

BRITISH CAPITALISTS CALL FOR WAGE FREEZE

Dec. 16 (IPS)--While neighboring European governments are moving to implement their own versions of the British social contract--self-policed austerity--British government sources are already preparing to dump the social contract for more harsh measures. This week, in the aftermath of a sterling crisis which shook the British economy to its roots, leading cabal propagandists sounded the death knell for the social contract and hysterically demanded an immediate wage freeze. They are the first European government to call for such severe measures.

Citing the example of the "Communist-dominated" miners--whose mild militancy has demonstrated that within the ambiguous terms of the social contract the working class still has too much room to maneuver--the press eagerly retailed the line: the social contract is a luxury that Britain can no longer afford.

Leading the call in its usual grim assessment of the economic situation is the Bank of England's Quarterly Bulletin, which speaks directly for Rockefeller interests in the United Kingdom. Since "no more can be expected of price controls," the Bank warns, inflation can be checked only if wage restraint is achieved and most of the population accepts a cut in living standards. Otherwise, "it is doubtful whether a satisfactory pattern of expansion can be achieved."

Echoing the Old Lady, as the Bank of England is fondly called, the prestigious Economist, leading weekly journal of British capitalists, hysterically ranted that there is only "one crisis measure" which can ease the pressure on the pound--that is "a return to the wage freeze." Otherwise, the only thing left of the British economy, which the Economist likened to a dinosaur with a pea brain, will be its fossilized bones.

Miners Take Blame, Again

The leading bankers' daily, the Financial Times, pins the flagging confidence in sterling directly on the miners' "tragic farce." This week the miners' Communist Vice President Mick McGahey walked into a set up by trying to commit the miners to a 60 per cent wage claim in the absence of moderate President Joe Gormley. When moderates walked out in protest that McGahey was trying to establish a "dictatorship" by flouting a previous commitment to an unspecified but "substantial" wage claim, Gormley had to be called in from his sickbed to set the matter straight. When the dust had settled, a clear, if shaky, victory for the social contract was on the table. Nevertheless, the miners' latest fracas caused the Financial Times to claim that the social contract, whose mere existence only goes to show the reluctance of politicians to spell out the necessary austerity, was "never a promising child." Now, the Times feels obliged to deliver this deafening pronouncement: "The social contract, quite simply, is no longer relevant."

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Communist "intrigues" in the trade unions also provoked the right-wing porno sheet, the Daily Express, into calling for an immediate wage freeze to be pushed through Parliament, similar to the way that anti-terrorist laws were enacted within hours a few weeks ago.

SPECIAL FORCES STAGE SPECIAL FARCE

Dec. 16 (IPS)--A United Press International (UPI) dispatch from Miami, dated Dec. 15, tells an intriguing story of a shootout between a Dade County game warden armed with a shotgun and 30 Green Beret troops firing blanks.

The warden, not tipped off that the Rangers were staging war games in the area, opened fire on the "shadowy figures" and they fired back, thinking he was "the enemy." The warden summoned the Sheriffs' Department, which sent a helicopter and 23 deputies into the woods.

"For 30 minutes, the police and the Army reservists... stalked one another in the underbrush" without firing any shots, until a police lieutenant demanded over a bullhorn that the bandits identify themselves. "The officers in charge of both groups met and both units retreated," according to the UPI dispatch.

The Dade County Sheriffs' Department stated today that the Miami Herald had learned about the incident on Dec. 7, the night the battle took place. No newspaper reported it until Dec. 10, when the Miami News ran a story furnished by the Sheriffs' Department. A spokesman for the Sheriff said, "The media didn't seem interested in the story."

An editor at the Miami Herald denied that military authorities had advised them not to publicize the incident.