

X/13 BRIT - 2ND ADD - BRITISH UNIONS CONDEMN CZECHOSLOVAK INVASION
(CN - 154) X X X PEACE

K. GILL OF THE DRAUGHTSMENS UNION SUPPORTED BONDS CALL TO RETAIN CONTACTS WITH EAST EUROPEAN UNIONS AND ARGUED THAT THE BRITISH UNIONS HAD NOT RPT NOT BROKEN OFF CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN UNIONS WHICH SUPPORTED AMERICAN POLICY IN VIETNAM.

BUT THREE SPEAKERS, TWO OF THEM LEADERS OF LARGE UNIONS AND THE OTHER A DEPUTY LEADER, SUPPORTED THE EXECUTIVE POLICY.

LES CANNON, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ELECTRICIANS UNION AND A FORMER MEMBER OF THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY WHOSE WIFE WAS BORN IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, CALLED THE INVASION A CRAZY ACT OF AGGRESSION WHICH HAD NO PARALLEL IN HISTORY.

IF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE WERE ALLOWED TO HAVE THEIR SAY, CANNON SAID, THEY WOULD CALL ON THE BRITISH TRADE UNIONS TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE INVADING COUNTRIES AND UNTIL THE OCCUPYING TROOPS ARE WITHDRAWN, WE SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM.

DANNY MCGARVEY, LEADER OF THE BOILERMAKERS UNION AND ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN FIGURES IN THE BRITISH LABOR MOVEMENT, SAID THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE WOULD THINK BRITISH TRADE UNIONISTS HAD SOLD OUT TO THE INVADERS IF THEY REOPENED CONTACTS WITH THEM AT THIS TIME.

MCGARVEY SAID THE CONGRESS EXECUTIVE WAS COMPOSED OF TRADE UNION LEADERS OF MANY SHADES OF POLITICAL OPINION BUT IT HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS IN ITS DECISION TO WITHDRAW THE INVITATION TO THE SOVIET LEADERS TO ATTEND THE CENTENARY CONFERENCE AND TO SUSPEND EFFORTS TO RENEW CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST UNIONS.

NORMAN STAGG, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE UNION OF POSTOFFICE WORKERS, ENDED THE DEBATE BY TELLING THE CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO LEAD A DELEGATION TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION NEXT SATURDAY.

HOW COULD I GO THERE AFTER THIS NAKED ACT OF AGGRESSION AND EXPRESS FRATERNAL SENTIMENTS... HOW COULD I? STAGG ASKED TO APPLAUSE.

IF THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT CONDEMNED THE INVASION, STAGG SAID, WE MUST DO MORE THAN UTTER WORDS OF PROTEST . . . WE MUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE STAND FOR LIBERTY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.

IN A FINAL REFERENCE TO COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE INVASION AND AMERICAN ACTION IN VIETNAM, STAGG SAID THAT AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR OPPOSITION TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS POLICY BUT NOT ONE VOICE OF TRADE UNION PROTEST HAS BEEN UTTERED IN THE SOVIET UNION OR OTHER INVADING EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AGAINST AGGRESSION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

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