Government’s pledge to support voluntarism and free collective bargaining, the unions advocated tripartite working³³ and promised to endeavour to increase production. Planning, the journals agreed, would increase efficiency, and provide a moral basis for the economy, replacing individualism with social solidarity and production for need, and thus was presented as the common-sense solution for peace-time. It would enable the expedient use of scarce resources, the identification of future training needs, and capital to be directed to socially useful outcomes, whilst ensuring income levels were both adequate and maintained; it was also a necessary condition for facilitating the financing of an expansion of social services.³⁴ Planning, it was asserted, would also facilitate the formulation of foreign trade agreements that would optimise the security of domestic industry. For some, especially within the AEU, planning was also requisite for industrial democracy and worker control, which itself remained a goal, and formed part of their understanding that democracy remained only partial if confined to the political sphere and denied in the sphere of work. Nonetheless, authors sought to draw a distinction between socialist and fascist planning by stressing that planning is only advantageous if its social purpose is beneficial, and its operation benign (and thus distinct from fascist dictatorial planning).

³¹ C. Dukes, ‘The Central Hall and What it Portends’, *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1946), pp. 120-121.

³² J. Yarwood, ‘Northern Note’s’, *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1946), pp. 27-28; H. N. Harrison and J. Matthews, ‘Engineering Industry’, *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1947), p. 144.

³³ E.g. Editor’s Notes ‘Facing Up to Industry’s Problems’, *AEU Journal*, (March, 1946), p. 65; ‘Editor’s Notes’, *AEU Journal*, (April, 1946), p. 97.

³⁴ R. Bamber, ‘Functions of the Trade Union Movement in the Post-War World’, *AEU Journal*, (September, 1945), p. 272.

The war-time consultative machinery, from factory level JPCs, through Advisory Committees associated with Ministry of Production District Committees, Regional Boards, and Government officers, was considered by the journal contributors as a suitable basis for peace-time consultative working.³⁵ The *AEU* Journal contributors advocated making JPCs obligatory in all factories (over a certain size), and along with the *NP/MW* recommended the official recognition of shop stewards. Additionally, the *AEU* and *NP/MW* advocated Government control over direct investment to ensure that planning was implemented and production optimised.³⁶

The initial switch from war-time to peace-time production caused multiple lay-offs as factories closed or switched to non-war production. Nonetheless, outside the Development Areas, labour shortages soon emerged, prompting the *AEU* and *MW* to question keeping nearly 5 million in non-productive sectors, such as the armed forces and auxiliary service, Government employment, service trades, and entertainment industries. The military's financial cost was highlighted and condemned by the *AEU* and *MW* (in line with left-wing labour and communist opinion).³⁷ Importantly for the *MW*, reductions to the military would also help free Britain from the US: '[C]utting the swollen armed forces ... in the Middle East guarding oil pipelines for Wall Street',³⁸ would contribute to a more socialist (pro-Soviet) foreign policy. The *NUGMW*, occasionally complained about the size of the forces policing occupied countries',³⁹ but once Tom Williamson became General Secretary, all such criticism was omitted from their journal.

Britain's economic situation meant Government policy aspirations were subjected to context driven expediencies; export production was given precedence over home consumption, and the expected rise in living standards was deferred. Improved technology and modern capital equipment were deemed essential to close the productivity gap with the US.⁴⁰ Inquiries were initiated into organisation, production, and distribution methods and processes, and the utilisation of scientists, engineers,

³⁵ For Instance, L. Stubbs, 'Experiment or Expedient', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1946), p. 81.

³⁶ Sidney Hall, 'Why we Lose our Export Trade', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1946), p. 82.

³⁷ Anon., '1,510,000 in forces, Whilst Industry Needs 750,000', *MW*, (February, 1947), p. 1. Also see: Anon., 'Tory Pressure', *MW*, (November, 1949), p. 4; 'Abstract Report of Council's Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), p. 229.

³⁸ Anon., 'Output Problems', *MW*, (February, 1947), p. 4.

³⁹ H. L. Bullock, 'An Urgent Problem', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1946), p. 83; T. Williamson, 'Can Industry Afford Compulsory Military Service?', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1947), pp. 152-3.

⁴⁰ A. E. Scarr, 'Slog Harder or Work More Effectively?', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1947), p. 143.

and economists, was recommended and encouraged.⁴¹ This approach resonated with those who considered that expert knowledge (especially scientific knowledge) was apolitical and untainted by interests. The unions arranged information gathering delegations abroad.⁴² The Government established the Anglo-American Advisory Council to enable the interchange of ideas on such issues,⁴³ which provoked mixed feelings. The *NUGMW Journal* contributors were enthusiasts; the *AEU*'s had no objections in principle, but expressed concerns about the insidious influence of US ideological dogma.⁴⁴ The *MW* was overtly hostile, considering the Councils to be conduits for US Big Business influence in British industry as a cost condition of Marshall Plan Aid.⁴⁵ Improved technology was not objected to *per-se*, but as R. A. Etheridge (Austin convener) stated that, 'what we do object to is the workers ... operating new machinery at ... less wages than previously despite increased production'.⁴⁶ Moreover, they exposed the criminal conviction of P. D. Reed (Chairman, US Section of the Productivity Council, and General Electric Co., America) for conspiracy with Nazi arms-supplier Krupp over monopoly price fixing.⁴⁷ The combination of Nazi connections and the exploitation of the war situation, clearly signalled to readers the politics and character of the Committees American members.⁴⁸

The third session of the Anglo-American Council concluded that: 'basic to all else is the attitude of mind ... 'productivity consciousness' is ... a long step towards high productivity.'⁴⁹ This accorded with the views expressed through the *NUGMW Journal*, and G. D. H. Cole's belief that:

⁴¹ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1945), p. 231.

⁴² For instance, an AEU delegation visited the US as guests of the United Automobile Workers of America to examine their Engineering Industry; Anon., 'The AEU Delegation to the USA', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1949), p. 74.

⁴³ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1949), pp. 257-8; 'Editor's Notes' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1949), p. 33.

⁴⁴ Editor's Notes: Hitting the Targets', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1948), pp. 255-6.

⁴⁵ Anon., 'Bedeaux System in British Factories', *MW*, (August, 1948), p. 1.

⁴⁶ Anon., 'Shop Stewards Refute Attacks by Austins', *MW*, (June, 1949), p. 1.

⁴⁷ Anon., 'General Electric and Krupps', *MW*, (December, 1948), p. 6.

⁴⁸ See, for instance: Anon., 'Foundry Workers Attacked in Anglo-US. Report', *MW*, (October, 1950), p. 2. Also see, for instance: Editor, 'Engineers case. Pt.2', *MW*, (June, 1948), p. 4.

⁴⁹ T. Williamson, 'The Problem of Production', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1950), p. 368.

... key individuals set the tone of the workshops ...with an attitude of hostility to capitalism or ... belief that efficiency of production was the employer's affair ... they had better avoid taking any share in the responsibility for it.⁵⁰

The new era of Labour Government, *NUGMW* argued, necessitated joint working, JPCs, and a tolerant atmosphere; they even promoted the hated 'time and motion studies' (as did the TUC)⁵¹. In justifying their changed stance they stressed that their traditional objection to scientific management was that, previously it was designed to exploit workers, whereas now it offered 'direct benefit to the workers ... facilitating ... minimum expenditure of time, labour and energy'.⁵² The *NUGMW* even questioned union and the shop steward functions under a Labour administration, and whether this should include discipline (hitherto management's responsibility), as indolent workers negatively impacted community interests, the Labour movement, and Government.⁵³ The *NUGMW* utilised various devices, like outside authoritative sources, to reinforce their message⁵⁴ (subsuming their socialism and trade unionism to promote Labour Government prescriptions). For instance, the *NUGMW* quoted the report of 'An American visitor' that the British see:

... all work ... as hardship, all pressure for higher output as 'slave-driving', and insistence on good quality work as intolerable exploitation', adding that 'if you need more dollars from American workers, get busy proving ... you can afford your five-day week, your easy attitude towards shirkers, your solicitude for the thriftless, and your out-of-date industrial ideas.'⁵⁵

Whilst the *NUGMW* used such reports to control worker dissent; had such articles appeared in the *AEU* or *MW* they would have been employed to illustrate the pernicious US's attempts to enforce its capitalists' will and their ideology on British workers. The *NUGMW* presented these reports as a warning, and also cited the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America who posited that US big business, through its capitalist press, was attacking American social welfare by linking Britain's dollar crisis with the Labour Government's

⁵⁰ H. E. Matthews, 'Industrial Relations: The Purpose of Joint Production Committees', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 292.

⁵¹ D. A. Hopkin, 'Time-and-Motion Study', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1949), pp. 72-3.

⁵² William E. Hopkin, 'Chairman's Address, Scarborough Congress', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1949), pp. 194-9.

⁵³ W. N. Mosley, 'It all Depends on You', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1946), p. 112.

⁵⁴ J. Yarwood, 'Northern Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1951), pp. 212-3.

⁵⁵ J. Yarwood, 'Through American Eyes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1949), p. 268.

'reckless Socialist experimentation' which 'squandered the heritage of centuries of capital accumulation in four extravagant years of 'Welfare Statism'. Thus, the NUGMW, through its journal sought to pressure workers into modifying their demands and behaviour by linking their success in rectifying the British economic situation to both British and international working class socialist ambitions.⁵⁶ This illustrates the profound impact of context on political culture as articulated through journal content and union policy prescriptions.

The *AEU* disseminated the idea that structural impediments undermined Government pressure and propaganda in stimulating production, as stockholders, not workers, remained the primary beneficiaries of the workers' labour. The *MW* concurred: 'We cannot be expected to increase production merely to increase employers' profits', and they asked the Government to legislate for a five-day, 40-hour week, and protection for Shop Stewards from victimisation by reactionary employers.⁵⁷ They advocated Advisory Councils to facilitate Ministerial consultation with employers and workers on engineering matters.⁵⁸ The *MW* supported David Kirkwood and his fellow MPs' call for a National Planning Commission⁵⁹, and advocated the 'genuine participation by the workers in planning from the top, e.g., through the Engineering Advisory Board-right down to factory floor'.⁶⁰

Similarly, the *AEU* blamed the failure of profit-sharing and similar schemes to raise productivity on the structures of capitalism and instead they advocated limiting returns on capital and the distribution of surpluses as dividends on wages.⁶¹ The journals all cited foreign worker participation and consultation schemes as workable systems, each journal selecting examples that accorded with their ideological position. The *MW* detailed operations in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the French legislation (February, 1945) which augmented Joint Works Committees powers,⁶² and their 1946 extension which included consultation on organisation and management, and access to all information available to shareholders including

⁵⁶ Anon., 'We Stand with British Labour', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 18.

⁵⁷ Anon., 'Jimmie Hamilton Tells Attlee How to get Increased Production', *MW*, (November, 1946), p. 5.

⁵⁸ Anon., 'Wilmot to set up Advisory Councils for Engineering', *MW*, (January, 1947), p. 1.

⁵⁹ Anon., 'MPs Want Plan', *MW*, (February, 1947), p. 1.

⁶⁰ Anon., 'Output Problems', *MW*, (February, 1947), p. 4.

⁶¹ Such as Vauxhall Motors, where 6% is paid to capital, plus 90% of additional profits; workers received the small residue; Paul Derrick, 'Incentives in Industry', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1946), p. 327; also, see: P. Derrick, 'Why not Mutualise Engineering?', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1950), p. 114.

⁶² Anon., 'French Stewards' Wide Powers', *MW*, (October, 1946), p. 4.

auditors' reports and accounts.⁶³ The *AEU* also advocated such regulation⁶⁴ and highlighted Swedish Joint Consultation,⁶⁵ and Mitbestimmunsrecht in Germany, which provided equal representation on large mining, and iron and steel company Boards.⁶⁶ The *NUGMW* described the Norwegian JPCs arrangements.⁶⁷

Despite the unions and Government talk of tripartite working in the national interest, the *AEU* highlighted how the employer /management class pursued its own agenda. An editorial from the trade journal, *The Engineer* (7th May 1948), was cited to illustrate their point: 'managements must continue to manage, and workers must continue to produce'.⁶⁸ The same article derogatorily located the problem with the workers' loyalty, describing workers as often 'inarticulate' and 'some ... hostile.'⁶⁹ In the same vein the *AEU* reported on the Institution of Production Engineers' Conference where R. W. Mann, (President N. E. Section) concluded 'that fear must form part of the incentive'.⁷⁰ Thus readers were reminded of the employer-class's continuing disparaging attitudes, antagonism, and enmity, thereby implicitly reinforcing their members' class consciousness.

Profits, Wages and Prices

The wages question of the late 1940s illustrates the inter-union ideological differences. The journals published multiple Government appeals for pay restraint. The Regulation 1305 conditions meant many strikes were re-labelled by the participants 'holidays', and often such unofficial actions, as occurred in engineering, received local (unofficial) union support. However, when the leadership truly objected, strikes were condemned for violating the trade unionist core values of loyalty to the leadership and unity. The TU official journals, exercised their deontic power in this pursuit, reminding readers that they had duties not just rights. Taking industrial action before exhausting the conciliation machinery was deemed

⁶³ Anon., 'French JPCs See Firms' Books, *MW*, (August, 1947), p. 7.

⁶⁴ Don Ellis, 'What Should Labour's Programme Be?' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1949), p. 141.

⁶⁵ Anon., 'Joint Consultation in Sweden', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1949), p. 142.

⁶⁶ Mitbestimmunsrecht is the direct workers' participation in industrial control in Germany, which provided equal representation on large mining, and iron and steel company Boards (although the idea was originally instigated in 1919); P. Derrick, 'Mitbestimmunsrecht', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1951), p. 108.

⁶⁷ Anon., 'Norwegians Renew Novel Production Pact', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1951), p. 5.

⁶⁸ J. D. Lawrence, 'Freedom at Work', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1948), p. 299.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ R. Harle, 'Scientific Management - and How!', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1951), p. 369.

unjustifiable as it alienated the previously indifferent, created animosities, provided class enemies' ammunition, and left union leaders open to accusations of being unable to maintain their members' compliance.⁷¹ The *MW* dissented.

The *NUGMW* continually advocated the Government and TUC's line on wage limitation and the subsequent wage freeze (1948).⁷² They typically vilified strike action and printed multiple expressions of regret about 'certain elements' and 'sectional interests' (communists), who they accused of negating trade union democracy by defying official union policy.⁷³ They saw strike avoidance as especially important in nationalised industries, and pledged an 'energetic persecution of anyone who contributes to the breaking-up of 'mutual relationships'.⁷⁴ Moreover, they warned readers that: 'wage inflation ... will bring this Government down. The industrialists and the Tories cannot bring this Government down, but our Movement can'.⁷⁵ In 1950 the *NUGMW Journal* suggested they even workers on automatic sliding scale agreements who 'May feel ... entitled to get what is due to them will be wrong', as higher wages would undermine the Government.⁷⁶ Thus, the *NUGMW* again prioritised the Labour Government's welfare over their members' short-term interests, premised on the idea that Labour's success in Government and continuation in office were necessary conditions to secure their members' longer term interests. However, a lone dissenting voice was published in the *NUGMW*, stating that workers do not 'deliberately and lightly throw themselves out of employment, unless ... something very, very serious ... caused them so to do',⁷⁷ and, this contributor, attributed half the unofficial strikes to employers' conscious provocation (the *AEU*'s and *MW*'s position).

⁷¹ C. Dukes, 'Must History Repeat Itself?', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1945), p. 344.

⁷² T. Williamson, *NUGMW*'s General Secretary, served on the TUC Special Economic Committee.

⁷³ For instance: J. Yarwood, 'The Discipline of Public-Spiritedness', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1945), p. 308; C. Dukes, 'Unofficial Strikes and the Closed Shop', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1946), p. 336; T. W. Kerry, 'Aberdeen Congress, Chairman's Address' *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1947), pp. 202-6.

⁷⁴ R. G. Cook, 'Nationalized Industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1949), p. 242.

⁷⁵ T. Williamson, 'Cost of Living', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1949), pp. 240-1; T. Williamson, 'The Need for Caution', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1950), pp. 112-3.

⁷⁶ T. Williamson, 'Wages and the Economic Situation', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 16; also see T. Williamson, 'Wages Policy and the Lower-Paid Worker', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1950), p. 176.

⁷⁷ 'Unofficial Strikes', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1947), pp. 248-9.

The *AEU* reported that the situation was complex. They were torn between loyalty and common cause with the Government and TUC on the one hand, and on the other, their basic TU principles, National Committee's pay demands, and those of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions (to which they affiliated 1946).⁷⁸ In an environment of cost of living and productivity increases, profits at double pre-war level, but limited wage increases, the AEU decided to pursue a £1 per week pay claim,⁷⁹ but chose by ballot to submit the claim to the National Arbitration Tribunal rather than strike (51,280 for strike: 143,579 against).⁸⁰ The NUGMW's leadership (unsuccessfully) took the political decision to attempt halt the AEU's ballot under Arbitration Order 1305. The AEU condemned this as an attempt to undermine their democracy. The M.W. acceded.⁸¹ Thus, notwithstanding their shared self-identification as socialists and their shared support for the Labour Party administration, the two unions differing political cultures were evidenced in their conflictual policies.

The *MW*, like the *AEU Journal*, campaigned for the £1 a week engineering pay rise and advocated strike action.⁸² Authoritative sources, like the '*Interim Index of Industrial Production*' were cited, as was Dr. Barna's (Oxford Institute of Statistics), statement that profits per worker (1948) were 85% higher than 1938, and return on capital up 174%.⁸³ Implicit within this was the message that the capitalist continued profiteering at the workers' expense, and those labour movement advocates of the Government's wage restraint policy were in fact backing this continued institutionalised capitalist exploitation, and therefore their judgement and leadership should be questioned. For the *MW*, this illustrated the validity of their (communist) ideas and understandings, including the need to fundamentally restructure society in order to usurp capitalist exploitation.

⁷⁸ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1950), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁹ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1950), pp. 133-4.

⁸⁰ '£1 per Week Wages Ballot Results', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1950), p. 201; The subsequent Court of Inquiry into the wage claim disappointed the AEU. However, Jack Tanner recommended its acceptance due to the economic and international situations, and the need to support the Labour Government. He was attacked from both the left, and those who prioritised trade unionism over labourism.

⁸¹ Anon., 'GMW Branches Against Freeze', *MW*, (May, 1950), p. 1.

⁸² For instance: Anon., 'Vote Strike! Call from Shop Stewards', *M.W.*, (May, 1950), p. 1; A Special Correspondent 'Do you Know What 1305 Really Means?', *M.W.*, (June, 1950), p. 6.

⁸³ Anon., 'Unions Prove £1 Claim can be met from Employers' Record Profits', *MW*, (December, 1949), p. 1.

The eventual reversal of the TUC policy was regarded as inevitable by the *AEU* and *MW*, but not the *NUGMW Journal* which argued for its retention until spring 1951.⁸⁴ This included rhetorical outbursts, for instance, accusing anyone campaigning for its repeal (like the *AEU* and *MW*)⁸⁵ of being 'blind servants of the Cominform States,'⁸⁶ and being 'political, sponsored and supported mainly by those who desire to see a wave of industrial strife for the sole purpose of undermining the national effort for recovery'.⁸⁷ Thus the evolution of the Cold War context (which by this time had become institutionalised) can be seen as intensifying the *NUGMW*'s long-standing anti-communist position, and its contrast with some of their wartime utterances.

Economic and Fiscal Measures

A nation's economic and fiscal policy is reflective of the power and influence of various groups within society. The unions had expected far-reaching and structural changes; they voiced their disappointment (to varying degrees) at what they perceived was the maintenance of class privilege. In autumn 1945, the Chancellor appealed to 'industry to plough back increased profits rather than to distribute them to shareholders. The response to this invitation has been patchy'.⁸⁸ The journals advocated curbs on profits and higher level salaries to match those proposed for wages.⁸⁹ The Government declined, claiming profit limitation would hamper production and expansion incentives, whilst dismissing the idea that wage limitation reduced workers' incentives.⁹⁰ The *AEU Journal* lobbied for an Excess Profits Tax (EPT) of 80- 100 % throughout the Labour administration, to be 'held in trust by the Treasury for industry to use when better times return'.⁹¹

The *MW* (1947) highlighted the EPT refunds to employers (Vickers received (Vickers receive over one million pounds), while worker's (apart from Old Age

⁸⁴ '1305' was repealed on 14th August, 1951 and replaced with the Industrial Disputes Order, 1951).

⁸⁵ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1950), p. 325; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1951), pp. 97-8; R. Dunn *et al.*, 'The Scottish TUC', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1951), p. 172.

⁸⁶ W. McGinnis, 'Scottish Note's, *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1951), pp. 85-6.

⁸⁷ T. Williamson, 'The National Arbitration Order', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1951), p. 48.

⁸⁸ T. Williamson, 'Economic Crisis in 1947', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1947), pp. 120-2.

⁸⁹ For instance: Anon., 'Unions to Meet on Wages; Government Pressure on TUC', *MW*, (November, 1947), p. 1.

⁹⁰ T. Williamson, 'Wages Policy', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1946), p. 286.

⁹¹ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1947), pp. 353-4 and 357. Also see for instance: 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1950), pp. 357-9.

Pensioners (OAPs)) post-war credits remained unpaid.⁹² The journal contributors saw this as indicative of the capitalists' unwillingness to act in the national interests (as workers were urged to). Thus, fiscal issues were politicised, and notwithstanding the unions support for the Labour Government, they sought changes in their policy direction by repeatedly highlighting the (unexpected) continued disparity of treatment between classes.

As the 1940s drew to a close the divergence between the left and right of the labour movement became more pronounced in the journals. For instance, the TUC and the Government (and, with caveats, the *NUGMW Journal*) advocated the ongoing voluntary dividend limitation scheme, which it believed steered profits towards capital development. However, the *AEU* and *MW* condemned it because 90% of firms fell outside its parameters. Moreover, for those that came under its remit, it was voluntary, and it was regularly circumvented through bonus shares schemes.⁹³ The *AEU Journal* instead promoted statutory profits, dividend limitation, and company law changes, premised on the fact that dividend limitation alone simply reassigned surpluses, which stockholders continued to accumulate.⁹⁴ They also advocated the co-operative principle (including surpluses distributed as dividends on wages), which would decrease wage pressures and thus inflationary risks (protecting export competitiveness). Simultaneously it would incentivise production as the workers, not shareholders, would profit from their increased efforts, and thereby facilitate full employment through increased effective demand.⁹⁵ Indirect tax increases were condemned;⁹⁶ a graduated tax on property incomes was advocated.⁹⁷

In pursuit of their ongoing critique of capitalism and promotion of the need for structural change, the *MW*'s longstanding column 'The Money we earn for Others' was resurrected (June 1947). It continued to highlight companies' profit increases,

⁹² Anon, 'Huge profits but no planning', *Metal Worker*, December 1947, p.3.

⁹³ 'Editor's Notes: Wages, Prices, Profits', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1948), p. 129; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), pp. 129-30; G. Marshall, 'The Dividend Freeze Swindle or How Green are the Workers?' *MW*, (September, 1951), p. 5.

⁹⁴ P. Derrick, 'Devaluation and Dividends', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1949), p. 366.

⁹⁵ P. Derrick, 'The Need for a National Profits Policy, Delay is Dangerous', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1950), p. 141.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ P. Derrick, 'The Economics of Full Employment', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1950), p. 177.

and their shadowy accountancy devices.⁹⁸ Other articles continue this theme, for instance, R. Chamberlain MP writing in the *MW*, blamed commodity speculation, combined with company reconstructions, which provided 'huge personal tax-free fortunes for existing shareholders, and bloated financial super-structures forcing up the price of every manufactured product',⁹⁹ causing inflation (which indirectly combatted the 'wage push' inflation hypothesis). The *MW* (and *AEU*) sought to reinforce their argument by highlighting how the wages component of domestic national income had stagnated at around 40% since 1880. The *MW* recommended Dr. T. Barna's pamphlet *Profits During and After the War*,¹⁰⁰ and Margot Heinemann's *Wages Front*.¹⁰¹

The interaction of international affairs and the domestic economic sphere was evidenced in the 1949 Sterling crisis, precipitated by the American loan agreement's Sterling convertibility clause. Devaluation brought mixed responses from the journals. The *AEU Journal* deemed it pragmatic, and advocated capitalising on the situation to push exports,¹⁰² and argued that inaction would have led to Britain's reserves being drained, triggering deflationary policies, credit contraction, and export price reduction, and thus unemployment. The *MW* disagreed. Devaluation, they concluded, was a 'Wall Street' tool for acquiring British and Empire assets and raw materials cheaply, whilst increasing their Sterling Area competitiveness. Instead, they argued repeatedly that the dollar crisis could be resolved, and employment secured, through increased trade with the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China,¹⁰³ and for lower US tariff barriers.¹⁰⁴

The Korean War provided a further example of the international impacting the domestic sphere. Gaitskell's 1951 budget omission of an EPT, the postponement of OAP relief, food subsidy limitation, and spectacles and dentures charges (as funds

⁹⁸ Anon., 'No Profits Freeze Here', *MW*, (March, 1949), p. 2.; Ronald Chamberlain, 'Profits and Prices', *MW*, (April, 1949), p. 5; R. Chamberlain, 'Vickers Pay £6 Million Bonus', *MW*, (June, 1949), p. 5; Anon., 'Fees-not freeze', *MW*, (March, 1949), p. 2; Anon., 'Money we Earn for Others', *MW*, (September, 1947), p. 3; R. Chamberlain, 'Profits and Prices', *MW*, (March, 1949), p. 5.

⁹⁹ R. Chamberlain, 'Profits and prices', *MW*, (March 1949), p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Anon., 'Economists Says Raise Wages and Keep Down Prices', *NP*, (January, 1946), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ David Michaelson, 'Working Class View of Wages', *MW*, (November, 1947), p. 4.

¹⁰² 'Editor's Notes: Economic difficulties', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1949), pp. 289-30.

¹⁰³ Much engineering production was embargoed under the Marshall Plan. For the *MW*'s position see, for instance: Anon., 'The £ Gamble', *MW*, (October, 1949), p. 4; Anon., 'Devaluation Spells Wage Cuts: Fight for the £1', *MW*, (October 1949), p.4.; Anon., 'Is There an Alternative to the Dollar.' *MW*, (October, 1949), p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Editor, 'We Must Close the Gap in our Pay Packet!', *MW*, (October, 1949), p. 5.

were diverted to rearmaments) were all considered to disproportionately burden the working classes with rearmament expenses.¹⁰⁵ The *AEU* quoted *The Express*: 'Gaitskell would make a first-rate Tory Chancellor',¹⁰⁶ and noted that following day's Financial Times (FT) Ordinary Shares Index reached a three year high. Thus, journals' contributors interpreted and framed the consequences of the confluence of foreign, domestic, and economic policies, in terms of conflicting class interests and disparities.

The perceived perversion of priorities precipitated the resignation of Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman. Gardner, (AEU General Secretary), condemned the resignations, but not their criticisms. Much sympathy was expressed for the Bevan group's assessments published in *One Way Only*, but with the caveat that 'wishful thinking influenced by Soviet propaganda' may have influenced the group.¹⁰⁷ Another contributor, J. Stewart, considered their resignations would improve debate, and 'give recognition to the fact ... that a much more positive radical policy is required from our representatives in Parliament.'¹⁰⁸

Nationalisation v Socialisation

The nationalisation of essential industries was pre-eminent amongst the longstanding ideologically driven changes expected from a Labour Majority Government. The alternative was presented as a return to the interwar autocratic, capricious, industrial system, where unemployment was deemed inevitable.

The Bank of England's status as a private concern, responsible to its shareholders (whose 24 directors were board members of 152 leading companies), was universally considered an anathema by journal contributors, especially as its credit decisions impacted the nation's employment, wages levels, and social service provision. Public control was presented as fundamental to facilitating investment decisions and to fund allocation, guided and planned for the national benefit.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ For instance: Frank Brown, 'Plea for a Wage Policy', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1951), p. 233; R. Dunn *et al*, 'The Scottish TUC', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1951), pp. 161-2; J. W. Smith, 'Organise your Problems', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1951), p. 234.

¹⁰⁶ P. Derrick, 'Profits and Taxation', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), p. 138.

¹⁰⁷ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1951), pp. 225-6.

¹⁰⁸ James Stewart, 'An Aye for Nye?' *AEU Journal*, (August, 1951), p. 242.

¹⁰⁹ 'Beneath Big Ben', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1945), pp. 266-7.

Nonetheless, Lord Catto's continuance as the Bank's Governor post nationalisation, and its unchanged structure and staffing, were conspicuously omitted from the journals. Moreover, the *NUGWM*, *AEU*, and *NP* were silent on the compensation paid; the *Electrical Trades Journal* commented on it, but without the usual condemnation.¹¹⁰

The *NP* (1944) had published Lord Catto's merchant banking connections (Andrew Yule and Co., the Royal Bank of Scotland, and Morgan Grenfell), and his record of promoting millionaire financiers' interests.¹¹¹ Thus he was ostensibly an unlikely choice to advance socialist economic policy. Indeed, his continued employment underlines institutional continuity within apparently profound change, and how ideologically driven change (the Bank's nationalisation) was limited by orthodox economic expedience, market considerations (market wariness of a socialist government), maintaining Britain's position as a financial centre, and arguably, deference to interests and the establishment.

The absence of debate or comment on the issue was consistent with the *NUGMW Journal's* editorial practice of not publicly questioning Government's decisions. However, its absence from the *AEU Journal* is more surprising, given its traditional focus on economic issues, and its criticism of the Coal Board's structure and the lack of workers' control under nationalisation. Similarly, the *MW* would have normally attacked the granting of power positions to advocates of powerful financial and business interests. All journal contributors would have been acutely aware of the situation, and its implications. Support for the Labour Government, and an ideological belief in the importance of public control (which could subsequently be internally restructured), a sensitivity to the City of London's pre-eminent position, powerful financial interests, and market fears, would have all been factors in its omission, but their relative importance would vary between journal editors. Their silence on the matter underscores how the journals failed to hold the Labour Government to account to the extent to which they would have a Tory Government implementing the same policies.

The *AEU Journal* continued to condemn private factional reserve banking, whereby credit creation was almost cost free, yet the bank income received the interest

¹¹⁰ 'Editor's Notes', *Electrical Trades Journal*, (November, 1945), p. 321

¹¹¹ Anon., 'My Lord Catto is Moved to Threadneedle Street', *NP*, (May, 1944), p. 5.

charged, including from the financing of Government bonds; moreover, they paid no EPT. They recommended that credit from banks and financial institutions should be replaced by non-interest bearing State Credit, and alleged that 'the banks and high finance control the Government'.¹¹²

Coal

The mines had suffered from a dearth of capital investment as mine-owners prioritised short-term profit (especially since the Samuel Committee), which, combined with war pressures resulted in the mining industry's dire state, as evidenced in productivity declines, down from 301.9 tons per worker annually (1938), to 242.2 tons in 1946.¹¹³ However, the journals never discussed whether coal (or railways) nationalisation was effectively a bail-out.

The Clerk Journal noted that immediately pre- nationalisation, Coal owners, who had in the past attempted to thwart trade unionism, began exalting it, 'Can it be that they wish, on nationalisation, to seek protection under the umbrella of strength of the staff worker?'¹¹⁴ The journals reported on the political significance and industrial expedience of nationalisation. However, the form it took caused disquiet, especially amongst the *AEU* contributors (spring 1946 onwards). They had expected a democratic structure 'from the coal face upwards'. Instead a capitalists dominated Board was appointed and 'superimposed' on the industry.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the *AEU Journal* noted that disparity was further institutionalised as appointees from union backgrounds had to sever their ties; private sector appointees had no such restraints on outside interests.¹¹⁶ Discontent over the former owners' re-employment, excessive executive pay, top-heavy administration, and the paucity of workers' representation, resulted in the AEU submitting numerous resolutions at various union, TUC and Labour Party Conferences.¹¹⁷

The *AEU Journal* majority voice believed nationalisation did not equate to socialisation; they had expected socialisation. They lamented that 'It is clear to us

¹¹² S. Hall, 'No.1 Priority, Let There Be Light for Peace', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1946), p. 136.

¹¹³ T. Williamson, 'You Can't Buy Economic Salvation with a Dollar - Only by Hard Work', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1947), pp. 280-1.

¹¹⁴ W. O. D. Smart, 'North-Eastern Area', *The Clerk*, (May-(June, 1946), p. 42.

¹¹⁵ 'Editor's Notes: Closing Ranks at Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1948), pp. 161-2.

¹¹⁶ 'Editor's Notes: Who Runs Socialised Industry', *AEU Journal*, (March, 1949), pp. 65-6.

¹¹⁷ C. F. Morling, 'Labour Party Conference, 1950', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1950), p. 368; Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1950), pp. 293-4.

to-day that Socialisation does not mean ... in its present phase, the disappearance of the employer-employee relationship',¹¹⁸ and that 'The miners could scarcely have had less representation The industry is still controlled by the same class that has always controlled it'.¹¹⁹ Indeed, it was stressed that 'within this State capitalist model the worker remained industrial serf'¹²⁰ and exposed to the caprice of future Tory Governments. The *AEU Journal* instead advocated the establishment of Pit Councils comprised of representatives from production, official and management realms, selected on ability and expertise; these Pit Councils would send representatives to Regional Pit Councils, whose representatives would form a National Coal Board, which would liaise with the Minister and Government. Similar models, it was considered, should be applied to all industries being nationalised.¹²¹ This stood in stark contrast to Arthur Horner's *Miners Charter* and vision of a collaborative relationship the managers in the common good as part of a national plan.¹²² There was no mention in the journals of Shinwell's discussion with the Miner's Unions about them running the industry.

The nationalisation programme was deemed to be 'permeated by inevitable compromise with capitalist experience and competency',¹²³ founded on ideas concerning competence propagated by the capitalist classes. This resulted in the employment of managers and technicians of questionable political reliability.¹²⁴ The *AEU* proposed that those best qualified to direct nationalised industries were highly technically qualified 'men' [sic] who were nationalisation advocates, with the leadership skills to motivate the workforce and a desire to thwart socialism's enemies.

Stafford Cripps suggestion, that workers were unsuitable as nationalised industry executives, was utterly condemned by the *AEU* and *MW* as showing the 'same contempt for the working-class which was voiced by Churchill in his notorious

¹¹⁸ 'Editor's Notes: The Mines for the Nation', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), p. 225.

¹¹⁹ R. Luton, 'Socialism', *A. E.U. Journal*, (November, 1946), p. 336.

¹²⁰ R. Rallison, 'Nationalisation and Industrial Democracy', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1946), p. 201

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Horner's vision of nationalised industry was impeded, as, unlike Sweden, Social Democratic Governments did not become the new normal. Additionally, disunity amongst the multiple British unions, rendered collaboration difficult as neither employers or unions spoke for all members (compounded by independent shop stewards, and militancy, resulting in multiple, small, unofficial, and often parochial strikes, and demarcation disputes),

¹²³ Tom Gillinder, 'Be Prepared for Responsibility', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1947), p. 108.

¹²⁴ 'National Committee, 1947, Presidential Address (abridged)', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1947), pp. 234-6.

phrase, 'Labour is not fit to govern' and merely repeated capitalist classes' prejudices.¹²⁵ *AEU* contributors highlighted how Union officials already acted as solicitors, advocates, negotiators, technical experts, and interpreters of Governments Acts and Orders, and many rank and filers had potential.¹²⁶ Cripps elitist attitude was contrasted with the Webbs' statement in *Industrial Democracy*, 'such representatives (of manual workers and technicians) will be found to compare, in competence, quite favourably with the average member of a Board of Directors'.¹²⁷

Morrison's suggestion that as 'joint stock company's go out into the market and buy brains. The State can do the same.' was linked with the 1931 Macdonald Government and Snowden's 1928 statement, that: 'We are going to get Socialism largely ... through a public corporation controlled, in the interests of the public, by the best experts and business men'.¹²⁸ Thus the *AEU Journal* contributor, sought to discredit such assertions through association. R. Rallison, a regular *AEU* economics contributor (whose M.A. qualification was always printed), was alone in positing that workers lacked the 'perseverance and will-power to study and master the technique of control', implicitly meaning, unlike him.¹²⁹

The *AEU Journals* hosted a long debate (1946-8) on the nationalisation / socialisation question. This debate illustrated the multiple (left-wing) ideological strands pursued by their contributors; each presented their case as 'obvious' and 'common sense' and selectively quoted Marx, Engels, and Lenin, for corroboration. Everyone agreed that socialism embodied:

A system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.¹³⁰

However, some argued that the Labour Party Government's nationalisations were merely the State acquisition of 'the right to administer', whilst 'the issue of bonds

¹²⁵ W. Hale, 'Labour is Fit to Govern', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1947), p. 364. Also see: Anon., 'Workers are Not Able to Manage says Sir Stafford', *MW*, (November, 1946), p. 2.

¹²⁶ 'Editor's Notes: Training for Management', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1948), pp., 193-4; T. Gillinder, 'Regional Boards for Industry', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1948), p. 46; 'Editor's Notes: Closing Ranks at Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1948), pp. 161-2.

¹²⁷ W. Hale, 'Labour is Fit to Govern', p.364

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ R. Rallison, 'Nationalisation and Industrial Democracy', p. 267.

¹³⁰ L. Young, 'Socialism and Socialists', p. 42

has guaranteed capitalist rake-off.¹³¹ Some questioned if this form of nationalisation was socialist, especially as various defenders of capitalism had historically advocated nationalisation as ‘an expedient of property ownership ... not even remotely connected with working-class interest’.¹³² Counterfactuals were offered and compared. It was argued that the prevailing form of nationalisation had not altered the fundamental that workers were still compelled to sell their labour in exchange for wages to purchase necessities. It was suggested that ‘so long as the wages system exists together with rent, interest and profit, we shall continue to suffer the Capitalist system’,¹³³ as illustrated by the postal workers’ status. Such contributors considered that a necessary condition of socialism was the abolition of:

... property ownership in the means of production and distribution, and ... the social superstructure peculiar to property ownership, the end of capital and wage labour, and the whole paraphernalia of barter and monetary exchange.¹³⁴

This position also precluded those with capital loaning it to the Government instead of private undertakings. ‘Both are capitalist’.¹³⁵ In a ‘truly socialist’ system, production and distribution would function for use not profit, and for universal benefit; ‘all ... will live according to the maxim: ‘From each according to ability to each according to need’.¹³⁶ All such articles sought to influence the debate and ultimately the form in which nationalisation was operationalised. However, often such articles were rhetorical, merely cataloguing the Government’s programmes’ faults without providing worked alternatives.

Another strand in the *AEU Journal* debate condemned continued Capitalist type imposition of workforce discipline in nationalised industries. In capitalist industry, factory rules were dictated ‘without reference to the ruled’, which was deemed expensive and inefficient and where promotion meant joining ‘the management against the Union’.¹³⁷ Instead it was suggested there should be:

¹³¹ Frank T. Burvill ‘Control or Ownership?’ *AEU Journal*, (March, 1948), p. 82.

¹³² F. T. Burvill, ‘The Tyranny of Words’, *AEU Journal*, (June, 1947), p. 168.

¹³³ L. Young, ‘Socialism and Socialists’, *AEU Journal*, (February, 1947), p. 42; A. W. Pepper, ‘Open Door: Socialism and Socialists’, *AEU Journal*, (May, 1947), p. 146.

¹³⁴ F. T. Burvill, ‘The Tyranny of Words’ p. 168.

¹³⁵ F. T. Burvill ‘Control or Ownership?’ p. 82.

¹³⁶ F. T. Burvill, p. 168.

¹³⁷ J. D. Lawrence ‘Factory Totalitarian Dictatorship—II’, *AEU Journal*, (July, 1949), p. 202.

technical leaders, elected by ballot upon their qualifications ... no managers, no foremen, no rate-fixers, no charge-hands, no promotion-seekers, no secret police, no clocking-on ... will reduce the cost of production enormously.¹³⁸

Moreover, 'totalitarian dictatorship ... perpetrated by arrogant managements' was alleged to be a major cause of strikes.¹³⁹ However, a minority *AEU* voice argued the need for a transformation in attitudes, if workers or their elected officials were to be involved in management of nationalised concerns.¹⁴⁰

Share-prices increased when nationalisation was anticipated, and fell when it was contested, illustrating for the contributors share-holders' profit expectations from the nationalisation process, which most deemed reprehensible. However, one contributor proposed, that granting former shareholders interest bearing bonds was merely equivalent to funding municipal work through similar bonds.¹⁴¹ The *AEU Journal* editor formally halted the debate (October 1947), concluding that nationalisation was a step towards socialisation.¹⁴² Nonetheless the debate and analysis continued. The specific nationalisations of gas, electricity and transport, received little coverage, but were welcomed as necessary to optimise productivity, and for industrial and scientific progress.

The nationalisation – socialisation debate was largely absent from the *NUGMW Journal*. They did however argue that unions within nationalised industries must remain free, and able to dispute any oppressive or unfair administrative practices (thereby precluding themselves from running industry).¹⁴³ R. E. Scouller (*The Clerk*) similarly concluded that, despite his previous support for workers' control, trade unionisms' sectional nature was incompatible with running nationalised industries due to conflicts of interests with the community through parliament.¹⁴⁴ The *NUGMW* remained largely silent on the domination of the National Coal Board (NCB) by ex-private mine owners and managers. Indeed, issues around the nature and efficacy of nationalisation, or increased worker participation in management

¹³⁸ J. D. Lawrence, 'The Shop I Want', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1947), p. 265.

¹³⁹ J. D. Lawrence 'Factory Totalitarian Dictators -II', p. 202.

¹⁴⁰ This position had widespread support outside the AEU, and included a diverse range of actors, from the right wing NUGMW, to G. D. H. Cole, and Harry Pollitt.

¹⁴¹ "M", 'Bro. Young is out of Step', *A.E.U Journal*, (March, 1947), p. 85.

¹⁴² Anon., 'The Tyranny of Phrases', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1947), p. 307.

¹⁴³ Harry Crane, 'This Freedom of Ours', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1949), pp. 140-41.

¹⁴⁴ R. E. Scouller, 'Some Immediate Problems', *The Clerk*, (January-February, 1948), pp. 1-2.

(except in the broadest generalised terms) were omitted. However, a single complaint was printed stating that they 'could never accept that the architects of the capitalist system ... could also be the architects of the New World'.¹⁴⁵ In 1948 the *NUGMW* concluded that:

Until the problem [nationalisation] has been satisfactorily solved, from the TU standpoint one feels that it would be both unwise and untimely to widen the scope of nationalized industry.¹⁴⁶

The journal's lack of debate, despite many members being directly employed or indirectly impacted by nationalisations, can only be interpreted as a deliberate editorial decision to pursue a policy of unity behind the Labour Government.

The absence of scrutiny or denunciation of the NCB by the *MW* is more complex, but doubtless partly driven by their enthusiasm for nationalisation, and partly support for the Labour Government (although post-mid 1947 they became increasingly critical). However, the widespread discussion of the topic's on the left may have meant the editors considered their limited space had other exigencies.

Steel

Steel nationalisation was acrimonious, largely, because unlike coal, the industry was profitable for the capitalists. The *AEU* and *MW* covered the issue, including histories, industry concentrations, cartels, and collusions.¹⁴⁷ The *MW* described the industry's record as 'restriction, unemployment and the murder of towns like Jarrow'.¹⁴⁸ The *AEU* and *MW* were highly critical of the compensation paid, of structure, and personnel, 'top ranking jobs filled with people who had a social background but no experience in the Iron and Steel Industry'.¹⁴⁹ They retained managements, their company names, and subsidies (some £22 million in the financial year 1948-9), which limited steel prices for the largely private sector

¹⁴⁵ R. J. Cook, 'A New South Wales', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1946), p. 324.

¹⁴⁶ T. Williamson, 'Union-Employer Relationships in Nationalized industry', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1948), pp. 208-9.

¹⁴⁷ For instance: Anon., 'Our Part in Steel Struggle – Battle not Won', *MW*, (June, 1946), p. 7; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1948), pp. 321-2.

¹⁴⁸ Anon., 'Steel Sell-out', *MW*, (September, 1946), p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ 'Steelworker', 'The Story of Steel', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), p. 136; Also see, for example: 'Editor's Notes: Steel-Number One Priority', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1948), pp. 257-8; Anon., 'Steel firms' Directors to Remain', *MW*, (November, 1948), p. 1; Anon., 'Steel Kings Scare Government: Best Brains for Board', *MW*, (September, 1946), p. 1.

buyers.¹⁵⁰ The *MW* cited Ellis Hunter's (Iron and Steel Federation Chairman), comment on the nationalisation agreement, 'I think it is alright. I have no complaints'; itself a damning indictment for the communist *MW*. The *NUGMW Journal* merely described the iron and steel nationalisation without analysis, comment or criticism.¹⁵¹

The Schuman Plan further complicated the iron and steel question.¹⁵² It received little *AEU Journal* coverage, none in the *NUGMW*, but was condemned in *Electron* (the rebranded *Electrical Trades Journal*)¹⁵³ and the *MW*,¹⁵⁴ who portrayed it as an anti-socialist, anti-Soviet, monopolistic umbrella for capitalist coal, steel, and the iron Barons (including Hitler's backers), to maximise their profits at workers and consumers expense, the CP line.

Opinion polls in 1951 found that 39% of nationalized industries' employees were disillusioned. The *NUGMW* (whilst reminding readers that the alternative was capricious private ownership) suggested that the 'pioneers' 'believed State control meant new men with new ideas. ...however... too many 'old order' minds' remained in control'¹⁵⁵ and they complained that the National Boards were overly concerned with 'approved channels of procedure'.¹⁵⁶ The perception of continuity in the workers' role and relationship with the 'boss', rather than the change envisaged, caused disappointment. This was further exacerbated by problems, such as getting shop stewards official recognition in the gas industry in 1950.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, those on the left, as articulated by the *MW* and much of the *AEU*, continued to advocate further nationalisations. The unpopularity of nationalisation was deemed to be

¹⁵⁰ T. Williamson, 'Now Iron and Steel', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1948), pp. 368-9.

¹⁵¹ Compensation was based on stock exchange values (on 1st October and the 25th October 1948 or, the average market value on other dates, whichever was higher),

¹⁵² T. C. Pannell, 'The Fight for Steel and Power', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 301.

¹⁵³ For instance: Anon., 'Month in Parliament', *Electron*, (July, 1950), pp. 331-333; 'Editorial', *Electron*, (July, 1950), pp. 338-9;

¹⁵⁴ Anon., 'Stewards to Meet on Schuman Plan', *MW*, (July, 1950), p. 1; Anon., Schuman Plan Means Wage Cuts, *MW*, (July, 1950), pp. 4-5; 'Resolutions Passed by Conference', *MW*, (August, 1950), p. 3; Basil Davidson, 'Monopolists Like the Schuman Plan', *MW*, (August 1950), pp. 4-5; 'Paris Conference Against the Schuman Plan', *MW*, (September, 1950), p. 7; Anon., A Threat to Wages and Conditions, *MW*, (October, 1950), p. 1; *MW* Correspondent, 'Steel Bosses who Served Hitler Back in the Ruhr', *MW*, (October, 1950), p. 3; Anon., 'November 15: Day of Action Against the Schuman Plan', *MW*, (November, 1950), p. 2; Anon., 'Schuman Plan Menaces Welsh Steel Men', *MW*, (November, 1950), p. 7; Anon., 'Schuman Plan a Menace to us All', *MW*, (May, 1951), p. 7; Anon., 'Unions Call for Action on Wages and Peace', *MW*, (August, 1951), p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ R. G. Cook, 'Nationalization - the Verdict?' *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1951), pp. 108-9.

¹⁵⁶ J. Yarwood, 'Consumers' Councils with Teeth', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1951), p. 177.

¹⁵⁷ *NUGMW Report of the Thirty-Fifth Congress, NUGMW Minutes and Reports 1950, Gas Industry, Resolution 57.*

consequent upon the degree of continuity in these industries; they were largely managed by the same people; the relationship between workers and management remained largely unchanged, and the worker control / participation in management originally envisaged had not materialised. Thus, they surmised, disillusionment was not a product of nationalisation *per-se*, but was a consequence of the form nationalisation took, and thus could be rectified in those industries already nationalised, and new nationalisations could be structured differently.

Communism

During the immediate post-war period, communism remained a negative background issue in the *NUGMW Journal*, coming to prominence viscerally when pertinent. On the other hand, the *AEU Journal's* majority voice supported communist rights, usually even when their politics diverged. For instance, the AEU's 1945 National Committee advocated that all members paying political levy should be eligible for election as representatives for all Labour Party bodies and Labour Party Conferences.¹⁵⁸ Jack Tanner pressed this issue at the 1946 Labour Party Conference, and (again) advocated CP affiliation to the LP.¹⁵⁹ The *NUGMW Journal* reported that his speech was disrupted when he credited communists for JPCs successes.¹⁶⁰ (This was omitted in the *AEU Journal*). The *MW* cited the same speech and appealed against the 'outburst of antagonism between the different sections.'¹⁶¹ The position of *The Clerk* on communism at this time was nearer that of the *AEU* than the *NUGMW*.

The extent of the impact of the international context on the unions political cultures, was evidenced in diminution of pro-communist statements in the *AEU Journal* from 1948 onwards (and also in *The Clerk*) as the Cold War intensified, and anti-communist rhetoric increased. One *AEU* contributor equated an attempt to obtain a

¹⁵⁸ 'National Committee, 1945', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 303-7.

¹⁵⁹ 'Extracts from the President's Address to the 1946 National Committee', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), pp. 232-3; W. H. Shackleton *et al.*, 'Labour Party Conference Report June 1946', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), p. 23. Also see: 'General Office Report', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1946), p. 37-39.

¹⁶⁰ Jack Cooper, 'The Labour Party Conference, Bournemouth 1946', *NUGMW Journal* (July, 1946), pp. 220-21 and 223.

¹⁶¹ Anon., 'Unity', *MW*, (July, 1946), p. 8.

strike decision at the re-called National Committee (1948), to a 'complete domination of the Union by the Communist minority',¹⁶² adding, that if they succeeded, it would be comparable to the revolutionary forces 'Burning and murdering' in Kharkov in 1919. Responses were published, one entitled 'Let Us be Fair--Even to Russia',¹⁶³ and another highlighted how such anti-communist hyperbole was 'reminiscent of Tory fear-mongering'.¹⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the prevailing mood was illustrated by four out of six readers' letters published in (May 1948) which denounced communists within the movement, or complained that the journals published 'extreme socialist' views.¹⁶⁵ Notably however, two pro-communist letters were included, illustrating the continued editorial policy of publishing multiple left wing ideological positions. Thus, what the *AEU Journal* contributors deemed to be acceptable and unacceptable forms of socialism shifted over time in response to the changing international context and the wider ideas environment.

The following year (1949), Jack Tanner alleged that communists were endeavouring to undermine the economy and weaken the Labour Government and movement, hoping that with 'the consequential scarcity, unemployment and dissatisfaction ... the workers will turn to them' resulting in 'planned insurrection-possibly Civil War - certainly the forcible overthrow of the Government ... and ... dictatorship of the CP'¹⁶⁶ Amid such allegations one published respondent declared that he was elected as:

Minute Secretary, Branch Secretary, District Committee Representative, Shop Steward, Trades Council Secretary, Food Control Committee Representative ... as a known Communist ... If a meeting supports some policy put forward by a Communist in preference to another, is not that democracy?¹⁶⁷

The *NUGMW Journal* maintained its long-standing anti-communist position,¹⁶⁸ it merely intensified as the Cold War intensified. Warnings were published that 'We

¹⁶² Fred Evans, 'The Universal Providers', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1948), p. 365; See also for instance: W. J. Hiscox, 'Make the Communists see Red!' *AEU Journal*, (November, 1948), p. 330.

¹⁶³ R. W. Brooks, 'Let Us Be Fair--Even to Russia', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1949), p. 45.

¹⁶⁴ L. Startry, 'Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1949), p. 14.

¹⁶⁵ 'Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1948), p. 145.

¹⁶⁶ J. Tanner, 'Extracts from the President's Address to the 1949 Meeting of the National Committee', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1949), p. 235.

¹⁶⁷ W. S. Evans 'Red or Blue?' *AEU Journal*, (January, 1949), p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ Extracts from the General Secretary speech, 'British Labour and the USA', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1949), pp. 336-8.

must be alert that they [communists] have no opportunity to plant the seeds of their insidious propaganda within our ranks',¹⁶⁹ as, through 'infiltration in politics and trade unions we find that a mere handful of Communists can wield tremendous power over the community as a whole', alleging that they were 'just like Hitler'¹⁷⁰ (and thus indubitably evil). The *NUGMW* justified their position (and that of the TUC and Labour Party hierarchy) by suggesting that they were 'compelled to forestall any *coup d'état* by those who hold key positions in our constitution.'¹⁷¹ The *NUGMW Journal* provided its own interpretation of international communist history, which it linked to the contemporaneous World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) disunity over the Marshall Plan,¹⁷² unrest against the production drive, an ambition to capitulate the Labour Government,¹⁷³ and Cominform policies. Indeed, everything concerning communism and the Soviets was framed to leave no doubt as to communists' malevolence, and the necessity for members to counter their influence.

Despite the escalating anti-communist environment, the *MW* articles were increasingly published with attribution (spring 1946 onwards) whereas previously they were almost exclusively anonymous. The *MW* presented the 1948 onwards communist 'witch hunt' as a replay of the 1924 situation, where attacks on the left preceded assaults on workers' terms and conditions.¹⁷⁴ The *MW* condemned the presentation by the capitalist press of shop stewards as a 'red bogey,' which they suggested was an employer expedient:

They want to drive a wedge between members and union leaders; if the Stewards can be isolated from the membership ... workers' claims can be resisted. Profits can be safeguarded.¹⁷⁵

Thus, *MW* contributors sought to undermine 'Reds' fear-mongering by firmly situating shop stewards as the workers' ally against their exploiters.

The *MW* expressed alarm at 'Attlee's statement giving the secret police wide powers to conduct a witch hunt in the Civil Service.'¹⁷⁶ (The *NUGMW* reported the

¹⁶⁹ T. W. Kerry, 'Congress – Torquay June 20th-23rd', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1948), pp., 194-6.

¹⁷⁰ H. Matther, 'This Freedom and Communism', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1948), pp. 141-2.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-2. Also see: T. Williamson, 'A Backward and Forward Look on Trade Union Unity', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1948), p. 16.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹⁷³ T. Williamson, 'Don't Let your own Side Down', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1948), pp. 240-1.

¹⁷⁴ 'G. S.', 'Red Herring', *MW*, (February, 1948), p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ Anon., 'One Enemy', *MW*, (April, 1946), p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ Anon., 'Shop Stewards Back Unions Wage Claim', *MW*, (April, 1948), p. 4.

policy but without censure). The *MW* condemned the TUC circular banning Communist appointments or speakers, as being antithetical to the union movement's ethos.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, the *MW* (and *AEU*), appealed against individual dismissals, for instance, Ernest Athorn (due to his Second World Peace Congress involvement).¹⁷⁸ They publicised the CPGB's *The British Road to Socialism* policy statement which declared that 'Britain will reach Socialism by her own road,' and that 'the British people can transform Parliament into an instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people' rather than 'introduce Soviet Power into Britain'.¹⁷⁹ This supported the *MW* published narrative, that they merely sought a socialist state where the majority, not the few mattered (which ran parallel to their agitational content that sought to motivate their readers into action).

Britain's Financial Position, the American Loan, and Marshall Plan

The intertwining domestic economic sphere, international finance, and foreign affairs, came together with Lend-Lease's cancellation. It was universally condemned by the journals' contributors. The *AEU* and *MW* judged it to be indicative of US capitalist desire for economic dominance, which would enable them to steer British domestic and foreign policy, and export opportunities. The *MW* considered it reinforced the need for international trade unionism to fight imperialist and 'dangerous reactionaries whose poisonous doctrine "back to cut-throat competition" is spread 'from City Offices as well as from Wall Street.'¹⁸⁰ The *AEU* urged the Government to refuse 'any financial arrangement with the US which will make this country dependent upon and subservient to the economic royalists and Big Business interests.' They endorsed Attlee's message to the American Congress, 'we are going on with our programme of socialisation whether America likes it or not'.¹⁸¹ The *AEU* majority voice considered the subsequent US loan to be a necessary expedient that 'bore few marks of generosity'.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ E.g. Anon., 'Red Scare Flops', *MW*, (December, 1948), p. 2; Anon., 'Branch Rejects E.C Ban', *MW*, (February, 1950), p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ E.g. Anon., 'AEU Appeal Against Dismissal', *MW*, (January, 1951), p. 6.

¹⁷⁹ Anon., 'The British Road to Socialism', *MW*, (February, 1951), p. 6.

¹⁸⁰ Anon., 'Switch Policy', *NP*, (September, 1945), p. 4.

¹⁸¹ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1945), p. 353.

¹⁸² Henry Berry, 'The Month in Parliament', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1946), p. 10.

Roosevelt's death precipitated *AEU* contributors' warning of the 'disintegration of all progressive forces in America, and that the Democrats had become a collection of vested interests'.¹⁸³ These vested interests were deemed to hold power nationally and internationally, and were behind the US's insistence on dollar denominated trade settlements¹⁸⁴ (although the Cold War was already an evolving and intensifying reality). The *MW* concurred. In order to illustrate the fact that many shared their concerns, the *AEU* reported on the disaffection of some Labour Party MPs over the extent to which a perceived need to please the US was shaping British foreign policy (1946), publishing Crossman's (defeated) amendment calling for the Government to:

... review and recast its conduct of international affairs as to afford the utmost encouragement to, and collaboration with, all nations striving to secure full Socialist planning and control of world resources, and ... a democratic and constructive Socialist alternative to an otherwise unenviable conflict between American Capitalism and Russian Communism.¹⁸⁵

The prevailing *AEU Journal* majority opinion (and that of *The Clerk*¹⁸⁶) promoted this 'third way' at this time, distinct from American Capitalism and Russian Communism (promoted by G. D. H. Cole and the *Keep Left* advocates).

The Marshall Plan provoked diverse reactions.¹⁸⁷ On the state level, sixteen countries accepted it and worked to fulfil the US's requirements, but the Soviet Union rejected its conditions and barred Eastern European states from engagement (in order that they remained a buffer zone for Soviet security).

The *AEU Journal* provided detailed analysis reflecting the importance they attached to the subject, and their belief that the membership should be informed and be interested. Disquiet over American actions, intentions, and ideology, occasionally spilt over into anti-American polemics:

¹⁸³ J. C. Forman, 'The Month in Parliament', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1946), pp. 362-3.

¹⁸⁴ This also meant Britain's (non-sterling area) trade partners required dollars to finance their own US trades, which itself impacted Britain. See, for instance: J. Stewart, 'Money Monopoly', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1947), p. 337.

¹⁸⁵ J. C. Forman, 'The Month in Parliament', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1946), pp. 362-3.

¹⁸⁶ See, for instance: 'The 56th Annual Conference', *The Clerk*, (May-June, 1947), p. 50.

¹⁸⁷ The British TUC, the Scandinavian Group, and others favoured the plan; whilst the Soviets and French Conderacion Generale du Travail (CGT), and a few others opposed it.

[America] that land of freemen: free to use machine guns against the workers in labour disputes and to lynch Negroes to satisfy the whims of her southern gentlemen ... A country that has enriched itself out of the miseries, suffering and destruction of two world wars. ... it breeds fear and suspicion even among the rulers and forces them to spend countless millions of dollars on defence measures.¹⁸⁸

The *AEU* reluctantly approved the Marshall Plan as an expedient agreed to under severe duress. Refusal, it was thought, would have equally consigned Britain to American mercy.¹⁸⁹ They reported on the concern of the European Committee on Economic Co-operation over the Marshall Plan conditionalities,¹⁹⁰ and reminded readers that the American Government represented capitalist financial interests domestically and internationally. The *AEU* also highlighted the divisions within the WFTU (discussed below), the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the US unions.¹⁹¹ For instance, a US Committee of Industrial Organisations (CIO) visitor's report of opposition to the policy due to its 'political implications'¹⁹² was published, along with assertions that the AFL and CIO officially supported the Plan, on 'fraternal humanitarian grounds' and 'to preserve our own form of democracy and our living standards and security'.¹⁹³ Moreover, the *AEU Journal* reported the unanimously adopted CIO Convention resolution:

... under no circumstances should food or any other aid ... be used as a means of coercing free but needy people in the exercise of their rights or independence and self-government, or to fan the flames of civil warfare.¹⁹⁴

Such reporting, in addition to merely disseminating information, was doubtlessly motivated by a desire to mitigate reader hostility to accepting American money with strings attached, particularly in light of their previous anti-US propaganda.

¹⁸⁸ J. W. Smith, 'The World is What we Make It', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1947), p. 266.

¹⁸⁹ 'Extracts from the President's Address to the, 1948 Meeting of the National Committee', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1948), pp. 202-3.

¹⁹⁰ 'Editor's Notes', 'Marshall Plan', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1948), pp. 1-2.

¹⁹¹ See, for instance: 'Editor's Notes', 'WTUF and Marshall Plan', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1947), pp. 353-4, 357; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1948), pp. 1-2.

¹⁹² 'Editor's Notes', 'The Marshall Plan', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1948), pp. 33-4.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

A minority strand within the *AEU*, was represented by Walter Ayles MP (who, like most contributing MPs was politically right of other contributors). He stated, in a tribute to Bevin, that:

Marshall Aid with the assistance of Cripps saved England. The Atlantic Pact which with the great assistance of a futile Russian policy ... killed isolationism in America and linked the US with Europe for all time.¹⁹⁵

However, as the Cold War intensified, *AEU Journal* opinion tended further towards this position (and that of the *NUGMW*).

The *MW*, steadfastly condemned the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact, which they considered contravened the UN Charter. They cited Senator Vandenberg's statement (US Senate Marshall Aid debate) that in:

... signing the Atlantic Pact Britain would also agree to a specific memorandum certifying that her trade agreements did not and would not come into conflict with the purposes of the Atlantic Alliance.¹⁹⁶

This, the *MW* stated, explained the British Government's non-engagement in trade with Eastern Europe, to the detriment of Britain's economic position and job security.¹⁹⁷ The Ford steel plant's exclusion from the Steel Bill was similarly blamed on US pressure and concerns that 'the Marshall dole might suffer'.¹⁹⁸ The 20% cut in steel allocated to the shipbuilding industry in 1947 'so that our friends in the USA can dump their Liberty ships on us',¹⁹⁹ and the US's proposed deferment of British shipbuilding until after 1952, rendering some 13,000 unemployed, were considered Marshall Plan corollaries that harmed British workers.²⁰⁰

In contrast to the *MW* and *AEU Journals*, the *NUGMW* presented the US as benevolent, and the Marshall Plan as 'generous and far-sighted',²⁰¹ an aid to reconstructing a healthy Western Europe, both industrially, and, as an example of

¹⁹⁵ W. H. Ayles, 'Foreign Secretary, Past and Present', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), p. 141.

¹⁹⁶ Anon., 'Standard's Fire 1,700: more 'Redundancy'', *MW*, (April, 1949), p. 1. (reported '*Manchester Guardian*', (March 25th 1949).

¹⁹⁷ Board of Trade Order No. 652 (1949), and Export of Goods Control Order No. 2466 (1949); Anon., 'Exports to USSR Banned', *MW*, (March, 1950), p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Anon., 'Why Leave Fords out?' *MW*, (February, 1949), p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ Jimmie Hamilton, 'Wage Freezing: Open Letter to Cripps', *MW*, (March, 1948), p. 4.

²⁰⁰ Finlay Heart, 'Cripps Cuts Mean Unemployment in Britain's Shipyards', *MW*, (February, 1948), p. 5.

²⁰¹ H. L. Bullock 'United Nations Association', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1948), p. 99.

'liberty and human rights.' They quoted J. B. Carey (CIO), that the Plan was 'partial repayment to the European countries for the contribution they had made in human resources to America', and George Meany's statement that the AFL, was 'wholeheartedly in favour'.²⁰² No anti-American opinions were printed. The only downside they foresaw was that intimate ties with America left Britain vulnerable to her economic fluctuations and export surpluses (British competition in foreign markets).²⁰³ The *NUGMW* rejected suggestions that Marshall Aid (and the US loan) was a US tool to steer British domestic and foreign policy, or to allow US financial interests to penetrate Europe. Instead, they regularly expressed gratitude for US finance, and the necessity to convince America 'that we do not regard it as a subsidy or a right',²⁰⁴ and (following the US and Bevinite line) interpreted Russian Marshall Plan opposition as indicative of their desire to sabotage it, and the West's unity in protecting democratic freedoms.

International Sphere

Empire

Peace precipitated the revival of the pre-war approach of internationalist and collective security of many contributors, and the 1945 Labour Party victory was seen as holding the promise of a 'socialist foreign policy'. The *NUGMW Journal* stressed the need to 're-align the sympathies of those who had learned British diplomat's word was not always his bond'.²⁰⁵ In India this was evidenced in procrastination, unfulfilled promises of economic and political freedom, and even 'that our slick diplomats have actually fermented ... fratricidal struggles for power'.²⁰⁶ The Moslem and Hindu conflict, and the dire conditions were considered a damning indictment on British colonial rule.

Despite subscribing to the core socialist and labourist concept of equality, this was usurped by 'traditional' ideas around colonialism by *NUGMW Journal* contributors.

²⁰² T. Williamson, 'What is Marshall Aid and Why?', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1949), pp. 16-18.

²⁰³ T. Williamson, 'You Can't Buy Economic Salvation with a Dollar-Only by Hard Work', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1947), pp. 280-1.

²⁰⁴ J. Yarwood, 'Wholly Different Peoples', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1948), pp. 267-8.

²⁰⁵ H. Mather. 'Little Man What Now?' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1945), p. 330.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

British exceptionalism and the 'white man's burden' pervaded their content: 'the cool, reasoning, tolerant Briton' was contrasted with 'these simple, innocent, illiterate, emotional souls, [who] can be whipped into a fury of insensate killing'.²⁰⁷ Such ideas, although unacceptable and deeply offensive in contemporary society, were widely subscribed to when they were written. The passage of time and changing mores have rendered such issues visible.

The *NUGMW* also suggested that India's terrible labour conditions could be cured by building a TU movement 'like ours', and that their own Labour Party would transform Indian employers into 'decent citizens'.²⁰⁸ This was incongruous and logically inconsistent with their belief that employer/ employee relations were structural (shaped by capitalism), and their portrayal of British employers' as malevolent despite the British Labour Party and trade union movement's presence. Moreover, in parallel with British exceptionalism, the *NUGMW's* deferential attitude to Royalty continued, for instance, describing Lord Mountbatten's appointment as Governor General, as 'a happy and fortunate choice ... exemplifying all that is best in the Britisher'.²⁰⁹

Conversely, the *AEU Journal*, continued promoting its longstanding ethically based support of Indian independence (the financial aspects of empire were considered extraneous to the argument). It backed the India League, and expressed 'grave dissatisfaction at the chaos and famine in India, which has resulted in the death of over four million Indian people',²¹⁰ which it considered was a consequence of Tory Imperialist and Colonial policies. They advocated policies inspired by the Atlantic Charter's ethos: the release of political prisoners, granting India Dominion status under a National Government,²¹¹ universal suffrage, and rescinding restrictions on freedom of movement, speech, and association.²¹² When in 1946 famine reoccurred,²¹³ the *AEU* predicted six million deaths 'A cool calculation - a race of

²⁰⁷ H. L. Bullock, 'Impressions of Ceylon and India', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1950), pp. 130-1.

²⁰⁸ H. L. Bullock, 'Impressions' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1950), p. 163.

²⁰⁹ H. L. Bullock, 'The Indian Scene', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1948), pp. 3-5.

²¹⁰ Now known as the Bengal Famine; 'National Committee', 1945, *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 303-7.

²¹¹ 'National Committee 1945: India League', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 303-7.

²¹² 'The National Committee 1946', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), pp. 234-238.

²¹³ Also precipitating bread and flour rationing in Britain.

people must die',²¹⁴ which although the figure was erroneous, illustrated the *AEU*'s contributors' desire to propagate ideas around international fraternal sentiment.

Outside the Indian question, there was little Colonial coverage, which contrasted with the Labour Government's often-expressed enthusiasm for the Commonwealth as a resource for British economic reconstruction. Walter Ayles, MP wrote in the *AEU* from the Labour Party establishment view (to which the *NUGMW* accorded), describing British colonial policy (1946), as illustrating:

... our real love for freedom. We are ... spending millions of pounds in building up their economic and social life and their educational systems' and have sent out trade union leaders to train the natives in trade union organisation and the establishment of co-operative societies. We want them gradually to develop so that they too will be self-governing.²¹⁵

Nonetheless, in reality, declarations about colonial development translated in practice into increased exploitation.²¹⁶ In keeping with the Government policies since the 1930s, the Colonial Office co-opted trade unionists to assist in the development of 'responsible' trade unions (that is non-nationalist and non-communist). The TUC organised special training courses, and Ruskin College sponsored correspondence courses for colonial trade union leaders. However, by 1950, J. Hale MP acknowledged that the Empire's natural resources, including labour, had been exploited, with derisory levels of services provided in return, and education and health provision left to religious missions.²¹⁷

The Wider International Scene

The need for international trust and economic co-operation were highlighted, and consensus formed that the UN was the mechanism to achieve it. However, the *AEU* expressed concern over a perceived democratic deficit in the San Francisco

²¹⁴ J. W. Smith, 'Food in a World of Limited Supplies', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1946), p. 208.

²¹⁵ Walter Ayles, 'The Parliamentary Year in Retrospect', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), p. 240.

²¹⁶ Callaghan, '*Great Power Complex*'.

²¹⁷ J. Hale, 'Colonial Affairs', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1950), p. 246.

Agreement itself, especially the 'Big Powers' ability to defy decisions, whilst the smaller nations had no such option.²¹⁸

The hoped for 'new world order' was deemed to be partially dependent on international trade unionisms' input. The *AEU* accorded with the TUC policy (1945), including the establishment of the WFTU, premised on the understanding that 'only amongst the workers could be found the base for the formation of free democratic governments,' and they possessed the 'experience and the equipment to help forge such governments'.²¹⁹ The WFTU optimistically believed that 'no Government will dare refuse admission to colonial territories to so representative a body... nor ignore its recommendations'. Moreover, they claimed a right to a seat and vote in the UN Economic and Social Council, and a consultative voice in the UN General Assembly.²²⁰ These claims were ignored and the *AEU* denounced the Labour Government's opposition to them.²²¹

The subsequent difficulties within the WFTU over the trade secretariats function were noted in the journals.²²² The *NUGMW Journal* fully endorsed the TUC walkout.²²³ *AEU Journal* contributors challenged the dominant narrative around the WFTU impasse, and focused on the need for international co-operation, unity, and talks.²²⁴ The *MW* contributors unanimously condemned the TUC's walk-out, and reported on the WFTU EC's Scandinavian representative's condemnation of the TUC proposal to suspend activities, and M. Benoit Frachon's (CGT General Secretary) accusation about the Anglo-American union leaders' 'collaboration with the American Secretary of State'.²²⁵

AEU contributors considered the USA's intention to secure military bases in numerous Pacific Islands to be incompatible with the World Charter. Britain's re-occupation of Hong Kong, and France's deployment of forces into Indo-China to

²¹⁸ R. B. Suthers 'Peace - By Permission of the Big Five', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1945), p. 210.

²¹⁹ 'Editor's Notes: TUC in Transition', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 289-290.

²²⁰ Gordon Schaffer, 'The World Federation of Trade Unions', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1946), p. 12.

²²¹ 'The National Committee, 1946', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), pp. 234-238.

²²² E.g. 'Aberdeen Congress, Chairman's Address', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1947), pp. 202-6; Anon., 'International Metal Workers Federation: Report of the Conference', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1947), p. 300; 'Editor's Notes: Stormy Clouds', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1948), pp. 321-2.

²²³ T. Williamson, 'Where do we go from Margate?', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1948), pp. 304-6; T. Williamson, 'The TUC in Retrospect', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1949), p. 304; T. Williamson, 'The TUC and the WFTU', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1949), pp. 80-81; H. L. Bullock, 'Free, Independent and Democratic', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 2.

²²⁴ R. Adams *et al*, 'Report of the TUC', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1947), p. 298.

²²⁵ For instance: Anon., 'TUC Splits World Unions', *MW*, (February, 1949), p. 7.

thwart the population's self-determination, were similarly denounced.²²⁶ *AEU* contributors lamented the speed with which the optimism surrounding the UNO and Bretton Woods agreements dissipated, and 'business as usual' re-established, concluding that national representatives in the UN Councils and Committees were pursuing profiteering strategies and organising for the next war.²²⁷ To highlight 'right thinking peoples' antipathy towards this, the *AEU Journal* published Leon Jouhaux's (World Trade Union Conference chairman) statement:

We ... do not want economic war which creates the germs of future conflagrations ... the question for to-morrow is not one of a new division of power, but of a community of forces of production.²²⁸

The *NUGMW* concurred (1945) stating that there was:

... no possibility of peace if nations insist on their sovereignty ... We have not spent ten years out of the last thirty getting rid of militarism... only to enthrone it here and elsewhere amongst the Allied Nations.²²⁹

They were highly cognisant that 'years pass, memories are dimmed and sedulously there creeps in again the old spirits of fear, distrust and suspicion; the old diplomacy ... and the sickening game of competitive armament'²³⁰ and they illustrated the longstanding nature of their 'common-sense' position by citing William Penn, who 250 years earlier recommended a United States of Europe, 'where every nation should agree to submit its disputes to a world court of arbitration and all nations would promptly unite to crush an aggressor'.²³¹ The *NUGMW* called for international aggression to be categorised as an international crime, and for an International Defence Pact, with a dispute settlement force (also utilisable in civil conflicts, such as Palestine).²³²

²²⁶ R. B. Suthers, 'The Atomic Bomb was a Nine Days' Wonder', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1945), p. 269.

²²⁷ For instance: R. B. Suthers, 'A Vote for Labour is a Vote for a Fine Future', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 172; R. B. Suthers, 'The Atomic Bomb was a Nine Days' Wonder', p. 269; R. B. Suthers, 'They are Making us a Rotten Peace', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), p. 297; R. B. Suthers, 'Are we Preparing for the Next War', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1945), p. 328.

²²⁸ R. B. Suthers, 'They are Making us a Rotten Peace' p. 297.

²²⁹ Anon., 'War and Collective Security', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1945), pp. 202-3.

²³⁰ C. Dukes, 'United Nations Association', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1946), p. 84.

²³¹ William Dollin, 'A Pioneer of Democracy', *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1946) p. 263.

²³² H. L. Bullock, 'United Nations Association', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1948), p. 99; T. Williamson, 'Peace in our Time and Always', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1948), pp. 272-3.

The official union journals promoted the United Nations Association (UNA) as they had the LNU; its ideals were stressed, and its objectives and educational remit²³³ and its non-defence works were praised.

Despite the initial optimism engendered by the UN's establishment, schisms between the Allies deepened, and two conflicting 'colony conscious' power blocks emerged, resulting in conflicts fermented by fear and mistrust, and competitive weapons development (including nuclear).²³⁴ The deployment of nuclear weapons received sparse coverage other than the recommendation that all atomic bombs and infrastructure should be subsumed under a UN body.²³⁵ The *NUGMW* commented on the 'miracle of scientific achievement, which saved tens of thousands of lives'.²³⁶ The *AEU Journal* postulated that atomic fission was a potential saviour from the oil cartels who were lined-up behind governments and a threat to world peace. The Russians reportedly believed that these cartels aspired to halt Soviet nationalisations and sought to control all oil:

... from the tip of Arabia, through Iran and Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon, the Caspian, the source of the Volga to the mouth of the Petchora... Palestine ...with its pipelines and its Haifa, and Syria with its Tripoli.²³⁷

Oil was a longstanding issue in the *AEU Journals*, and considered a factor in multiple conflicts past, and potentially in the future (especially in North Africa), due to structural dependencies, and especially the US's 'rapacious' appetite for the commodity.²³⁸

In the intensifying Cold War context, *AEU* opinion shifted towards that expressed in the National Council of Labour's May Day Manifesto (1949), that the UN and Atlantic Treaty, were 'new instruments for the establishment of permanent peace based upon the principles of collective security and mutual trust'.²³⁹ However, as time progressed they changed tack again, countering the mainstream media's presentation of developments in Europe and Asia (1951) as being in accordance

²³³ For instance: Anon., 'United Nations Association,' *NUGMW Journal*, (August, 1946), p. 253; Anon., 'United Nations Organisation', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1946), p. 215.

²³⁴ H. L. Bullock. 'The American Scene', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1948), pp. 258-9.

²³⁵ T. Williamson, 'Peace in our Time and Always', pp. 272-3.

²³⁶ 'Colwyn Bay Congress: Chairman's Address' *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1946), p. 174. Also see: C. Dukes, 'The Gateway to More,' *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1946), p. 156.

²³⁷ Tom Barker, 'Petroleum - World Trouble Maker No.1', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1947), p. 111.

²³⁸ T. Barker, 'Like a Wild Animal!!!' *AEU Journal*, (July, 1947), p. 210.

²³⁹ 'National Council of Labour's May Day Manifesto', 1949', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1949), p. 149.

with UN decisions. The *AEU* maintained that 'America can command sufficient votes in the Assembly to ensure a majority for any resolution' noting that 'When any government still in receipt of Marshall Aid votes against the USA on any major issue, then we shall be justified in believing that there are no strings attached.'²⁴⁰ Moreover, US economic strength and control of raw materials ensured that 'she can exert pressure on any country that endeavours to run counter to her wishes.'²⁴¹

Liberated Countries

Greece

AEU Journal contributors' concern over the Greek situation continued. Their 1945 National Committee resolution stated: 'the British Army landed in Europe to free the suppressed peoples.... The past events in Greece have undermined our faith in the Government's intention'.²⁴² (In reality the British army's (December 1944) occupation of Greece aimed to prevent the communist inspired ELAS, from gaining power after they ousted the German army).²⁴³ They denounced the Labour Government's support for the 'reactionary monarchists beating down the working people-... of the heroic Resistance Movement',²⁴⁴ and expressed concerns that Greek Unions and Trade Councils' elected representatives were being replaced by Monarchists.²⁴⁵ Such criticism continued (including supporting resolutions at the Labour Party Conference²⁴⁶ and TUC Congress²⁴⁷). Their 1947 National Committee (NC) appealed for clemency for Pandelis Goussides Salonika (EAM Secretary)²⁴⁸, and sought Makronnisos Concentration Camps' closure, and an amnesty.²⁴⁹ Thus despite the *AEU*'s rightward shift as the Cold War developed, they continued to promote the democratic rights of supposedly 'freed' peoples in their

²⁴⁰ Tom Rees, 'The Illusion of Peace', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1951), p. 181.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² 'National Committee, 1945', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 303-7.

²⁴³ See Callaghan 'Great Power Complex'.

²⁴⁴ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows, a New Start', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1946), p. 323.

²⁴⁵ N. G. Belsten, 'Report of the 1946 TUC', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1946), p. 369.

²⁴⁶ The delegates, 'AEU Delegation to Labour Party Conference', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1947), p. 204.

²⁴⁷ N. G. Belsten, 'Report of the 1946 TUC', p. 369.

²⁴⁸ 'The National Committee 1947', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1947), pp. 271-5.

²⁴⁹ A. E. Sumbler, 'TUC Report 1950', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 302; The *AEU* similarly demanded the release of trade unionists imprisoned and awaiting trial in Cyprus; 'The National Committee 1946', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1946), pp. 234-238.

struggle against what they considered to be reactionary occupation, including by British and US Governments' forces.

The *MW* concurred.²⁵⁰ They linked British foreign policy and the Government production drive.²⁵¹ They called for a socialist foreign policy, emphasising the morality and widespread support for their position, including from within the TUC, and the sixty MPs that signed a resolution to end the Greece situation.²⁵² The *MW* highlighted the credit and equipment given by the US to the Greek Royalists.²⁵³ President Truman's (March 1947) statement announcing the containment policy was deemed to be 'an open declaration of American Imperialism and a threat, not only to the Soviet Union, but to Greece and Britain' and 'all progressive democracies' carrying the world towards WWII.²⁵⁴ The *MW*'s propagation of such 'common sense' understandings sought to counter the interpretations of the British establishment and capitalist press, and draw adherents to their cause, whilst also garnering support for policies that assisted Russian foreign policy objectives. The Greek coverage also illustrates that whereas the left-wing *AEU Journal* contributors and the communist MP contributors usually concluded that the cause of society's problems were structural (capitalism), their response to Truman illustrates that they still considered agency important (even when fundamentally shaped by structures).

The conspicuous absence in the *NUGMW Journal* of comment on any Greece is indicative of their shutting down dissent and debate on issues that questioned Government policies and gave ammunition to the capitalist press and Tory opposition.

Attitudes to Germany

Any international fraternity expressed in the *NUGMW* did not extend to Germans in the immediate post-war period. However, in 1947 there was a temporary volte-face, when they suggested that: 'If you have weak stomachs, find sweet the taste of

²⁵⁰ E.g. Anon., 'Foundry Men Condemn Government's Foreign Policy', *MW*, (October, 1946), p. 7; Anon., 'Foreign Policy', *NP*, (December, 1945), p. 6.

²⁵¹ Anon., 'Bevin and Output', *MW*, (April, 1947), p. 3.

²⁵² Anon., 'Freedom for Greece', *MW*, (January, 1949), p. 5.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 5.

²⁵⁴ Anon., 'Wall Street Moves in', *MW*, (April, 1947), p. 1.

vengeance, or feel that it would be disloyal to slain sons to sympathize with the Germans, don't visit Germany'.²⁵⁵ Then, by May 1948, they reverted, reporting Germans to be unchanged, and that ex-Nazis were not only free but being appointed to positions of authority (after the de-Nazification programmes were effectively abandoned). The *NUGMW* alleged (without citing any evidence) that the Germans 'ache to be together in the sense that they are of one mind, obeying one will, ... working and planning towards their ideal of complete unanimity - which would be just hell to us.'²⁵⁶ By 1951, in the Cold War context, the *NUGMW* suggested that many Germans considered that:

Hitler was not wrong in most of his ideas, but only in some of his methods. ... they are laughing ... at our failure to get the Russians to see right and reason ... and become daily surer that the West cannot adjust the balance without their help.²⁵⁷

Thus, reinforcing their status as a dangerous and untrustworthy 'other'.

Conversely, the *AEU's* contributors' attitudes towards the German people was fraternal. Atrocities were blamed on the German High Command, and they suggested that condemning the German people because they failed to overthrow Hitler 'is as undemocratic and unreasonable as Nazism'.²⁵⁸ The idea that German's were all militaristic was countered, for instance, R. M. Fox's article on the peace and nature loving post- WWI 'Wandervogels' youth movement.²⁵⁹ Fox's interpretations of international affairs were heavily influenced by the consequences of Versailles, his socialism, and his internationalism (even during the war he never attacked the German people). This led him to suggest that Germany could achieve peace and democracy:

If the people are helped and encouraged as the Russians are doing ... But if every democratic aspiration is met by repression ... despair will rise again and the old militarist ghosts ... will triumph.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ J. Yarwood, 'Antidote to Hate', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1947), pp. 362-3.

²⁵⁶ J. Yarwood 'Now, 'What about the Germans?', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1948), p. 135.

²⁵⁷ J. Yarwood, 'Up and Coming Again', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1951), p. 6.

²⁵⁸ J. W. Smith, 'Do we Believe in a Soft or a Hard Peace for the Germans?' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1945), p. 180.

²⁵⁹ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows: Ghosts of Berlin', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1945), p. 236.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Like many on the left he understood fascism was capitalism's counter-offensive against socialism and workers control; consequently, a necessary condition for extinguishing fascism was to eradicate capitalism and international finance's power. German reconstruction on Socialist lines was advocated, as the 'new world order' necessitated the prevention of US attempts to reconstruct the 'old trusts ... with American capital, so that some of the profits can go to American magnates and, in due course..., they can begin re-arming the German state.'²⁶¹ They saw this exemplified in the post-war treatment of the Nazi funder Baron Kurt von Schroeder (who had strong US banking and oil links) who was given a 'decisive role in the bi-zonal Western Zones of Germany'.²⁶² Publishing such material underscored the continued danger of fascism and its link with capitalism; it was doubtless hoped that giving readers this information would motivate their support for those groups and resolutions that sought to counter pro-US and pro-capitalist policies.

The *MW* sought to engender a sense of disgust about Western Governments' policies enacted in Germany, and an admiration for Russian actions. They recommended reading Gordon Schaffer's *Russian Zone*, which reported that the ex-Nazi gentry continued their affluent lifestyle in the Western Zones, whilst in the East, they were assigned productive work or signed-on at Labour Exchanges; a turnaround that 'horrifies many middle-class Germans more than all the crimes of the Nazis.'²⁶³ Thus, readers were reminded of the class equality that a Soviet type system involved. Their anti-US polemics employed the example of German (and Japanese) low wages, which were blamed on US capital, interests, and cost cutting methods, which meant German competition was endangering British jobs, wages and conditions.²⁶⁴ The *MW* recommended solutions through the WFTU.²⁶⁵

The *MW* and *AEU* contributors condemned the subsequent suggestion of rearming Germany due to the perceived Soviet threat.²⁶⁶ The 1951 freeing of Hitler's arms manufacturer Alfred Krupp, and restoration of his property, US talks with ex Nazi

²⁶¹ R. M. Fox, 'The World's Windows: A New Start', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1946), p. 323.

²⁶² Wolfgang, 'Why we have got to Curb Fascism', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1947), p. 368.

²⁶³ Anon., 'No Decision Made Without the Shop Steward', *MW*, (December, 1947), p. 5.

²⁶⁴ For instance: Anon., 'Low Wages in Germany Threaten Jobs Here', *MW*, (January, 1949), p. 2; Anon., 'Cheap Tools from Germany', *MW*, (January, 1949), p. 3; *MW* Correspondent, 'Signs of Car Boom Ending Threats to Conditions', *MW*, (February, 1949), p. 2.

²⁶⁵ The Secretary, 'Menace of Low Wage German Output', *MW*, (February, 1949), p. 4.

²⁶⁶ For instance: 'The National Committee 1951', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1951), pp. 202-5; M. McDonald, 'A Trade Unionist in Europe', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1951), p. 149.

generals, and Germany's changed status to 'future allies' in the fight for 'Democracy and Freedom',²⁶⁷ were similarly denounced.²⁶⁸

Despite the journals extensive European coverage, the advancing Red Army's crimes against German civilians, the Nuremburg Trials, and issues around a European Customs Union, were all omitted.

Relations with Russia

The Soviet Union's pivotal role in defeat of fascism challenged preconceptions and impacted the political consciousness of many in the immediate post war period, resulting in a flourishing of fraternal sentiment towards Russia. However, this was patchy, inconsistent and at times contradictory, and did not last (except in the *MW*).

Initially after the war, *AEU* commentators noted with satisfaction political declarations favourable to consolidating Anglo-Soviet TU unity.²⁶⁹ The *AEU* sent a delegate goodwill mission.²⁷⁰ George Meany's (AFL) negative attitude towards the Soviets was criticised, and contrasted with Attlee's statement: 'Unless we mean what we say when we declare all men to be brothers, we shall fail to create the world we desire.'²⁷¹ However, geo-political changes had consequences in the domestic ideas environment and by 1947, the *AEU Journal* decided to challenge this and published a condemnation of Tories and 'crypto-Tories on the Labour benches' (such as Bevin) who judged that 'all evils' emanated from Eastern Europe, whilst considering that:

Neither the British Foreign Office, packed by Tory gentlemen, nor the American State Department, packed with vicious enemies of the American working class, had ever said or done anything incorrect.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ Anon., 'Our Task for 1951', *MW*, (January, 1951), p. 4.

²⁶⁸ Anon., 'Krupps Again', *MW*, (February, 1951), p. 3.

²⁶⁹ 'Report of the 1945 TUC', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), p. 300; 'National Committee 1945', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), pp. 303-7.

²⁷⁰ 'Editor's Notes: Visit to USSR', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1946), pp. 353-4.; They also, for instance, donated £10,500 towards a new Stalingrad Telephone Exchange; Anon., 'Stalingrad Telephone Exchange', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1946), p. 8. Such gestures were considered important in counteracting decades of Tory antagonism. See for instance W.H. Ayles, 'The Political Scene, Labour at Westminster', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1945), p. 364.

²⁷¹ 'Report of the 1945 TUC', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1945), p. 300.

²⁷² Willy Gallacher, 'It's a Queer Place, Parliament: Foreign Affairs Debate', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1947), pp. 208-9.

The American House of Representatives' decision that Soviet dominated countries should not receive Marshall Aid, was also evidenced, which further reinforced an anti-American sentiment, especially as 'Spain with its murder and thuggery' received no such disapprobation.²⁷³

The *NUGMW* contributors' general mistrust of communists soon became intertwined with their assessment of Russia. Outside the trade sphere (considered mutually beneficial in all the journals), the *NUGMW* were sceptical and suspicious of the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovakian situation, the Soviet response to the Marshall Plan, and the Yugoslavian break with Cominform, were catalysts in creating an anti-Soviet hysteria by 1948. In this ideas environment the *NUGMW Journal* complained:

Everyone who elects to dissect Russian words and Russian acts dispassionately is accused of betraying mankind by sowing distrust ... Isn't that precisely what the Fascists said when we dared to criticize Hitler.²⁷⁴

However, Russia's dire post-war state was acknowledged,²⁷⁵ including her inability 'to wage war against any first-class Power' due to severe internal stresses, no atom bomb, or 'anything which the Anglo-Americans haven't got in a superior form'.²⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the *NUGMW*'s H. L. Bullock (1949) praised:

... the realistic views of AFL towards Communism in general, Russian aims in particular ... there can be no real peace or progress ... as long as the USSR press on with their ideological totalitarianism in an attempt to dominate our world.²⁷⁷

Russian domestic policy was similarly portrayed as ominous; her TUs 'dragoon the worker into ... ever-increased output and acquiescence ... Any person who protests against this ... is dubbed a fascist'.²⁷⁸ This, however, did not inhibit the *NUGMW*'s own relentless appeals for increased production, or labelling as 'Communist' anyone agitating for industrial action.

²⁷³ 'National Committee, 1947, Presidential Address (Abridged)', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1947), pp. 234-6.

²⁷⁴ J. Yarwood, 'Fear, the Canker of Morale', *NUGMW Journal*, (April, 1948), p. 103.

²⁷⁵ J. R. Clynes, 'The Link Between Food and Duty' *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1946), pp. 356-7.

²⁷⁶ J. Yarwood, 'Fear, the Canker of Morale', p. 103.

²⁷⁷ H. L. Bullock, 'In the Middle West with the American Federation of Labour', *NUGMW Journal*, (February, 1949), pp. 34-5.

²⁷⁸ H. Crane, 'This Freedom of Ours', *NUGMW Journal*, (May, 1949), pp. 140-41.

Jack Tanner stated (1947) that 'Russian policy has not been altogether understandable, but no justification to suppose aggressive purpose'.²⁷⁹ In 1950 he repeated (without endorsing) the Stalinist view, that 'there are forces amongst the capitalist powers who do not wish for a permanent settlement with the Soviet Union and the countries under its control.' But, he added that 'these would count for little' if they proved they would not interfere in other countries.²⁸⁰ Even in the Cold War environment of 1950 - 1951, occasional *AEU* voices questioned the supposed Russian threat, when it was the US that had troops in Britain and 'hundreds of other places ... and ... American Generals ... publicly speculated on how they should use the Atom Bomb'. Moreover, it was the US that was the protagonist in crushing Soviet proposals to the UN for banning the atom bomb and disarmament.²⁸¹ The *MW* concurred.²⁸²

For the *MW* contributor's, the USSR could do no wrong. They challenged the dominant narrative and published glowing reports of different aspects of Soviet planning, industry, workers' conditions, education, health care, and full employment,²⁸³ and reported on union delegation visits to the USSR in flattering terms.²⁸⁴ They also cited the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Economic Survey for 1948, which showed European industrial production increased 16% in 1948, whilst in the USSR it increased some 28% (without Marshall Plan Aid),²⁸⁵ and in doing so contested the necessity of US money and its accompanying influence.

Notably, although export embargoes with Russia were significant issues in the *MW* and the *AEU Journals*, the Berlin blockade and airlift received no direct mentions.

Korea

North Korea's invasion of the South kept international communism a live issue. The conflict wrenched open the schism between the two power blocks as the Western Nations feared its repeat elsewhere (especially in light of Czechoslovakia and

²⁷⁹ 'Presidential Address National Committee, 1947', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1947), pp. 234-6.

²⁸⁰ J. Tanner, 'Address to National Committee', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1950), pp. 204-5.

²⁸¹ K. Brett, 'Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 10.

²⁸² Anon., 'Road to Sanity', *MW*, (July, 1951), p. 4.

²⁸³ See for instance: Anon., 'Soviet TU's Decisions Apply in all Disputes, and the Management Appeals', *NP*, (November, 1945), p. 4-5; M. Solovyev, 'What! No 'Enterprise?'' *NP*, (December, 1945), p. 4; G. Inyutin, 'Soviet Steel Workers Get Four Weeks', *MW*, (April, 1946), p. 7.

²⁸⁴ E. Frow, 'How Shop Committees Work in the USSR', *MW*, (September, 1947), p. 5.

²⁸⁵ Editor, 'Markets for British Engineering Goods', *MW*, (June, 1949), p. 4.

Yugoslavia).²⁸⁶ Positions became further entrenched, and language more inflammatory, especially within the *NUGMW*:

We are too near the grim results engineered by Hitler ... to be taken in by ... those troglodytes behind the Iron Curtain and their stooges, catspaws and deluded supporters on this side of the Iron Curtain.²⁸⁷

Thus, the *NUGMW* underlined its position on what they considered the unacceptable nature of socialism when expressed as communism; contextual changes merely shifted the focus from domestic communists as the source of evil to the USSR (akin to the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact). The *NUGMW* fully endorsed the UN, British, and American Government (and TUC), position.²⁸⁸ No dissent was published.

The *AEU Journal* did not directly question the establishment's version of events, however, it published a member's letter expressing shock at its acceptance of the 'version of events in Korea as presented by our US overloads',²⁸⁹ and sought to situate it in a longer-term perspective:

The struggle did not begin ... with North Korea's attack on South Korea. ... Japan's attack on the US at Pearl Harbour. Japan's invasion of Manchuria.... All the great Powers had, or have, or aspire to have, colonial interests in and around the Pacific. And the Asiatic peoples are in revolt against that kind of exploitation and political tutelage.

But, the *AEU* warned readers not to 'expect deliverance ... by substituting for the colonial policy of western capitalist imperialism the Communist imperialism of Soviet Russia',²⁹⁰ whilst also reminding them that:

History is strewn with ... crimes committed in the name of Liberation, ... the excuse for wholesale murder of decent freedom-loving peoples who dared to resist the so-called Liberators.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ 'Extracts from the President's Address to The National Committee 1951', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1951), p. 200; also see 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1950), pp. 229-30.

²⁸⁷ H. L. Bullock, 'The British TUs and the International Situation', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 302.

²⁸⁸ Anon., 'Brighton TUC Blueprints a Year's Work', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 319; W. E. Hopkin, 'Chairman's Address to Congress', *NUGMW Journal*, (July, 1951), pp. 207-211.

²⁸⁹ R Rodgers, 'Open Door', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1950), p. 304.

²⁹⁰ 'Editor's Notes' *AEU Journal*, (September, 1950), pp. 261-2.

²⁹¹ T. Gillinder, 'The Illusion of Peace', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1951), p. 14.

Socialist propaganda raised awareness of capitalist states' motives; Cominform's declared aim to liberate nations 'from Imperialist despotism' was deemed equivalent to the Capitalists, as it included 'overthrowing democratically elected governments ... the liquidation of free trades unions and co-operative organisations' as illustrated in 'Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and Poland.'²⁹² Both sides were judged to bear equal guilt. The *AEU* warned that further military expenditure would harm Britain's economic position, and consequently impair British international influence, thereby indirectly strengthening Cominform.²⁹³

The *MW* advised caution over 'lurid tales in the millionaire press' regarding Korea, and advised that any solution must involve the Soviet Union and the new Chinese Government.²⁹⁴ They noted that the personnel the Americans selected to replace Japanese officials were 'from the privileged classes ... of the Korean extreme right'.²⁹⁵ The *Information Bulletin for the WFTU* (Number 17, 1950) was cited, describing South Korea's dire conditions, the lack of TU rights, the brutal repression of democracy, and how, since liberation, 'over 150,000 of its active members have been killed' and '89,000 arrests in seven months under the law on subversive activities'.²⁹⁶ Stanley Earl, (a Labour Consultant to the Marshall Plan Mission, and CIO official), was reported as stating in a radio interview (July 19th, 1950) that Korea was:

... a complete full police state ... The government ... was systematically looting the Republic of Korea; while many Koreans were starving the Americans were living handsomely.²⁹⁷

Conditions in the North, by contrast, the *MW* reported, were steadily rising, with land reform and nationalisation. Thus, the *MW*'s portrayal of the conditions on the ground again challenged the dominant narrative propagated by the mainstream press and the establishment, and in doing so they attempted to rally support against such hegemonic understandings and the Government policies based upon them.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ 'Extracts from the President's Address to The National Committee', 1951', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1951), p. 200; 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (February, 1951), pp. 33-5; J. Hale, 'Labour and the Four R's', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1951), p. 180.

²⁹⁴ Anon., 'Cover for What?' *MW*, (July, 1950), p. 4.

²⁹⁵ Anon., 'What a TUC Leader saw in Korea', *MW*, (August, 1950), p. 7.

²⁹⁶ Anon., 'Facts on Korea', *MW*, (July, 1950), p. 7.

²⁹⁷ Anon., 'Mr. Earl, US Marshall Plan Expert, on Korea', *MW*, (September, 1950), p. 7.

Education

Education continued to be promoted throughout the period of the Labour Government. The *AEU* restarted its 'recommended reading' column in December 1945 (cut due war-time paper rationing). Conversely, the *NUGMW* ceased their regular book recommendations after the war. The *NP/MW* reading recommendations continued unchanged. The new post-war order meant new areas were considered to require exploration and study, such as 'Understanding Government' (including: Cabinet duties and Ministerial powers; Bill preparation and implementation; the Law, and government).²⁹⁸ A. J. Caddick, (*AEU*) reminded readers that whereas 'slaves don't need to know about politics and economics', workers do, 'as powerful vested interests are only too anxious to mislead him.'²⁹⁹

As in previous periods, context driven courses were introduced, such as 'A Working Class Plan for Britain,' 'Let us face the Future', 'The Termination of 'Lease-Lend', (American Loan, Marshall Aid conditionalities, Government White Papers, Economic Surveys for 1947 and 1948), 'The Part of the Trades Unions in Reconstruction',³⁰⁰ 'The Western Union',³⁰¹ and 'Running a Nationalized Industry'.³⁰² Also new specific 'training for management' courses were established, encompassing economics, marketing, industrial relations, and psychology, both to fulfil the new roles they believed were opening up, but also to remove 'the old curse, working class's sense of inferiority'.³⁰³ However, the *AEU* highlighted the unfulfilled aspirations of the 1945 Ince Report, which had recommended a more extensive service, including a Central Juvenile Employment Executive.³⁰⁴ The TGWU decision to increase their annual education and training budget to £75,000 (including courses on technical efficiency and scholarships to Ruskin) was considered by the *AEU* worthy of emulation.³⁰⁵

²⁹⁸ J. P. M. Millar, 'Never in History', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1947), p.232.

²⁹⁹ A. J. Caddick, 'Knowing Where to Tap', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1950), p.113.

³⁰⁰ Andrew Bennie, Stan Morris, 'Report of AEU Summer School 1948', *AEU Journal*, (November, 1948), p. 332.

³⁰¹ E. Pratt, 'Seven Happy Days at School', *NUGMW Journal*, (November, 1950), p. 339.

³⁰² W. Dollin, 'TUC Summer School 1949', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 13.

³⁰³ D. F. Bellairs, 'The Playing Fields of Ruskin', *AEU Journal*, (April, 1950), p. 110.

³⁰⁴ 'J.W.N.', 'The Youth Employment Service', *AEU Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 9.

³⁰⁵ D. F. Bellairs. 'The Playing Fields of Ruskin', p. 110.

The *NUGMW Journal* contributors concentrated on workers who were, theoretically, becoming partners in tripartite working.³⁰⁶ New courses on Factory organisation, management and productivity, Industrial Relations and the law, were introduced, covering industrial organization, finance, costing, job evaluation, joint-consultation, time-and-motion study, and personnel issues,³⁰⁷ and included Ministry of Labour and National Service supported 'Training within Industry' schemes which focused on the spreading of industrial 'know how'.³⁰⁸ The changes to the voluntary release of youths for part-time study, and the Juvenile Employment Service, were welcomed.³⁰⁹

E. Fletcher, (TUC production dept. secretary) promoted the TUC's production and management courses for shop stewards as teaching stewards to 'talk the same language as managements' to make them more 'effective in negotiations'. However, the *MW* rebutted this position, insisting that the 'the unions' job was to teach a different language – socialism as opposed to the employers hunt for profits.'

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The idea that 'orthodox' education merely conditioned children to fulfil the role that the ruling classes assigned them, continued to permeate the journals, along with the idea that decent working class education was required to elicit freedom of thought.³¹¹ School education may not have included formal politics teaching, but it continuously imbued pupils with the ideology of the institution.³¹² Thus, the unions' attitudes to public education continued unchanged, and the imperative of working class education through summer and weekend schools, postal-courses and scholarships continued, and new media, such as film, were offered free to branch meetings.³¹³

³⁰⁶ For instance: 'Workers Education', *NUGMW Journal*, September, 1948, pp. 229-30; Anon, 'Training and Education', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1951), pp. 274-6; 'TUC 1951-Blackpool', *NUGMW Journal*, (October, 1951), p. 302.

³⁰⁷ J. Cooper, London Notes, *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1950), p. 24; 'Work Study Course', *NUGMW Journal*, (March, 1950), pp. 78-9; H. Davey, 'Management and Productivity', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1949), p. 358.

³⁰⁸ J. O'Toole, 'An Experiment in Education, Shop Stewards get College Training', *NUGMW Journal*, (September, 1951), p. 260.

³⁰⁹ 'Adult Education Today', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1947), pp. 368-9; 'The Juvenile Employment Service', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1946), p. 208.

³¹⁰ TUC, 'Experts to Train Shop Stewards.' *MW*, (January, 1951), p. 6.

³¹¹ W. Wilson, 'Working Class Education', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1945), p. 233.

³¹² W. Wilson, 'Politics and an Unbiased Press', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1946), p.266.

³¹³ 'Free Film Shows for TU Branches', *NUGMW Journal*, (January, 1951), p.33.

The theme of inequality in children's and youth's access to education, continued post-war. The Barlow Committee's findings were reported, that just 20% of British youths with intelligence above the average of university students, gained places, thus depriving youth and the nation of their potential. Additionally, both the *AEU* and *NUGMW Journals* pointed out, that whilst in America one in 150 youths attended university, in Britain it was only about one in 1,000.³¹⁴ Thus, Britain lagged well behind the US investment into human, as well as physical capital, (with consequences for technological advances and productivity gains).

The 1944 Education Act, was considered to be a significant improvement on the prior situation. Nonetheless, the *AEU* condemned its continuation of class based selection and education. They lobbied for the Government to reconsider its three-pronged approach which was deemed to be imbued with disequilibrium of esteem, and the imposition of categorisations which would sustain social divisions.³¹⁵ Instead, 'multilateral' (comprehensive) schools were recommended which 'would provide a' common core 'with facilities for bias according to ability and aptitude, all radiating from that core' and thus 'eliminate the inferiority stigma when a child in a poor family enters a grammar school'.³¹⁶

Both the *AEU* and the *NUGWM* journals output accorded with Mr Tomlinson's (Minister of Education) statement that 'Just as the individual who has ceased to learn has ceased to live, so it is with nations. The more complex the problems of modern life, the more we need to foster the intellectual abilities of our people.'³¹⁷ This included adult education, which the *NUGMW* posited 'raises the level of popular discussion and private thinking', necessary for democracy to function effectively.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ H. L. Bullock, 'Does Britain Need a Higher Education', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1948), p.164; J. W. Smith, 'It is Your Health Service', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1949), p. 137.

³¹⁵ C. F. Morling, 'Labour Party Conference', *AEU Journal*, (December, 1950), p. 368; J. Tonson, 'The Multilateral School', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1946), p. 203.

³¹⁶ J. Tonson, *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ 'Adult Education Today', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1947), pp. 368-9.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Diminished and Lost Power: the 1950 and 1951 Elections

From the summer of 1948 onwards, the journals attempted to minimise public dissent against the Government in anticipation of a forthcoming general election. The *NUGMW* reported the absence of the 'usual voices' of opposition to the National Executive Council (NEC) at the 1948 Labour Party Conference.³¹⁹ At the 1949 Conference Jack Tanner (despite his criticism of Labour Party foreign and domestic policies) endorsed the undertaking to prevent internal dissensions weakening the Labour Government's chances. He largely adopted the *NUGMW*, the TUC and Labour Party leadership's position of 'responsible unionists', subscribing to Government policies, and speaking of the 'logic realism, and firmness of the Chancellor'.³²⁰ Nonetheless, the *AEU Journal* also continued publishing multiple dissenting voices, including concerns that 'the structure of Society remains unchanged',³²¹ and complaints that Labour Party attempts to garner middle-class support 'is a process of bribery at the expense of the workers'.³²² *AEU* contributors also warned that 'present loyalty can be strained and could be broken if the political leaders moved over too far to the right'.³²³ Instead they advocated socialist solutions, premised on a belief that if the public were informed about and understood such solutions, they would support them as obvious and common-sense.

As the 1950 election approached the *NUGMW Journal* offered their customary advocacy for Labour (and reminders of life under the Tories). In contrast, the *AEU Journal* engaged heavily in overt electioneering, employing various tools and formats, from cartoons, to histories, ideological discussions, and polemics. An emphasis on the Labour Government's achievements was generalised in the journals and they all sought to actively engage the readership in securing electoral victory.

³¹⁹ R. G. Cook, 'The L. P. Conference, 1948', *NUGMW Journal*, (June, 1948), p. 170.

³²⁰ 'Editor's Notes', *AEU Journal*, (July, 1949), pp. 193-4.

³²¹ H. Taylor, 'Where do we Come in?' *AEU Journal*, (June, 1949), p. 171.

³²² *Ibid.*, p.171. Also see, for example: D. Ellis, 'What Should Labour's Programme be?' *AEU Journal*, (May, 1949), p. 141.

³²³ The Labour Party Cabinet, NEC, Co-operative Party, and TU leaders met (Dorking, May, 1950) and agreed to court the middle class vote to bolster their position; F. G. Moxley, 'Where do we Stand?' *AEU Journal*, (February, 1950), p. 42.

The 1950 General Election results disappointed. Despite garnering over a million more votes than 1945, their majority dropped to five. Very limited inquests into the results were published. The fact that the Labour Party polled less votes than the combined membership of the three prongs of the Labour Movement (including those whose involvement only extended to their co-op 'divi') caused concern and bemusement, as it was considered that even those loosely linked with the labour movement should have still have come under its influence. *AEU* contributors postulated that trade unions' spirit needed resurrecting.³²⁴ However, they welcomed the paucity of the Communists vote. Increased Working class education and efficient 'propaganda' (marketing) was recommended. The *Daily Herald* was considered the most effective conduit, but its two million circulation signified that nearly 6 million Trade Unionists affiliated to the TUC got their news elsewhere;³²⁵ a situation they deemed needed to be rectified.

1951 Election

The 1951 election loss was presented as a moral victory. It was noted that the Labour Party had the highest ever vote (48.7%, compared with 46.1% in 1950, and 48% in 1945). This was taken as evidence that Labour Party policies had popular support. The *AEU* considered that the defeat would facilitate a period of self-criticism, including reflection on Bevan and his colleagues' resignation and 'Socialist doctrine and practice in the light of actual experience'.³²⁶ The *NUGWM*, despite an antipathy the Tories, declared that 'the elected Government is the Government' repeating the TUC undertaking 'to work amicably with whatever Government is in power, and through consultation jointly with Ministers and with the other side of industry to find practical solutions to the social and economic problems facing this country'.³²⁷ The *MW* considered this stance to be inconsistent with rank and file opinion.³²⁸

³²⁴ F. E. Wilson, 'Where is the Spirit of the Unions?' *AEU Journal*, (April, 1950), p. 111.

³²⁵ 'Editor's Notes, Inquest on General Election', *AEU Journal*, (June, 1950), pp. 165-7.

³²⁶ 'Editor's notes: Political Stalemate', *AEU Journal*, (October, 1951), pp.325-6.

³²⁷ T. Williamson, 'The Trade Union Movement and the Government', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1951), pp. 368-9. Also see: T. Eccles, 'Lancashire Notes', *NUGMW Journal*, (December, 1951), pp. 376-8.

³²⁸ Anon., 'Now for the £1 claim: Stewards Act', *MW*, (November, 1951), pp. 1, 8.

Conclusion

This study was embarked upon with no preconceptions about the political cultures that close examination of the journals' content might expose. Rather, it sought an understanding of the ideologies and political cultures and the thinking that drove activists, institutional choices, and recommendations, beyond formal resolutions proposed, seconded, or supported at various Conferences and Congresses. The unions created the Labour Party as the movement's political wing in order to achieve a parliamentary presence to further their cause, theoretically leaving them to pursue their interests in the industrial sphere. However, the journals expose this to be a misrepresentation and gross simplification of the role the unions and their publications actually played. The unions remained political by their very nature.

Trade unions were unquestionably political in their aspirations and deeds, but no single union was involved in all forms of political action simultaneously, and thus they felt justified in claiming that they were non-political. Moreover, even when purely industrial issues were being pursued, like a fair-days' pay for fair-days' work, and improved terms and conditions, normative judgements around what is deemed 'fair' are involved, and indeed extend into questions as to whether 'fair' was even possible under a system where asymmetries and unfairness were considered structural.

The proportion of each union paying the political levy indicates that political commitment amongst members was far lower than the union journal content would suggest. Moreover, members paying the levy did not necessarily mean that they actively supported the Labour Party; indeed, the effect of changes to the 'opt in' / 'opt out' legislation on numbers paying, indicates that apathy, not commitment, influenced many. Thus, the extent to which the explicitly socialist ideology (of various strands) that continually imbued and shaped the journals' content is significant and raises important questions, including why there was a paucity of correspondence printed complaining about this, or advocating alternative perspectives.¹

¹ Although there were very occasional complaints about quite how left-wing the socialism being advocated was.

The changes in the political cultures evidenced within the journals were not simple or linear, but were the manifestation of the consequences of complex contextual factors combined with prevailing ideas environments (themselves historically influenced) which acted upon the contributors' and the trade unions' matrices of ideas, concepts, and priorities. There was also an overt promotion of the Labour Party and of Socialism, and notably, wherever alternatives to the Labour Party position were suggested by journal contributors, they were almost invariably to the left. Indeed, socialism pervaded interpretations of all other emergent themes within the journals. The result is a continuous dialogue of leftist politics, where all is political. Nonetheless, the success of trade unions depended on their ability to recruit eligible workers of all political persuasions, not merely Labour Party supporters or socialists.

Temporal Contexts

It is only by understanding the influences, insights, comprehensions, and historical conditions that shaped the authors' and audiences' ideological interpretations, that it is possible, following Skinner, to 'see things their way'. The time period analysed here falls into three broad periods, the inter-war period, WWII, and that of the post-war Labour Government (which have been further subdivided for the purposes of this study). The wider environment of each of these periods exposes how the journals' contributors interpreted and related to their changing context, and how this impacted the political cultures that the journals embodied. However, none of these periods is discreet nor uniform, rather they need to be understood in a complex evolving whole, which could have developed quite differently.

Trade unions shared many commonalities with the society in which they were embedded. They were typically male dominated and patriarchal, hierarchical, and authoritarian, with officials often occupying their positions for long periods, and being guided in their trade unionism by reference to the rulebook. The culture, norms, values and mental horizons in the society concerned had a profound impact on the unions as institutions, and in some cases subjugating their socialism, for instance, to patriotism, or to their attitudes to the British Empire and British exceptionalism, or in relation to gender issues. The prevailing patriarchal norms

within civil and industrial life, meant gender inequality was an invisible, common-sense part of social relations. The *AEU Journal* traditionally ignored women; they were not treated as individuals, merely dependents insofar as tax and benefits were concerned. Indeed, attitudes to women came across in the surplus meaning in non-industrial articles. For instance, when reviewing fiction like *'Love on the Dole'*, the contributors could only empathise with the father's position, the plight of the women's characters was treated as irrelevant.²

Journal content was unrelated to the movement's empirical strength. The extreme weakness of the unions in the early 1930s and the LP's position as an enfeebled parliamentary opposition, was not evidenced in the union journals, nor did it dent their confidence in socialism. The contrary was the case. The 1930s depression was interpreted as indisputable evidence of the failure of capitalism, especially when juxtaposed to the reported success of the Russian five year plans, which many interpreted as proof that socialism could succeed (especially the effectiveness of central planning), regardless of whether the specific way it had been implemented in Russia was approved of. Implicit within the text was the presumption that the collapse of capitalism would drive the previously unconvinced towards socialism, and that they would embrace it. The non-Marxist socialist contributors believed that this would occur when people were exposed to socialist ideas that resonated with their circumstances. The CPGB (and non CPGB Marxists) contributors to the *NP/MW* and *AEU*, expected that they would come to the fore through the industrial sphere as the system imploded. Such convictions were considered common sense by many, but history shows that both interpretations were mistaken. The journal contributors chose to deal with the dichotomy between capitalism's apparent implosion on the one hand, and the weakness of the Labour movement on the other, by ignoring the latter and focusing their members' attention on the former. They attempted through the journals to bolster faith in the Labour movement, and evidenced an unquestioning and largely un-reflexive faith in socialism. This formed a constant strand in the unions' political culture, within and between the journals, throughout the entire period.

The 1931-1939 journal output was dominated by contributors who had direct experience of WWI (and its aftermath), as soldiers, conscientious objectors (who

² Herbert Tracy, 'Love on the Dole by Walter Greenwood', *AEU Journal*, (February 1935), p. 12.

were over represented amongst contributors), or workers, and, after WWI, the 'betrayed' unemployed.³ Thus, journal articles reflected the contributors' formative wartime experiences, and their subsequent embeddedness in a culture that relived and reinterpreted the war experience through poetry, literature, and theatre in the late 1920s. Their pacifism reflected a dominant strand in British political culture of the time, and thus in the early 1930s the official union journals presented it as a non-controversial 'common sense' shared understanding. They reinforced this stance through devices like the publication of arms and aircraft manufacturers profits, questioning the legitimacy of the private manufacture of arms, and made declamatory statements of how wars were instigated to further the interests of powerful groups at the expense of the working classes. The pacifism presented was not subject to critical analysis and was often contradictory. For instance, many who presented themselves as pacifists supported the Soviet Union and its Government, despite the Bolsheviks having attained power through violence and engaging in a five-year Civil War in which some 10 million died. Only the rise of European fascism and the Spanish Civil war led to pacifist assumptions being challenged and reassessed, although the *NUGMW* retained a pacifist agenda longer than the other journals.⁴

The WWII context led to the mutation of the matrices of political concepts that formed political cultures. The trade unions had reason to feel empowered as union membership surged and they were increasingly incorporated into government and accepted as an 'estate of the realm', an essential element in the pursuit of victory. In Freedman's terms, the war led to political concepts being re-positioned in response to the changed environment, distancing themselves or moving towards previously adjacent or core concepts. Such patterns, and their inter-relationships, continuities, and discontinuities, both shaped, and were shaped by, what was politically possible,

³ In the early, 1930s, depression dominated domestic issues. The international concerns of that time centred on pacifism and collective security under the League. By 1937 the domestic economy had recovered, the production drive was underway; international issues were overshadowed by the rise of European Fascism and the Spanish Civil war.

⁴ The Spanish situation changed terms of foreign policy debate. It acted as a focus and catalyst, raising both political awareness and class consciousness, illustrating what was presented as the danger that capitalist classes presented, domestically and transnationally, including their willingness to overthrow democratic regimes to protect their interests. The British Government's tacit support for Franco through its non-intervention policy, combined with its undermining of the League of Nations and collective security, provided further examples for journal contributors to highlight class allegiances and conflicts, and thus raised readers political and class consciousness. 'Never again' was usurped by the imperative to stop Fascism at any cost.

which itself turned on what is contextually possible. For instance, the WWII geopolitical situation precipitated the shifting of the previously peripheral concept of nationalism into close proximity with the core concept of human welfare and flourishing. For the *NUGMW Journal* contributors, the concept of international fraternity was marginalised, as the journal turned to patriotic and nationalistic fervour, and increasingly, anti-German sentiment (illustrating the mutability and permeability of ideologies). Conversely, although vehemently anti-fascist, the internationalism (especially international fraternity amongst workers) of the *AEU* and *NP/MW*, remained part of the core concept cluster.

During the war, the official union journals disseminated the previously reviled National Government's propaganda, as national defence and the defeat of fascism constrained choices, subsuming previous political priorities and core concepts, including domestic socialist goals. This is evidenced in the official unions acquiescence with the Government's direction of labour. In contrast, the *NP/MW* initially ignored the war, except when objecting to the direction of labour, and instead concentrated on bread and butter issues. It was only when Russia entered the war that this stance changed. The *NP/MW* never said a good word about the National Governments, but halted their cutting critiques, instead concentrating on production drive promotions, effectively suspending adherence to their core concepts to further the war effort. This continued for the duration of the war, including through the schisms that were developing between the Allies (first reported by the *NP/MW* in 1943).

The reactions expressed within the *AEU Journal* were more nuanced. However, amid the changes and temporal rearrangements of core concepts, many fundamental understandings remained background constants, particularly regarding workers' education, critiques of capitalism, and the desirability of socialism. This also applied to some underlying non-socialist cultural norms, for instance gender issues. The *AEU* finally admitted women in 1943, but explicitly not on equal terms. Equal pay campaigns were undertaken, but the underlying 'fairness' argument often masked their priority of protecting the male wage. The *NP/MW*, on the other hand (in-line with communist thinking) vigorously pursued gender equality and equal pay, including issues such as childcare, in war-time and post war (these were raised in the other journals but not with the same conviction). The changing context from war to peace, and the subsequent production drive when women were urged to re-enter

the workforce, further stimulated journal discussion over women and equal pay. The *AEU* contributors were split between those who considered it a matter of fairness, and others for whom it was an expedient to protect their male membership. The *NUGMW Journal*, despite their long tradition of female membership, was no bastion of women's rights, and as the war drew to an end, its patriarchy bordered on misogyny.

The third overarching period covered by this study was defined by the 1945 Labour Government which attempted to actualise collectivist ideas. This new era engendered a sense of optimism, and a presumption that the unions would continue to grow and expand in influence, and that a Labour Government would be the new normal going forward both in Britain and all other European countries. The trade union expectations were that they would be taken into partnership with Government and industry, where workers would be treated as equals, and their experience and knowledge would be employed for the common good.

The trade union movement should have felt empowered during this period. The unions exuded goodwill and support for the Labour Government (especially in nationalised industries). However, the situation presented its own challenges and tensions, particularly when Government policies diverged from union expectations. The Labour Government relied on the unions to ensure its economic and industrial policy success, which inhibited the unions from taking any actions that may have destabilised or undermined the situation or the government. It also restricted debate and socialist analysis as solidarity, loyalty, and a deep desire for the Labour administration to succeed came to the fore, inhibiting criticism. This resulted in notable absences in the journals. For instance, no indication was given that the Government entered office without detailed plans for translating their aspirations into workable policies in many areas.

The lack of policy analysis or any attempt to hold the 1945 Labour Government to account, resulted in increased commonality between journals on domestic issues early in the Attlee Government.⁵ However, this did not last. Divergent ideological stances resurfaced as the parliament progressed. The *NUGMW* offered uncritical support for the Labour administration and policies. The *AEU* supported the Government, but became increasingly critical on issues such as the form

⁵ They differed greatly on foreign policy.

nationalisation took, fiscal policy, the U.S. loan, Marshall Plan Aid, and what they deemed the Churchillian foreign policy of the Attlee Government, especially in Greece. Disappointment and a sense that opportunities had been missed began permeating *AEU Journal* coverage, and schisms grew between the left's socialist aspirations and the LP's policies. For instance, insofar as nationalisation was concerned, there was a sense that whilst ownership had changed, and health and safety issues were foregrounded, much else remained untouched; those who believed that nationalisation would embody socialisation and worker control were disappointed. However, even where dissent was voiced it was not vigorously pursued for fear of providing Labour's opponents with ammunition, and thwarting the chances of the Labour Party being returned to power. The *NP/MW* dissent was also initially muted, but became more vigorously from 1947 onwards as the Cold War evolved.

Thus, the structure of the British labour movement, as well as its ethos and the reciprocal deontic relationships between the industrial and political wings, greatly constrained the unions during this period. For some, it also led to a reassessment of fundamental questions concerning what their relationship should be with a Social Democratic Government. This was especially so for some communists. For instance, Arthur Horner thought that nationalisation would engender a corporatist collaborative relationship between the miners and their employers, characterised by reciprocity and the pursuit of common aims and the national good within a national plan, extending workers' interests beyond narrow bread and butter issues. Horner's ideas and his 'Miners' Charter' presented an ideal form of the type envisioned by the majority of journal contributors (with the notable exception of the post-war *NUGMW* under Williamson) and which contrasted with nationalisation as it was implemented.⁶

Changes in office holders also elicited shifts in the journals' political cultures. For instance, the *NUGMW Journal's* ideological position typically echoed that of their General Secretaries: Chas Dukes' succession (1936) produced a move to the left (reversed during WWII); when Tom Williamson succeeded Dukes (1946), the

⁶ Attaining this ideal type was hindered by the LP's hierarchy's suspicion and scepticism about worker control, combined with disunity amongst the multiple unions which impeded their ability to speak for an entire industry, which was further hampered by continued shop stewards' independence and militancy. See for instance, Fishman, *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions*; Fishman, *Arthur Horner: A Political Biography*.

journal shifted markedly rightwards, and their support for the Labour Government changed from general, to uncritical support, with a censure of all debate that questioned the Government's line. The retirement of J. R. Clynes as NUGMW President curtailed the NUGMW's extensive coverage and promotion of the Co-op movement. There were similar mutations in the political culture of the *AEU Journal* with changes in office holders, but these were more nuanced than in the *NUGMW*. For instance, Jack Tanner's accession to the AEU's Presidency in 1939, initially marked a leftward movement in journal content. Then, in the context of the Labour Party Government and the Cold War, Tanner himself moved increasingly rightwards, especially from 1947 onwards.

Russia

The influence of context on political thinking was exemplified in the journals changing attitudes to Russia. Ideas concerning Russia and communism were multi-layered, complex, intertwined, and contained inconsistencies and contradictions. Throughout the inter-war period Russia was the embodiment of lived socialism, with progress, no economic depressions, and the people, not shareholders, benefiting from their labours. For many the subsequent Nazi-Soviet Pact and the invasions of Finland and Poland, challenged such received understandings. The *NUGMW* and *AEU Journals* evidenced a considerable anti-Soviet and anti-communist backlash (although many *AEU* contributors disbelieved that Russia had shed its Socialist ideals and befriended Nazism). The *NP/MW* judged the Soviet's behaviour expedient and defensive. Notably its circulation rose despite anti-communist sentiment in Britain supposedly being at its (pre-Cold War) height.⁷

Russia's entry into the war as an ally modified sentiment, and her subsequent successes falsified capitalist propaganda about her inability to supply national requirements, or that Russians would be disinclined to defend their state and system. Russia's success was recruited by the *NP/MW* and leftist *AEU* contributors and attributed to her Communism, and was used to rally readers to the cause. The war-time growth in Russia's popularity elicited a defensive response in the *NUGMW* (and reported TUC statements), which sought to disconnect admiration for Russia

⁷ The *NP/MW*'s circulation rose from 27,000 to 45,000 (May, 1939-May, 1940).

from British communists who, most *NUGMW*, and some *AEU*, contributors, believed had long been a malevolent disruptive force.

Attacks on communists were directly related to Russia's changing popularity, and they became ferocious whenever the CP sought Labour Party affiliation. The *AEU* and *NP/MW* supported affiliation, a position that continued post-WWII. Comintern dissolution in 1943 did not alter perceptions as expressed in the journals (nor did the CPGB's 1950 adoption of the *British Road to Socialism*). The evolution of the Cold War, the post-war Bolshevisation / Sovietisation of Eastern Europe with one party states and soviet style state planning and ownership, shifted the focus for the anti-communists writing in the journals from domestic communists as the source of evil, to Russia (akin to the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact), reinforcing the old dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy.

The 'Right Type of Socialism'

Attitudes to communists were influenced by the presence of, and beliefs about, the 'actually existing socialism' of Russia and its influence on contemporaneous debates and discussions within socialism. This included the realisation for many (acknowledged and unacknowledged) that Soviet socialism did not take the form that many envisaged. The anti-communists, particularly *NUGMW* contributors, cited this to underline the schism between what they considered unacceptable socialism (communism), and what was (for them) the 'right type' of socialism, that is democratic socialism and social democracy. The identification and condemnation of unacceptable ideas forms as much a part of ideology as the dissemination of sanctioned matrices of belief and values, and often those who were targeted were those who held related but distinct ideas.

The unions support for, or acquiescence in, Labour policy regarding communists was complex, conflicted, and context dependent. The different journals' attitudes reflected their political cultures as they encountered changing environments. Nonetheless, all the official union journals contained anti-communist elements; in the *NUGMW* this was almost unanimous; in the *AEU*, *ETU*, and *The Clerk* journals,

it formed a significant strand. Conversely, in the *NP/MW*, no anti-communist note was ever struck.

Anti-communism was linked to Labour Party policy, but also propagated independently in the journals by contributors on ideological grounds (or for some, temporal expedience). Throughout the period analysed here communists worked through broader movements (similar to the earlier Fabian permeation of other organisations,⁸ although communists were not always open about such actions). Many communists legitimised their role in the union, standing openly as communists for election for shop steward or union office, often successfully (where they were known as dedicated, hardworking, trade unionists), which contrasted with their poor showing in general elections (where they were largely unknown to the electorate, and thus merely the representatives of an ideology, which the establishment and press portrayed as dangerous). Moreover, from the Popular Front period until the Cold War, the CPGB advocated working within the trade unions, and leading communists like Arthur Horner believed that effectiveness within the trade union movement required trade union rules to be followed, rather than merely adherence to the CPGB line.⁹

The anti-communists portrayed communists as dangerous fifth columnists who sought to destroy the labour movement. They were concerned that communist agitators might build momentum behind movements that could become uncontrollable and pursue their goals through extra-parliamentary means, placing them outside the constitution, and thus a danger to the prevailing system. Although they considered the system to be flawed and in need of reform, they did not want it to be overthrown.

Nonetheless, others, especially within the *AEU Journal*, argued that the labour movement should be inclusive, and that anti-communists prevented unity of action, thereby hindering the socialist cause (such as prohibitions on CPGB backed organisations like the National Unemployed Workers Movement). Thus, the communist element amongst the *AEU Journal* contributors and those who considered communism a legitimate view was clearly visible in the journal. Their socialist journalists exercised considerable freedom, which at times formed a

⁸ For instance, the LRD, which was communist in the 1930s, had earlier been the Fabian Research Department.

⁹ Fishman, *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions*; Fishman, *Arthur Horner*.

continuous dialogue between themselves, and was always written with the readership in mind. This stood in contrast to the *NP/MW* and *NUGMW* which, whilst occupying different socialist extremes (communist on the one hand, and views which accorded with the right-wing of the Labour Party on the other), both evidenced (almost exclusively) internally homogenous content synchronically, although it varied diachronically.

The ideological gap between the communist *NP/MW* and the majority voice in the Labour Party supporting journals was profound and implicit, but not generally overt (with exceptions). The socialist (communist) ideal was a constant, but the means of its attainment went unstated, with no indication given that a non-parliamentary path should be taken. The *NP/MW* differed from the other journals in their focus on industrial discontent and the promotion of militancy in pursuit of wages and conditions as a means to politicise workers. This mutated during the war-time production drive, in that grievances continued to be aired but focused on such issues as management, waste, the inefficiencies of capitalist production, and day to day issues like the presence and quality of canteens and other facilities.

The *NP/MW* utilised point of production discontent to expose the exploitation that is usually obscured, and to challenge what they saw as the misinformation embodied within hegemonic explanations to a much greater extent than the official union journals. They sought to expose workers to the true nature of power relationships, making them cognisant of the disparities that endured and their ubiquitous nature, which would remain unchanged until underlying structures were altered. However, unlike most communist literature, the *NP/MW* content included little theoretical and ideological discussion. For instance, whilst they emphasised the economics of capitalist firms, their profits and tax expedencies, they largely left it to readers to draw their own conclusions from the data presented. Conversely, the *AEU* and *NUGMW* company profits and dividends data (often linked to wage disputes) were always published with accompanying explanatory narratives which promoted socialist ideas and understandings and elucidated capitalists' exploitation.

The *NP/MW*'s political culture remained constant: adherence to the CPGB line. From its 1935 inception until 1951, their work within the TUs was central. However, within this their policy position fluctuated with changes in the CPGB policy positions (which depended on the Moscow line), from the Popular Front period, through

WWII's initial categorisation as an imperialist war, to being fully behind the war effort and cheerleaders for the production drive which was often prioritised over their members' short-term welfare (justified by the threat of a fascist victory and its consequences). Post WWII the *NP/MW* supported the 1945 Labour administration, before turning against it as the Cold War evolved. Each iteration of policy was presented not as a reappraisal or reassessment, but as non-controversial continuations, or responses to external events and conditions.

The Prescribed Means of Attaining Socialism

The unions' officials and activists contributing to the journals examined in this study self-identified as socialists.¹⁰ They understood that workers were embedded in society, and thus their employment, pay and conditions, depended not merely on their industrial environment but on the wider economic, political, social, and judicial environments, which were all shaped by the structuring of society on capitalist lines. Moreover, workers were also consumers, who became sick and old, and who often had dependents. Thus, the political was understood as all-encompassing, and that improving workers' collective welfare would require societal transformation; socialism provided the ideological foundations and direction for the desired change. Economic actions were understood to impact the social realm, embodying an ethical component with culturally derived social meanings. The socialisms which contributors propagated through the journals ranged from, an idealised distant 'nirvana' that time, parliamentarianism, and paternalistic leaders, would eventually deliver, and which considered that members' political activism should be restricted to voting, to the realisable imperative for fundamental structural change on Marxist lines.¹¹ Thus, they encompassed all the views of all sections of the Labour Party as well as some to its left.

Notwithstanding the journals' distinct political cultures, their ideological commonalities, including socialist/ labourist core values routinely came to the fore.

¹⁰ With the single exception of I. Haig Mitchel who wrote in the *AEU Journal* and considered that socialism and its middle and upper class proponents hindered the cause of trade unionism.

¹¹ The histories and strands of socialisms and labourism are explored by, for instance, Geoffrey Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought: A History*, (Kent, 1985); Callaghan, *Socialism in Britain*, (Oxford, 1990); or Tony Wright, *Socialisms Old and New*, (London, 1996).

The journals output evidenced a strong drive for fairness, equality and the promotion of human flourishing, along with co-operation, unity, and the belief that the future can be better than the present, all of which were embodied in the policy options they advocated. In this pursuit, the journals contested the social, political and economic hegemonic understandings (propagated by the state, civil institutions, and the capitalist press), and elucidated class contradictions, worker exploitation, and structural inequities. They condemned the Conservative and National Governments, the capitalists, and their advocates, for complicity in maintaining the system. Nonetheless, often the socialism the journals advocated was of an unspecified nature, albeit with specific strands surfacing at different times and within different unions.

The journal contributors assessed the interplays between structure and agency which resulted in their various policy recommendations and visions of structural changes (and subsequently their assessment of those changes implemented by the 1945 Labour Government). The journals all politicised distributional conflicts and interpreted them in terms of class, exploitation, and divergent interests. These were expressed most starkly in the *NP/MW*, but were a constant within all the official union journals, although with diminished emphasis post WWII, especially within the *NUGMW Journal*. The interrelationships between finance, industry, and Government were covered, and all pre-1945 Government budget decisions presented as expressions of class allegiances and power positions. This was seen as being expressed in, for instance, the inter-war Government's prioritisation of war-debt and rearmament over social welfare; the perceived disproportional nature of the fiscal burden borne by the working classes; the war-time conscription of people but not business surpluses or private wealth, and accusations that war-time wage claims were unpatriotic, whilst increased armaments and aircraft industries profits were not. The journal contributors utilised such inequalities of treatment to arouse and reinforce class and trade union consciousness, interpellating readers into being 'one of us', 'othering' the capitalist classes, who, contributors repeatedly made clear, lived off the product of the workers' labours. Nonetheless, the attitudes expressed in the journals also contained contradictions and inconsistencies, especially insofar as the *NUGMW Journal* was concerned, which whilst denigrating the privileged and capitalist classes, expressed almost sycophantic attitudes towards Royalty, and considered the ennoblement of its top official as the ultimate

honour. The contrasting political culture embodied within *The Clerk Journal* was expressed in their denunciation of:

the action of certain officials of the Trade Union Movement in accepting so-called honours at the hands of the capitalist class, being strongly of the opinion that such action is contrary to the interests of the working-class and the Trade Union Movement.¹²

The pursuit of socialism through parliamentary means was explicitly promoted in the *NUGMW Journal*; it was usually articulated in the *AEU*, but left unstated in the *NP/MW* (although they did campaign for the Labour Party in the 1945, 1950 and 1951 elections). The majority voice in the official union journals deemed that parliamentarianism strengthened and unified the industrial and political wings of the movement, and was the only legitimate way forward. Parliamentarianism was the driving force behind the unions' efforts to motivate their readership into active campaigning for a Labour Government to ensure policies were actioned.

Nonetheless, parliamentarianism was reliant on electoral success, and thus if accepted, it effectively shut down much extra-parliamentary political activity.

The LP's *raison d'être* necessitated achieving power. It found this challenging even in the dire economic conditions of the 1931 and 1935 elections. In the pursuit of office, the socialist message was diluted to attract wider support (against the will of the left-wing of the party). This is evidenced in the journals through the Labour MPs articles, which were typically amongst the most right-wing in the journals (although there were exceptions). Some theorists, like Ralph Miliband, interpreted the Labour movement's adherence to parliamentarianism, as attempting to fight the class struggle whilst adhering to the rules and norms of the system that they were seeking to transform; the parliamentary path need not have been followed.

Miliband's '*Parliamentary Socialism*' analysed speeches, resolutions and manifestoes, which, for him, evidenced the leaders' doctrine bound ideology and their betrayals of the working classes revolutionary consciousness. Analysis of the union and shop steward journals facilitates an insight into a level of the labour movement that the existing literature, which typically looked at the unions from either above or below, omitted. The journals (especially the *AEU*) illustrate that

¹² 'The Annual Conference', *The Clerk* (September, 1935), pp. 54-63.

contributors and interested members were not merely seeking to usurp an unfair system where they were structurally disadvantaged, but that the complexities of lives as lived, their auto-didacticism, and their exposure to socialist framings of issues and debate, provided nuanced understandings of intricacies, difficulties, and consequence.

Character and Quality of the Journals Socialist Analysis

Just as the types of socialism advocated in the journals varied, so did the character and quality of their socialist analysis. Indeed, some important issues were largely omitted, such as why a third of the working class vote Conservative, or why Labour lost the 1931 election. Similarly, pertinent issues like the 'non' (at a time when most workers were not in trade unions) received little analysis, merely condemnation.¹³

The *NUGMW Journal* typically (but not exclusively) employed rhetoric rather than critique or analysis of policy options. They concentrated on socialist and trade union values and beliefs, attempting to persuade people to the socialist view point, utilising contemporary examples that would resonate with readers to illustrate injustices. They expounded the predatory nature of employers, and stressed the super-normal wartime profits made by the 'pseudo patriots' of the defence industries, with the National Governments supportive acquiescence. Notably, when the *NUGMW* analysed and debated worker control, it was in a 'Readers Forum' rather than articles written by their usual contributors. Within this 'Forum', technicalities and the extension of works and shop committees were debated, with the overwhelmingly majority of members' input advocating full workers control (markedly to the left of the usual journal content). Post 1945 the *NUGMW* changed tack and deemed worker control and trade union involvement in management to be incompatible with their priority of collective bargaining and protection of workers'

¹³ Although the absence of such analysis is notable, market research and sampling based statistical analysis was in its infancy for most of the period studied here. The assumption that imbued the journals was that rational voters would vote with their interests, and thus for the LP. It was only in the 1950s that such issues became commonly analysed and the statistics widely trusted. Such studies found 33% of the working class voted Conservative. See for instance, Robert T. McKenzie, and Allan Silver, *Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England* (London, 1968).

interests; thus prioritising defending themselves as an institution over socialist ideals.

Conversely, the *AEU* rather than merely deploying rhetorical devices, routinely discussed and critiqued various different and sometimes conflicting socialist policy options both in the abstract sense, and as they related to topical and broader issues.¹⁴ For instance, as part of the nationalisation / socialisation debate they published a series of articles (1943-4) by other trade unions elucidating their post-war objectives. This included contributions from the Union of Post Office Workers who had first-hand experience of public control, and a public service ethos, and protection. This experience led them to recommend that forthcoming nationalisations should not follow the Post Office's pattern, as nationalisation alone equated neither to socialisation nor worker control. They desired the Post Office's transformation from a bureaucratically administered State monopoly into a public corporation with worker control. The *AEU* concluded their analysis of nationalisation and worker control by explicitly rejecting the Morrisonian model on the grounds that it perpetuated class interests and power asymmetries, as the previous owners were appointed managers and generously compensated, which effectively provided them with a profitable exit from distressed industries (which the state recapitalised), freeing their investment capital to seek more lucrative returns. Nationalisation in itself was deemed insufficient to be considered a socialist act, rather it was an expedient that enabled the planning necessary to facilitate a socialist agenda (although it was suggested that having been implemented it could be restructured on worker control lines). In hosting such debates, the *AEU*, through the conduit of their journal, questioned dominant ideas, attempted to move debates on, and sought to influence the Labour Party (especially the PLP) to change their policy position. In reporting these issues, they also presented counterfactuals and questioned whether Labour Party policy choices were in fact truly socialist and attempted to influence Labour Party policy indirectly through motivating their readership to advocate certain policy options in the public arena and through their CLP to effectively supplement the unions own lobbying and submission of resolutions. The desirability of public ownership, however, was never debated; it

¹⁴ Such topics ranged from fiscal, economic, and trade policies, to Georgism, changes to ownership structures, and international affairs.

was self-evident and so went unarticulated, as part of the deeper cultural understanding that bound members.

The *NP/MW* when commenting on the Conservative or National Government policies, or the behaviour of capitalists, were caustically critical (and to a lesser extent under the Labour Government, except post 1947, and for instance, concerning matters like the Schuman Plan). However, they tended not to debate different socialist options. Instead they generally presented the 'facts' as self-evident, or provided polemics, for instance in their regular articles extolling various aspects of the Soviet Union. No regard was given to people being exposed to the same 'facts' reaching very different conclusions (as they digested the 'facts' through different ideological assumptions); it was taken as given that all right minded people would, or at least should, share the authors' understandings.

The journal contributors' adherence to socialism was not at the expense of their trade unionism; the two ran in parallel; their malleable relative dominance was contextual, and varied between the agents and institutions. 'Trade unionism' forms a significant strand within all the journals, evidenced in their self-perceptions as institutions (including their defensive mind-set), their relationships with their members, the wider Labour movement, and the employers and Government. The promotion of trade unions and trade unionism entailed issues being omitted (or underplayed) as well as being selectively included.¹⁵ The journals addressed the importance of recruitment and retention for trade unionism and the unions' effectiveness, and also reminded readers of the unions structure and personnel. Moreover, the ideas, norms and values of trade unionism were institutionalised and became constitutive, contributing to their own reification. The journals implicitly and explicitly communicated trade unionism's sets of beliefs (unity, collectivism, loyalty, community, egalitarianism, selflessness, and co-operation), and its own underlying logic, philosophy, and purpose, which drove policy choices and aspirations. Indeed, it was the promotion of such ideology and ethos in all its facets that was the primary

¹⁵ For instance, the expulsions of those who rebelled over the EC's 1931 acceptance of a wage agreement without consulting the membership. Those expelled included Jack Tanner, the future General Secretary. The significance of their action, their establishing the Members Rights Movement and the (short lived) journal, *The Monkey Wrench*, received sparse coverage in the *AEU Journal*. See for instance, Frow and Frow, *Engineering Struggles*, pp. 92-94; Fishman, *The British Communist Party and Trade Unions*. For *AEU Journal* coverage, see, Abstract Report of Council Proceedings', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1931), pp. 4-14; Abstract Report of Council's Proceedings, *AEU Journal*, (September, 1932), p. 6; 'Letter to be Read Out in Branches: Members Rights Movement', *AEU Journal*, (May, 1932), p. 6.

function of their journals. In this pursuit, they also constructed their own historical narratives and utilised history to make substantive points, acting as a memory prompt for the non-committed.

In fostering and elevating trade unionism, activists and officials attempted to create a sense of TU community, promoting the unions as cultural associations, as well as industrial and political institutions. Social events, outings, sports events (especially in the *AEU Journal*), and children's outings were all promoted and regularly reported. In doing so they sought to bind their membership together within the union and the labour movement more generally, and seek to recruit adherents to the socialist political culture that was embodied within the movement, with the goal of obtaining a critical mass of followers that would facilitate the election of a Labour Party Government, who would implement the socialist policies they believe were imperative for the common good. Thus, P. F. Clarke's suggestion in his '*Lancashire and the New Liberalism*' that the TU movement could never be to Labour what the Non-conformist church was to the Liberal Party, as a network of people, ideas, and values,¹⁶ somewhat underestimates the movement's reach.

The continuous flow of socialist/ labourist ideological interpretations of issues and events disseminated in the journals, was designed to raise readers' political awareness and class consciousness; their ideology dictating that knowledge, framed by socialist understandings, would motivate readers to take a stance on issues and act on them, to be part of the social transformation. Thus, the unions and their journals were unreservedly political, and socialist.

Political Language and Decontested Meanings

The journals all employed value loaded statements in both their overtly political and their seemingly politically innocuous content. Nonetheless, whilst the texts encompass authorial intentionality which can be easily understood (especially with the passage of time), it is much more difficult to ascertain how this content impacted the individual readers.

¹⁶ P. F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (London, 1971).

The ideological imperative to control political language and decontest meanings is evidenced in all the journals. This is most obvious when decontestations of meanings diverged, for instance, during the inter-war period, NUGMW officials decontested 'incorporation' by presenting it as a means for unions to gain influence in Government. However, for the left-wing of the *AEU* and for the *NP* contributors, it was an insult aimed at those union leaders deemed to have allowed themselves to become incorporated into the capitalist system (and thus no longer representing their members who were in conflict with the system).

Conversely, there was also much commonality in the language the journals employed, for instance, linking the word 'parasite' with capitalist, and the word 'dole' for the subsidies paid to capitalists and landowners. Such content was often visceral and personal, constructed to interpellate readers as right thinking people into internalising their ideological interpretations. Imagery was also employed, such as the capitalist 'octopus' with its invasive tentacles seeking out spaces to exploit, whilst the co-operative movement was presented as its benevolent counterpart. Nonetheless, much of the journals ideological content was implicit, taking the form of shared common sense understandings, and evidenced within the surplus meanings contained in the texts. For instance, the idea of 'them' (the capitalists and their advocates) and 'us' was constantly implicitly reinforced (as well as explicitly), and the 'them' 'othered'. The Conservative Government was presented as the 'other' in political party form, and their policy failures were recruited by all the journals to emphasise the inefficiencies and failures of capitalism and its immorality, whilst in the international arena their inter-war policies were condemned as pro-fascist (deemed by the journals to be their natural allies).

Not all dissemination of ideology and ideas was linguistic. Cartoons were highly effective (most abundantly employed in the *NP/MW*), conveying Trade Unionism's ethos, and collective relationships. They were a simple but highly effective means of politicising distributional conflicts, conveying ideas around the workers' place under capitalism, and views of the employer class (and castigation and denigration of the 'non' insofar as the *NUGMW Journal* was concerned). They were rarely employed in anything but an explicitly political sense (the exception being Giles in the *AEU* in 1943). The *NUGMW Journal* employed photographs as cultural prompts (typically unrelated to the adjoining texts); as WWII approached and during the war

an image of an idealised rural Britain was promoted, and images of young children were employed, implicit representations of what that the country was fighting for.

The Journals and their Readers

In contrast to the dominant narrative, that trade unions were rule bound workers' associations concerned with wages and conditions and parochial matters, the unions' and shop stewards' journals covered a broad range of issues, and actively sought to further the objective to 'educate, organise and control'. The extent of the international coverage within the union journals, especially the *AEU*, challenges the assumption that foreign policy would be of marginal interest, and instead shows journal editors/ contributors belief that readers should understand issues outside the domestic and the industrial. They stressed the importance of working class education as a means of countering the obfuscations of the capitalist hegemonic views which imbued state institutions, the press, and much of civil society. The extent and persistence of adverts for books and educational courses in the *AEU Journal* (averaging a third of all advertisements, in addition to the journals own reading recommendations) attests to a thriving culture of educational self-improvement. The *NP/MW* promoted various talks and rallies, it encouraged the auto-didactic tradition through book recommendations, and advertised the Left Book Club, the *Labour Leader*, and the *Daily Worker*.

The union journals embodied both the doctrine and ethos of the movement as understood by the journal contributors, editors, and activists, but only shared by part of their membership, as many would have held different ideological positions or were politically unengaged. Ideological disparities and divergences as well as commonalities between the journals were evidenced. Each union had its own specific political culture, ethos, and unconscious common-sense understandings (albeit with much overlap), which all varied over time in reaction to their external environment and changes to journal staff - editors, senior union officers, or other contributors, who disseminated their understandings and interpretations, based on their common sense assumptions directly through their columns.¹⁷ Nonetheless,

¹⁷ For instance, the *AEU*'s employment of the communist, J. T. Murphy, and socialists, such as R. B. Suthers and R. M. Fox, ensured specific framings of events.

the politics of the left was ever present (which embodied shared socialist core values), and anti-socialist voices were absent (other than when prioritising trade unionism).

The journals enabled contributors and editors to establish or reinforce the identity of the trade union and the wider labour movement, promoting and bolstering confidence and morale. They sought to inform and engage their audiences, sharing their mediated understandings of events and issues, and how these situated themselves within the wider debates and with powerful voices of the time. Thus, journal content encompassed affirmatively apposite issues, and omitted inconvenient issues. Texts embodied their assumptions of what the readership *ought* to know, and the subjects that *ought* to interest them, which extended beyond organisational rules, collective bargaining, workers' protection, and pay and conditions. Even within the industrial sphere, the unions sought changes beyond pecuniary advantage, for instance, through worker control, encroachment on managerial prerogatives (as promoted by theorists like G. D. H. Cole), or changes to the ownership structure through various forms of socialisation or nationalisation.

The journals present a one-sided narrative, albeit with audience awareness and sensitivities to feedback, as they sought to involve, or at least not alienate, their readers (necessitating some authorial self-censorship). Contributors wrote not as sentimentalists, but addressed the larger issues, offering solutions to prevailing problems, whilst also disseminating their received understandings, including what they considered imaginable, desirable, and feasible. They exercised their power in various forms, seeking to influence discourse and set agendas, selectively granting voice, whilst also keeping some issues off the agenda (as well as through moral obligation and loyalty to the movement and leadership). In doing so antagonisms between different strands of political thought within and between unions and the ASSNC were exposed. The official union journals articles were typically attributed to named contributors (union officials, Labour journalists, and MPs) whose ideology was embedded in their texts. The *NP/MW* articles however were normally anonymous due to victimisation fears (typically written by shop stewards and activists), but attribution increased during the war, and surprisingly continued as the Cold War developed, especially 1946 onwards.

As with all studies into the consumption of culture and the media, the motivation of consumers in accessing the materials is complex and often obscure. Thus, in the present study, the reasons why the readers purchased the journals in the first place, such as their particular areas of interest, their ideology, their interpretation and value of the content, or even their loyalty to the publishing institutions, is difficult to assess. Journal readers were not necessarily interested in political affairs, geopolitics, economics, or history. Their interests may have been in local or district matters or industrial disputes, just as people purchase newspapers for football coverage, racing tips, or financial analysis, often irrespective of whether the papers' ideology is at variance with their own. Thus, it should not be presumed that all readers read, let alone internalised, all the ideologically laden content.

The Reach of the Various Trade Union Journals

The journals exposed many thousands of people to a socialist framing of events and issues at a time when the mainstream media (the commercial press and the BBC) were hostile to such ideological understandings, and instead disseminated capitalist hegemonic interpretations. The journals supplemented the relatively small and financially troubled socialist press by acting as a corrective to distortions of Labour Party policy disseminated by a media who had a vested interest in reproducing current system. In an environment where Labour found difficulty in conveying its message and was constantly seeking ways to project itself (such as by investing in the *Daily Herald*) the unions' journals effectively communicated Labour's stance and policies (this was especially important during WWII when Labour Party machinery was not functioning). The journal texts often took the form of declamatory statements aimed at converting readers their own ideological position by persuasion. The journal contributors mediated events and issues through their ideology, and employed reflexive reconstructions, reinforcing some existing ideas, denigrating others, and framing events to ensure that the resultant discursive constructions would lead to an acceptance of their interpretations as logical and obvious. Thus, journal content was imbued with intentionality.

Opinions differ as to the extent to which continual exposure to ideological framing elicits changes in received understandings, but most leftist thought attributes the

dissemination of capitalist hegemonic understanding through various institutions (including the press) as being powerful instruments in obfuscating reality and creating false consciousness. The alternative framing of issues and events offered by the journals challenged such hegemonic interpretations. The framing of issues alone is not a sufficient condition for altering peoples' mind-sets, as ideas have to hold true to the readers lives as lived; however, the continuous exposure to socialist framing of issues would, at a minimum, leave some traces, and would have encouraged readers to question the establishment's presentations of issues and events, and to think more politically.

The long standing ideological, political and economic antagonism of the capitalist press to the Labour Movement and to socialism, precipitated the 1945 Labour Government into establishing a Royal Commission to inquire into the finance, control, management, and ownership of the press. It was unanimously welcomed by the union journals' contributors and reported. The generalised view of the Labour Movement was articulated in the *AEU Journal's* conclusion that the Press was 'one of the most subtle and successful methods used by the dominant class to guide the thinking of the working class into the acceptance of the ruling class social outlook.'¹⁸ F. Allaun (NUJ member, author of *The Tory Press*) asserted in the *AEU Journal* that the newspaper proprietors' expurgated evidence presented to the Royal Commission¹⁹ and misrepresented its findings by claiming that they were 'vindicated.'²⁰ The *AEU* also highlighted Lord Beaverbrook's²¹ now infamous statement: 'I ran the paper solely for the purpose of making propoganda and with no other object', and Lord Rhondda's statement: 'A newspaper in London will be a source of political power and I am prepared to spend money on it.'²² Newspaper ownership provided a platform to steer public opinion; propagate their ideas and interests, and oppose or denigrate the labour and Co-operative movements; a position which was reinforced by their desire to please capitalist advertisers (both in terms of content and audience delivery) who contributed some two thirds of major newspapers' revenue. The *AEU Journal* situated newspaper owners' vested and family interests within a web of self-reinforcing, self-serving, profit making firms,

¹⁸ W. Wilson, 'Politics and an Unbiased Press', *AEU Journal*, (September, 1946), p. 266.

¹⁹ 37 volumes of memoranda.

²⁰ F. Allaun, 'The Tory Press and the Coming Election'.

²¹ Lord Beaverbrook owned the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, and the *Evening Standard*.

²² F. Allaun, 'Press Lords Versus Trade Unionists (1), Putting the Worker in Blinkers', *AEU Journal*, (August, 1951), pp. 244-5.

which used their own press as propaganda instruments to steer public opinion and the political agenda. For instance, Lord Kemsley (of the Berry family), owned the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Chronicle*, *Sunday Graphic*, *Daily Record*, *Daily Dispatch*, *Daily Graphic*, *Empire News*, plus 200 additional papers; a brother, Lord Camrose, owned the *Daily Telegraph*. Additionally, the family had significant cotton, steel, and armaments interests. Thus, their newspaper articles were employed to implicitly and explicitly convince the readership of, for instance, the anti-steel nationalisation case, which they could then misrepresent as factual news.²³

Laura Beers postulated that the Labour Party by contributing articles and columns to the capitalist press (as well as their own), exposed many to a socialist / labourist framing of issues and brought their ideas into debates and discussions.²⁴ This strategy during the late-interwar period and the run up to the 1945 election served to:

normalise Labour politics and bring them to the breakfast table or sitting room of homes that Labour had failed to penetrate through more traditional modes of political outreach.²⁵

Beers' claimed that the press's dissemination of Labour's policies and positions was influential in shaping peoples' conceptions. Thus, by implication, the continual socialist framing of issues found throughout the union journals and shop steward papers represents an important asset for the Labour Party and the socialist project.

The Labour movement's concerns over their treatment in the mainstream press and their difficulties in conveying their message to the public was not confined to the period of history analysed here. Sean Tunney in his *Labour and the Press: from New Left to New Labour*²⁶ examines the debates within the Party on such problems throughout the Wilson, Kinnock, Smith, and Blair eras, and the Party's change in their tactics, from seeking to counter the capitalist press bias's through structural changes relating to press ownership, to the pursuit of a 'political marketing strategy';²⁷ a strategy that 'renewed pressure' to seek business approval – to avoid

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Beers, *Your Britain*.

²⁵ Ibid, p.202.

²⁶ Sean Tunney, *Labour and the Press: from New Left to New Labour* (Brighton, 2007),

²⁷ Ibid. p. vii; Although under John Smith, press plurality and accountability rather than press manipulation was advocated; see Tunney, *Labour and the Press*, pp. 104-5.

upsetting the apple cart by bringing forward proposals for structural change'²⁸. Thus, the capitalist press not only chose what they printed, but kept legislative changes around press ownership off the agenda.²⁹

The power of the media to frame policies and personalities to suit their own agenda is ongoing; consequently, so are Labour's efforts to manage their media presence and the dissemination of their own ideas, policies, and positions. This study's finding that the trade union journals were an important but unacknowledged propaganda instrument for the Labour Party, not only in encouraging the Labour vote but in explaining why people should support Labour (and believe in socialism), has contemporary relevance. Labour's 'political marketing strategy' and use of 'spin' within the existing capitalist press to garner Labour friendly coverage as part of the New Labour project, initially met with some success. It has subsequently suffered a backlash along with those people with whom it is associated.

In parallel with the policy of 'spin' there was an attempt by the Labour Party to deal with the 'problem' of the trade unions. A policy of distancing themselves from the unions was undertaken, particularly in the Blair era. However, such attempts were never very successful insofar as their media image was concerned; the media continued to link the two, and propagate that image (especially the idea that the Party's structure and financial dependency on the unions empowers them within the Party).

This strategy and its consequences are areas that warrant continued research. The loosening of the Party – union link need not have been the case and counterfactuals based on the potential role the unions could play (based on their past performance as conduits of the Labour message) could be useful in informing future policy. The media environment continues to be hostile, but the circulation of the press is shrinking, and current affairs programmes like *Newsnight* have a limited audience. However, even in their current weakened state the unions have the potential to disseminate the Labour message (political and industrial) to millions of people. Thus, if the LP were to present a coherent story and ideology that embraced their

²⁸ Ibid. p. 139. For discussion of the three dimensions of power and their application see S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*.

²⁹ Tunney, *Labour and the Press*, p. 139

past to understand the present and imagine the future, the trade unions and their journals (e-journals and other media communications) could be a great joint asset.

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