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GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES ANTI-WORKING CLASS ATTACK

The past week has seen two distinct and serious attacks by the Tory Government against the working class and its organisations. These two measures, the 'investigation' by the National Incomes Commission (old nic) and the Contracts of Employment Bill (the so-called workers' charter), signify a new stage in Tory Government policy. Faced with all kinds of difficulties at home and abroad, it seeks to solve its problems at the expense of the working class. It aims to restore the shaken confidence of the bourgeoisie by 'standing up' to the working class. We should expect more attacks of this nature, especially if the workers' movement does not respond with sufficient vigour. If the Tories feel that they can 'get away' with such measures they will be emboldened. The next logical step would be for them to take steps designed to attract back into their fold those sections of the middle class which have switched to the Liberals by launching a demagogic campaign to lay all the blame for Britain's ills on extravagant workers demands. By 'standing firm' against these demands the Tories would calculate to win back these sect

The attempt by the Tories to undermine the victory of the Scottish builders in winning the 40 hour week (without loss of pay) by referring this question to 'old nic' is directed against the whole campaign for the forty hour week. The Financial Times of December 12th, in an editorial pointed out the key role this particular question played in the national fight for the 40 hour week. As it pointed out, it was relatively a small matter for the Scottish building employers to give in on this question because "building is a protected industry, not much affected by international trade..." and therefore higher labour costs could be passed on. Even so, English building employers were very angry with their Scottish counterparts for giving in. They felt that this would make the claim by English building workers for a forty hour week well-nigh irresistible. The Government fears that once the builders have the forty hour week, a tremendous stimulus will be given to all other sections of organised workers to fight for it. The idea of referring the question to 'old nic' is not so much to get the Scottish decision reversed as to stiffen the resistance of employers to further demands for the 40 hour week.

The reaction of the unions has been one of hostility. James Paterson, Scottish Executive member for the Plumbing Trades Union, in a statement issued on December 12th said: "if the building employers try to revoke the Scottish agreement signed by the F.F.B.T.O. there would be a national stoppage." J. Armstrong, the T.G.W.U. building national secretary, said the same day that he would not be deterred by any statement made by the N.I.C. Furthermore, the Confederation of Shipbuilding And Engineering Unions was not deflected from putting in its claim for a 40 hour week. But this is scarcely more than a conditioned reflex, **THE ANSWER TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK ON THE FOURTY HOUR WEEK MUST BE A TREMENDOUS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON THE QUESTION.** There has been a great deal of discussion on the question of unemployment. The Government has shed crocodile tears about the plight of the unemployed but has shown in practice, especially by this latest move, that it wants unemployment. Using the considerable feeling which has been aroused on the question of unemployment, a vigorous campaign be waged linking the 40 hour week with the fight against unemployment.

The so-called workers' charter, described in typically hypocritical Tory language as giving workers greater security, is in reality a sacking charter. It legalises the immediate sacking of any striker who doesn't give the requisite notice. Another aspect which has received little attention is the passage which reads "the employers obligation under the section shall be conditional on the employee being ready and willing to do a reasonable amount of work." "Reasonable" is rather a vague term and no doubt many employers will interpret it in such a way to give immediate sack to any troublesome elements, whilst any 'work to rulers' would be subject to immediate sack. The Bill would seem to be directed against guerilla strikes too, which were instrumental in gaining the Scottish 40 hour week award. The Tory sacking charter is a particularly blatant piece of provocation, and as such can easily be exposed. As various union leaders have pointed out the Bill's sugar coating gives hardly anything to anybody and would give employers the chance to take away many of the existing gains which have been made in the field of redundancy agreements. Thus the stage is set for a vigorous campaign by all sections against sackings, for jobs and for the forty hour week.

LORD RUSSELL ON SINO/INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE: In a press statement reproduced by Peace News of 14th December, Lord Russell said that at first he had thought China was the aggressor, but examination of the facts led him to believe that the Chinese case was much stronger and that it was dubious if they started the hostilities.

MORE REDUNDANCIES ANNOUNCED.

In the last week still more workers have joined the ranks of the half million already unemployed, or have been informed that they are soon to lose their jobs. The biggest shock came in already hard-hit Renfrew, where it was announced that the shipyard Simons-Lobnitz is to be closed down by next year. This is a result of a take-over by another Clydeside building company Alexander Stephen which stated "continued operation at Renfrew is no longer economically possible without substantial capital investment which . . . cannot be considered." 1,400 men will lose their jobs. In another hard-hit area, Northorn Ireland, more than 100 workers will lose their jobs, just before Xmas at the Ulster Carpet Factories of Cyril Lord. 60 workers will be affected at Donaghadee (50 down) and 45 at Carrmoney (Belfast).

At Leicester, Whitworth Gloster Aircraft, already operating a four-day week at its Bitteswell works, warned Trade Union leaders that unless there is a dramatic change in the order situation there will be large scale redundancies from Jan. to June next year. The knitting firm of Pool Lorrimer and Tabberer are to close down 2/3 of the production at their Grimsby factory. 90 workers will lose their jobs and falling orders are blamed. In S. Wales, two factories on the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Glamorgan are to close in the next three weeks. The electrical firm of Chamberlain and Hookham is to close on Dec. 31. 220 workers will lose their jobs. The Murphy Radio factory on the same estate is to close on Jan. 4th. Of the original 400 workers at the factory, 200 have still to find suitable alternative jobs although the closure was mooted in July.

STILL ON STRIKE AFTER 16 WEEKS.

Readers will remember the statement of the High vacuum, Crawley, workers which we produced some weeks ago. This strike, an official one called in defence of union organisation, is still going on after 16 weeks, and the strike committee has just issued a special Xmas appeal for funds in which they state: "We are sure you will appreciate that the maximum possible financial support is vital at this time of year." Messages and donations should go to J. Barker, 15, Lancing Close Ilfield, Crawley, Sussex.

DAVY AND UNITED ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT "WILL NOT CLIMB DOWN".

In a statement issued on Dec 11th, Stephen Baker, Director and Gen. Manager of the above concern, a Sheffield steel works said that there will be no climb down. The strike which involves 600 workers is over redundancy notices given to 44 workers. It has not so far been called official though it has the backing of the local AEU and is called in accordance with the official AEU policy of 'no sackings'. There has been considerable support for the strike in other Sheffield factories where collections have been made.

FORD STRIKE CALL BY VEHICLE BUILDERS.

At a meeting last weekend the southern area council of the National Union of Vehicle Builders has called for an official strike by 4,000 members at Ford Motors, Dagenham. A composite resolution urged the union executive to support the call for re-instatement of all Ford workers not yet re-employed, and called on the company to lift restriction on shop stewards' meetings and to abolish a compulsory overtime clause.

MERSEYSIDE AEU CALL FOR FORD SITE STRIKE TO BE MADE OFFICIAL.

At its last meeting the Merseyside AEU District Committee asked the EC of the union to declare official the strike of 54 Andrew Air Conditioning engineers on the Ford factory site at Halewood.

VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS CUT WAGES BY £3 - 10 - 0d PER WEEK.

Nearly 70 workers recruited by Vickers-Armstrongs, Barrow in Furness, from other ship-building areas when labour was scarce are to have their pay cut by 70/- per week according to a Financial Times report. The company has decided that it can no longer afford to give the men a subsistence allowance because they are working away from home. A company spokesman said that the company had to be competitive. Some of the workers claim that the cut is a polite way of giving them the sack as they cannot afford to lodge in Barrow and keep a home going elsewhere without the help of the allowance. In comparison when Vickers-Armstrongs had to pay the allowance to get men to the area, the Towns of Barrow and Dalton-in-Furness had 125 people unemployed in ship-building and marine engineering in November.

After a few weeks' respite, Italy is facing another wave of strikes. Italian journalists, store employees and, once again, the metal employees are going on strike. The three metal workers' unions have called an initial 48-hour strike for tomorrow and Thursday. The negotiations between the unions and the General Confederation of Industry which were resumed last month have now broken down again.

The government-controlled metal companies with a labour force of 180,000 will not be affected by the strike. They do not adhere to the General Confederation of Industry, and their own organisation, Intersind, has reached an agreement in principal with the unions. A further 300 metal companies including the Fiat Motor Company and the Olivetti typewriter company, even though they do not belong to the General Confederation of Industry, will be unaffected as they have subscribed to separate undertakings with the unions. The metal workers, who will resume their strike tomorrow, total about 750,000. The metal workers started their agitation last June. A union spokesman stated today that the three main points on which negotiations with the General Confederation have broken down are union rights in the factories, the General Confederation demands that wage increases to be granted should take into account increases granted in the last two years by individual companies and the rejection by the Confederation of the Unions' claim for shorter working hours and higher wages.

Chain store and supermarket employees are demanding a 10% wage increase for all personnel except messengers, drivers, manual workers and administrative staff, for whom a 20% increase is being demanded. All the unions are backing the claims and an initial 24 hours strike has been called for Saturday. The date of the journalists' strike has not yet been set, but an eight day strike has been decided upon by the Union.

BELGIAN NURSES AND TRAMWAYMEN DEMAND HIGHER WAGES.

Hsinhua of Dec. 11th reports: over 2,000 nurses marched through the main streets of Brussels on Dec. 9th demanding higher wages and shorter working hours. Before the march, the marchers had a meeting arranged by the Public Service section of the Belgian General Federation of Labour. In Hainaut Province the same day, a strike which disorganised industry was started by thousands of tramwaymen. At the same time, thousands of tramwaymen of the Liege region downed tools or left their tram-cars, in support of their wage demands.

PARIS BUS DEPOT WORKERS STRIKE.

On Dec. 8th, workers and members of staff of the Paris Flandres and Michelet bus depots, together with workers at other depots, came out on strike in protest against the government's use of military police against the workers. Four workers at the Flandres depot were discharged on Dec 7th by the General Management of the Parisian Transport Administration which sent military police to surround the depot. The same high-handed measure was taken against the repair workers of another state-owned factory. On Dec. 5th Paris Military Police occupied the Michelet depot.

36 LEFT-WING MP'S SUPPORT EMRYS HUGHES AND UPHOLD CONFERENCE DECISIONS.

When Emrys Hughes sought leave to introduce under the ten-minute rule a Bill to terminate the agreement with the US for the siting of a Polaris base in Britain, he was supported by 35 Labour MPs. These included: Sydney Silverman, Michael Foot, S.O. Davies, W. Baxter, (all without the 'whip') and Julius Silverman, Fernyhough, Tudor Watkins, Laurie Pavitt, Frank Allaun, Barabara Castle, Tony Greenwood, Judith Hart, Will Warbey, Sir Leslie Plummer, Rankin, Leslie Hale, and Victor Yates.

Despite the fact that the Labour Party Conference supported a resolution calling for the removal of the Polaris base, the right-wing and leadership of the Party remained silent throughout.

ERNIE ROBERTS OFF LIST FOR MP'S.

Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the AEU has resigned from the list of parliamentary candidates sponsored by the AEU and is not now pressing to have his Horsham adoption confirmed by the NEC which has persistently denied him this right. In a letter to his executive council, Mr. Roberts yesterday said he had decided to devote all his time to union work.

THE TRUE COLOURS OF BRITISH COLONIALISM DISPLAYED IN BRUNEI.

This weeks Brunei revolt has been portrayed by the British Press as an isolated rising, but the support commanded in Borneo and in the Far-East generally is very extensive. The New China News Agency reports on Dec 13 a speech by President Sukarno pledging support for the revolt and the Indonesian Perti Islam Party, the Indonesian Poor Peasants' Association, the Indonesian Student's Movement and the Chairman of the Indonesian Party have all issued statements this week in support of the revolt. In both Malaya and Singapore, the opposition parties have given support, Wahab Shah, Sec. of the Singapore Party Rayat condemning the use by Britain of her Singapore Base.

Whilst the British-backed Malaysia plan has many critics in the Far East, opposition in Brunei could not be more complete. During the election this year, the Brunei Peoples' Party which raised the revolt, swept all the 55 elected seats in four District Councils and all 16 elected seats in the legislative council. A public opinion poll conducted earlier this year by a Commission of the Brunei Govt., showed universal opposition to the Malaysia plan. Plenty of publicity is given to the fact of the revolt, but little is said or known about the background and basis for the uprising. The insurgent army had as its objective the overthrow of colonialism and the formation of an independent Unitary State of North Kalimantan (i.e. Borneo), embracing Brunei, Sarawak and British North Borneo. The division which at present exists is an artificial one introduced and maintained by the British who first colonised Borneo in the 16th Cent., both Sarawak and Borneo having been at one time within the original Sultanate. The major economic resource of Brunei is Petrol, with an output of some 5m tons per year, which is monopolised by the British Shell Company. The rebels have threatened to blow up these installations. Azahari, Chairman of the Brunei Peoples' Party called the rebellion because the British had refused every other overture for independence conducted by constitutional means, and the only course left was that of force. On Dec 8th, speaking as President of the Revolutionary Government in Manila^{hd} declared the existence of the North Kalimantan Unitary State. Previously he had been imprisoned for 6 months by the British for holding an 'illegal' meeting. Whilst the immediate rising has been ruthlessly battered out of existence with the weight of British arms, the actual struggle will only just be starting. As in Cyprus, the fight is likely to be continued by guerilla warfare and terrorism, a bloody war of attrition that will extend over several years before obtaining its objective.

LEADERS OF ADEN TUC JAILED.

Two Aden TU officials were imprisoned on Dec 12th on charges of conspiring to publish a seditious Arabic pamphlet. The men, both Arabs, are the General Sec. of the Aden Trades Union Congress, sentenced to 12 months and the organising officer of the Aden TUC, who received 9 months. The pamphlets 'sedition' consisted of praise for demonstrations against the plan to merge Aden with the South Arabian Federation.

An indication that the British have no intention of giving up their Aden base and colony is afforded by an announcement on Dec. 13th that a small army town is to be built at Little Aden by Humphreys Ltd, civil engineering contractors, who were recently awarded the contract worth £3.5 millions. The town is to have army workshops and modern flat-roofed married quarters.

PERSSECUTION OF PROGRESSIVE PAPER IN ZANZIBAR from Hsinhua 12th Dec. '62

The British Colonial Authorities in Zanzibar have made 8 charges against the Zanzibar News Bulletin, "The Zanews", in an attempt to suppress the plea for independence being raised in Zanzibar. The Colonial Magistrates court on Dec. 6th held a hearing on three frame-up charges of sedition against Abdulla, acting publisher of the Zanews. Pleading not guilty, the court then adjourned until Jan. The three sedition charges were made on the ground that the news bulletin had carried in its issues of last Oct. two articles and a statement which exposed the imperialist manoeuvres in Zanzibar and the police terror prevailing in the country. The other five were libel charges levelled against this same bulletin and had been instituted on Nov 24th and the case was due for hearing on Dec 21st.

FIFTEEN THOUSAND STRIKE ON KENYA TEA PLANTATIONS.

Police were used to attack strikers outside a Tea Factory in Nairobi on Dec. 9th. Tear gas was used. The strike originated two weeks ago on a Brooke Bond plantation when workers demanded the dismissal of an African overseer. The strikers have since gone back to work, according to a Guardian report. The police were called out by the colonial authorities to break up the strikers.

In the course of the conflicting tendencies within the international Communist movement, the serious menace of Khrushchovite revisionism becomes daily clearer. Within the Soviet Union, Khrushchov preserves the hierarchical nature of the bureaucracy, but unlike Stalin he allows the bureaucracy more scope for the expression of its opinions without fear of the chopper. He seems to be allowing industrial management greater flexibility, although in no way diminishing the effective control of the guardian party bureaucracy. We hear of increased food prices for the proletariat and at the same time of concessions to the peasantry (new allies for the bureaucracy). We even hear of Khrushchov's interest in realistic costing, we hear nothing of an honest appraisal of the incomes structure in the Soviet Union. We hear of moans about embezzlement but nothing fundamental about the root causes of this embezzlement, arbitrary planning. Yevtushenko may be willing to act as a front for Khrushchov and seems to be a pleasant young man but this in no way can blind Marxists to Khrushchov's tactics. He is determined to appear as a reformer who is frustrated by evil stonebottoms waiting in the wings. All the economic problems can be put down to "thieves" and "idlers" against which he, poor suffering Khrushchov, has to wage a continuous struggle.

Revolutionaries are not to be so deluded. The apparent "liberalism" now in vogue in the Soviet Union is the result of a pressure the bureaucracy cannot resist but hopes to deflect. The "liberalism" of Khrushchov does not extend to the Chinese who are morally entitled to the maximum possible economic aid. There on the contrary he grows mean and indifferent.

Within the European Communist Parties, the Togliatti tendency comes closest to Khrushchov's standpoint and requires determined Marxist criticism. Togliatti's serpentine dismantling of Marxism should be ruthlessly exposed for what it is - a disarming of the Italian workers when militant policies will be required to meet the new economic tensions in the Common Market. His notion of polycentrism is particularly poisonous at the very period when a highly organised International is vital to defend the world interests of the proletariat.

The dangers of the liberal breeze in the Communist Parties cannot be underestimated. In this country it is often difficult to distinguish "Khrushchovite" from left centrist. "Organising the Left" must in no way take the place of ^a100% Leninist section prepared on critical occasions to put the whole programme of revolutionary Marxism within any such "organised left."

CHINESE COMMUNISTS ASK FOR PARTY TALKS

The Italian Communist Party paper Unita reported on December 9th that the Chinese fraternal delegates to the Czechoslovak Communist Party Congress had presented a letter calling for "an international consultation of all Communist Parties" to discuss disagreements between them. The letter, which was addressed to the foreign delegations present, said that the attacks upon the Albanian leaders were disrupting the unity of the workers' movement and that this could have "grave consequences....which can become even graver." This would appear to be a last attempt by the Chinese to prevent a completely open and irrevocable split between themselves and the Russian Communist Party.

SEVERAL COMMUNIST PARTIES SUPPORT CHINESE POSITIONS

Several Asian Communist Parties have in the last few days made it clear that they support Chinese Communist Party policies. The Japanese Communist Party paper Akahata, on December 2nd published an editorial devoted to the 5th anniversary of the Moscow declaration of Communist Parties (which the Chinese Communist Party has always used to justify its attitudes). In this editorial there is a very sharp attack upon the "Jugoslav revisionists" - this at a time when Tito is being lauded in Russia. The Indonesian Communist Party paper HarianRakjat published on December 8th an article calling for vigilance against Jugoslavia's intrigue under the banner of non-alignment. On the same day the North Korean Communist journal Minjoo Chosun published one of a series of articles attacking the "Jugoslav revisionists", this particular article accused them of restoring capitalism in the Jugoslav countryside. The Syrian Communist paper Al Akbar published an article on December 9th celebrating the 18th anniversary of the liberation of Albania "under the leadership of Enver Hoxha." The North Viet-nam Communist Party press has also carried articles celebrating the anniversary of the Moscow declaration. In addition, a Cambodian paper, (the political affiliation of which was not given) Meatophum, on December 8th declared "Peace can only be achieved after imperialism is eliminated from the world."

Several recent statements by Cuban leaders would indicate that they are more inclined to the Chinese viewpoint. For instance Dorticos in an interview with the Mexican magazine Siempre on December 6th said, "Peace is something quite remote so far as the situation in the Caribbean is concerned."

HOW TRIBUNE'S ALLIES GOT THEIR MAJORITY

We have noted in a previous article how Tribune quoted the statement of the Indian Communist Party on the border question without mentioning the fact that a substantial portion of the leadership of that party were opposed to Nehru - and also without referring to the arrests of hundreds of members of the Indian C.P. by Nehru's police. It is now clear as to how the previous left wing majority in the the Indian C.P. was overthrown. The New China News Agency of December 8th reports:

"The West Bengal and Punjab State Councils of the 'Communist Party of India have been reorganised following the wanton arrests by the Indian Government of leading Communists in these two states who opposed the anti-Chinese campaign

"The Indian paper Statesman reported that the West Bengal Council of the C.P.I. had been led by Indian Communists who persisted in the proletarian stand on the Sino-Indian boundary question and opposed the anti-Chinese campaign. After the publication by the Chinese Government on November 21st of the statement on China's unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal on the Sino-Indian border, the Indian Government carried out large-scale persecution of the Indian Communists in West Bengal..... Within a few days, fifty of the 101 West Bengal Council members of the C.P.I. were thrown behind bars. (The arrested 50 include all the members of the secretariat of the State Council) Following this, the leading body of the C.P.I. headed by Dange sent someone to West Bengal to convene the Party's State Council meeting on November 27th and reorganise the leading body of the State. Apart from the 50 arrested Council members, another 24 Council members were absent from the meeting. Only 27 Council members were present. The meeting elected a new secretary of the Party's State Council and formed a new secretariat and appointed a new editor and a chairman of the Party newspaper's editorial board.

"The Hindustan Standard reported that the reorganised leadership of the West Bengal State Council of the C.P.I. "is now said to be under the control of what is known as the Dange group." It was reported that immediately after the reorganisation of the leadership, the State Council meeting adopted an anti-Chinese resolution.

"The Hindustan Times reported that after the reorganisation of theIndian Communist Party in West Bengal State, the Party's Punjab State Council held a meeting on the following day, November 28th, to reorganise the Party's leading body in Punjab which had "passed over to the pro-Dange faction." the paper said that after the Chinese Government issued its November 21st statementmost of the Indian Communist Party leaders of Punjab State were also persecuted by the Indian Government. Twenty of the 24 member State Executive of the Party were arrested by the Government or were on the "wanted" list. H.S. Surjeet Secretary of the Punjab State Council, and most of the "extremists" were thrown into jail within a few days. The State Council held a meeting on November 28th to reorganise the leading organ. After reorganisation, "Four moderates of the 24 member State Executive who are out of jail assumed powers of full Executive and State Secretariat." The meeting also elected a new secretary of the Party's Punjab State Council and a new editor of the Party organ and appointed a new treasurer."

INDIAN MONOPOLIST TALKS OF "BENEFITS" OF WAR ECONOMY

In an article published in the Hindustan Times, 4th December, G.D. Birla, a big business magnate, spoke of the "big 'benefits' accruing to the Indian economy from war preparations. He said, "The sense of urgency created by war is a great tonic for activity in every field,....." the view that "war with China must greatly strain the the Indian economy and stand in the way of its development" was " just a hackneyed assumption."

INDIAN HOME MINISTER THREATENS "FIRM ACTION"

Speaking in the Indian Rajya Sabha on December 8th, Indian Home Minister Shastri said that the Indian Government would take "firm and strong action" against writings in the press or speeches by members of any political party designed "to create disaffection against the Government" and hamper the "war effort". He threatened the Indian Communists "who still had a lurking desire to accept and support the policy of the Chinese Communists" and said they must change their position and "deliver themselves" to the authorities. He added, "I say firmly and clearly that if any person indulges in the kind of activity which would help the Chinese or gives even indirect support which could harm or is injurious to the national interest we will have to take firm and definite action."

CZECHS TO SWITCH AID FROM CHINA TO INDIA: According to a report in the Financial Times of 12/12/62, Czechoslovak may be contemplating a switch of her agricultural and other economic aid from China to India. This includes large numbers of Tatra and Skoda five- and ten- lorries, up to 2,500 tractors, 700 harvesters, fertilisers, medical supplies and drugs, 3 complete sugar refineries, electric motors, etc., etc.