

# Europe Moves to Save Pound

by Dave Goldman

May 17 (IPS) — In defiance of explicit Rockefeller marching orders to enforce a shakedown of Great Britain, European central bankers came to the assistance of the Bank of England this week in a massive, coordinated intervention to prevent the collapse of the pound sterling. This, also despite official press reports that Bank of England Governor Gordon Richardson's routine pleas for aid to last Monday's meeting of central bankers at Basle were rejected. The immediate impetus for the central bankers' action was their considered fear that the collapse of sterling would rebound in a victory for the burgeoning "Fortress Britain" faction represented by British Minister of Industry Anthony Wedgewood Benn.

The support operation, acidly denounced by the City of London's faithful Rockefeller mouthpiece, the London Economist, in its lead editorial this week, is further indication of the reluctance among leading layers in Europe to countenance the political and economic implications of Rockefeller's insane and irresponsible brinkmanship strategy.

The Rockefeller gameplan calls for an economic "first strike" on Great Britain (see article p. 1) to set an example in Schachtian "reorganization" for the continent. One week ago Charles Coombs, foreign exchange chief of the New York Federal Reserve told an audience in Venice of his counterparts from every international bank that the pound should and would collapse — to put Britain into line — while the dollar was preserved. Sources contacted at Rockefeller policy nests in New York added their voices to the chorus calling for a pound collapse. British Finance Minister Healy promptly

echoed the orders: "The pound must be allowed to seek its own level," welcoming the opportunity to demand renewed austerity and wage restraint.

## Sounding the Alarm

By midweek, with the pound collapsing 1 per cent a day on foreign exchange markets and open revolt brewing within and without the Labour Party in Britain, the conservative West German financial daily Handelsblatt sounded the alarm on the continent. In its May 14 editorial this voice of the Ruhr industrialists sternly warned that Britain would be forced to "solve internal political difficulties with a go-it-alone, protectionist economic policy" — a patent horror for Europe which supplies 50 per cent of Britain's imports.

Unnerved by the prospects of further trade and production collapse, the editorial blast, called "Cheap Acquaintances," did not hesitate to brand the U.S. untrustworthy in the face of such an eventuality. Citing former Commerce Secretary Dent's assertions that U.S. trade policy epitomized the opportunities for free and liberal world trade, Handelsblatt noted cynically that in his current position as chief negotiator at the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) talks in Geneva "such protestations are merely part of his uniform."

In issuing the warning, the Ruhr industrialists were responding directly to the political handwriting on the wall in Britain itself, where diverse nationalist, anti-EEC forces were being galvanized faster than the pound's own rate of collapse. The explosive polarization was signalled by leading Financial Times columnist C. Gordon Tether who in a dramatic shift this week cemented an alliance with populist anti-Marketeer Benn. In two consecutive col-

umns Tether called for import controls and the nationalization of British industry, attacking what he termed the Benn "demonology". The conservative Tether, who has publically opened fire on the Rockefeller's international cabal previously, is responding directly and angrily — if shortsightedly — to Rockefeller plans to bankrupt and abandon the island.

At the same time, British industrialists in the Confederation of British Industry this week issued public warning of continued, deepening recession, fueling the conservative revolt against the shaky Wilson government and the desperation for an economic solution, however short-term, short of financial collapse and outright liquidation.

The steam behind the political upheaval in Britain is also coming, not insignificantly, from the militant trade unions who — despite intense counter-insurgency, replete with the vaunted corporatist "social contract" — have not been persuaded that they should commit suicide.

Faced with cataclysmic political turmoil, a rupture with the Common Market and the certain imposition of disastrous trade controls, Finance Minister Healy and Bank of England governor Richardson were forced to heed the warnings of their continental confreres, and accept Rockefeller's orders to the contrary.

What neither the coalescing "anti-Marketeers" — an implicit anti-Rockefeller grouping — nor their terrified observers on the continent yet grasp is the simple reality that the only viable alternative they have to economic holocaust at the hand of the Rockefellers is the expansion of East-West trade publically proposed by the Soviet Union and elaborated by the ICLC in the proposal for an International Development Bank.