



# TORIES DOWN - ON TO WORKERS VICTORY!



It could soon be curtains for Heath now that the failure of his gamble has left the strategy of the capitalist class in such disarray

## Miners' leaders fall into relativities trap

Speaking at a mass miners' demonstration in Cardiff last Tuesday, Lawrence Daly, Secretary of the NUM and leading left-winger on the National Executive, felt obliged to apologise for his union's appearance before the Tories' relativities inquiry.

He said that he had told the TUC 'I don't like the phrase "special case" - miners are not begging to be treated as a special case. I'm not prepared to put that type of argument at the expense of lower-paid engineers, postmen, agricultural workers and others.'

It is a shame that Mr. Daly was not prepared to tell the Tory Government the same thing he so 'bravely' told the TUC. The relativities inquiry which he attended is a body set up, clearly and openly, to deal with 'special case' arguments - and to make sure that 'special cases' are kept special.

Daly was told this to his face by Pay Board chairman Sir Frank Figgures, who spelled it out in his opening speech to the inquiry. At Cardiff, Daly offered the pathetic excuse that 'We only got involved in the relativities discussion when we were virtually dragged before the Pay Board.'

But how can a bunch of union 'leaders' who are afraid to make up their minds about what meetings they will and will not attend, hope to defeat a Government and win a strike? If the miners had refused to attend the relativities inquiry, and insisted that they would only cooperate with a body that was not bound up with Tory incomes policy, they would have smashed the 'relativities' trap to smithereens and caused a big set back for the Government's attempt to impose Phase 3.

As it is the NUM executive can now be depicted by the Tories as a living advertisement for the relativities machinery and Phase 3.

The executive's cooperation with the inquiry and its insistence on keeping picketing down to a minimum - even at the cost of making pickets ineffective - all suggest that the executive hopes to win this struggle without a real fight.

They have been counting either on a victory for Labour in the election and a prompt settlement with a new Labour Government, or on a new Tory Government being eager to get the country back to work, and prepared to pay for it.

They thus want to avoid picketing, confrontations, both for fear of having an adverse effect on Labour's electoral chances and to prevent a hardening of relations with the Tories, and are prepared to take part in the relativities inquiry in order to demonstrate to the electorate the 'reasonableness' of trade unions, and to give the Tories an opening to settle should they win the election.

Even if the NUM executive's calculations turn out to have been correct and there was a serious possibility that the miners could have found themselves facing a new Tory Government determined to smash their strike (an eventuality for which the executive's strategy left them totally unprepared) - their policy is thoroughly short-sighted. It will serve to strengthen the hand of those - Labour and Tory - who demand 'wage restraint' (either 'voluntary' or legal, while prices continue to rise, and it does nothing to promote working class unity).

The ability of the working class movement to fight back against capitalist attack is thus being weakened by the NUM executive's manoeuvring. But at least some of the damage can still be patched up. The NUM leadership must issue and publicise a declaration that they support wage settlements for every group of workers similar to the miners' claim, that they are opposed to any form of incomes policy or wage restraint under capitalism, and oppose any deal with a Labour Government to hold wages down. Resolutions to this effect should be adopted by NUM branches and area committees across the country.

Another major way in which the NUM can make up for its wrong policy over the relativities inquiry and strike a blow for working class unity is by taking up the proposal of Jack Collins, Kent area representative on the NUM executive, and making the freeing of the jailed Shrewsbury pickets a condition of their return to work. This also should be pressed for by branches and area committees.  
Ray Alexander

The Tories' last-ditch attempt to use an election to strengthen their hand against the workers' movement has dramatically backfired.

Their defeat at the polls is an important victory for the working class, but it marks only the beginning of the struggle to defend working class living standards. The attacks launched by the Tories - unemployment, social service cuts, legal shackles on the unions, incomes policy - were made necessary by the crisis situation in which British capitalism finds itself. This crisis will not disappear just because Harold Wilson is likely to replace Ted Heath in Downing Street.

Any Government that attempts to rule the country in this time of crisis must adopt drastic measures. The miserable string of reforms which Labour advocates are a joke. There are only two roads - the road of drastic *socialist policies* that will defend the interests of the working class and make the capitalist class pay the price for the crisis their system has created, or the road of drastic *capitalist policies* that will place the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the workers in order to preserve capitalist profits.

### PROGRAMME

The whole tradition, programme and leadership of the Labour Party will work to set it on the road of capitalist policies. Only the most highly-organised and determined forms of struggle by working people can prevent a Labour Government from implementing policies essentially identical to those of the Tories, and set the workers' movement on the road to a socialist solution.

The defeat of the Tories will be seen by the mass of working people as a victory that will boost their fighting spirit. The formation of a Labour Government will arouse expectations and inspire millions of workers to think and discuss about the type of policies that should be followed.

The task of militants is to push this response beyond thought and talk to organisation: to convince workers that policies that *should* be adopted by the Government can also be implemented immediately and directly by the workers' movement.

The union bureaucrats and the Labour Government will try to cook up a deal to keep wages down - but even if Labour could guarantee to

keep prices down (which, with their present reformist policies, they cannot) workers' living standards have a good deal of catching up to do. A fight must be mounted inside the unions to prevent the bureaucrats doing such a deal, based on the slogan *No incomes policy under capitalism*.

By CHRIS BALFOUR

The best way of preventing such a deal is by a massive, all-out wages offensive. The miners must maintain their strike and insist upon the full claim, the rail unions insist on their wage claims being met in full, and the Manchester Conference of engineering convenors should be recalled immediately to plan a national engineering strike to win their national claim. Workers forced to make last minute settlements under Phase 3 should insist on a new deal.

This wages offensive must be accompanied by a mobilisation of the entire trade union movement to ensure that the Labour Government abolishes the whole apparatus of Tory controls - the 'counter-inflation' Acts, the Industrial Relations Act, and the tighter laws for pickets. The 'Day of Action' in defence of the jailed Shrewsbury pickets set for 20 March must be turned into a massive display of working class determination to release these lads, and must mark the beginning of an all-out campaign to force the Labour Government to grant them a full pardon.

### PRICES

All wage claims must include the demand for total protection of wage rises from inflation through a sliding scale (or 'nil-norm threshold') that will automatically adjust wages upwards as prices rise.

But rising prices should also be tackled at source. Price committees

of trade unionists, tenants and housewives should be set up across the country to do this job. They should systematically monitor shop prices, insist that all firms open the books for regular inspection of prices and profits, and organise direct action (boycotts, blackings, and strike action) to keep prices down. They should build a mass campaign to insist that the Labour Government imposes a total price freeze and grants the price committees authority to enforce the freeze.

### WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The ruling class will employ all kinds of Parliamentary manoeuvres (with the Liberals as the main tool) to either block the formation of a Labour Government or to tie its hands. The Labour Party bureaucrats will use their weak position in Parliament as an excuse for not adopting radical policies.

But a Labour Government need not be at the mercy of such ruling class tricks. There is an alternative to relying on the Parliamentary backing of the Liberals - rely on the organised power of the workers' movement outside Parliament.

Working class militants should work towards the establishment of mass committees to mobilise support for socialist policies and defend the Government from Parliamentary sabotage by the opposition. If the Government refuses to take socialist measures, the existence of these committees will prevent the Labour bureaucrats using the excuse of their weak position in Parliament, and such committees could then move to implement such policies themselves. If the Government, the organs of the capitalist state (courts, police etc.) or the bosses try to resist such measures these committees could organise a powerful reply - *general strike*.

# WHERE HEATH FAILED

The Tory Government has gone. Labour has limped home with the largest number of Parliamentary seats. What sort of problems will a Labour Government face? To answer this we must examine the experience of the Tories over the past 4 years.

Heath's biggest job was to reverse the decline in the profitability of British industry, something which the previous Wilson Government had failed to do. According to one estimate, the pre-tax rate of profit in manufacturing, construction and distribution, had fallen from 17% in 1951 to 9.7% in 1970. These figures include foreign earnings. If these are subtracted, the fall is even sharper, especially under Wilson: from 11% in 1964 to 5.8% in 1970.

It would not be enough to bash wages. Hourly earnings in Britain rose by 58% between 1967 and 1971. Yet this is hardly exceptional. In France, for example, hourly earnings rose by 64% over the same period. Wage costs per unit of output in France, however, rose by only 18% whereas in Britain they rose by 27%!

In other words, the productivity of British industry was poorer than its competitors, even its weaker ones. This reflected persistently low rates of investment. Yet an investment boom could only be encouraged by a rising rate of return on capital. The vicious circle was complete.

To break out of this dilemma, Heath launched a double offensive. He took Britain into the European markets, and set out to fundamentally weaken the combativity of the working class by the use of the Courts and the law. This latter aim was especially urgent since entry into the Common Market would raise the cost of living in Britain through VAT, an end to subsidies on bacon and sugar, and levies on imports of food from outside the EEC.

## 'LAME DUCK'

The preparations for entry and the initial attack on workers dovetailed with the 'lame duck' policy which allowed the least efficient firms to go

to the wall, as for example in the case of UCS. This prepared business for the competitive conditions of the EEC, while at the same time helping to raise unemployment to over a million by March 1972. Tax handouts replaced investment grants, and the dole queues swelled. Business was to be made more efficient by competition while the workers were to be demoralised by unemployment.

The Industrial Relations Act was aimed primarily at the unofficial shop stewards movement in industries

industry who settled above an unofficial pay norm of 8%. The postmen were smashed. Dustmen, hospital workers, nurses, teachers, also fell by the wayside.

## MINERS

Yet it was from amongst this group of workers that stepped one group who could smash the policy into the ground: the miners. As one official commented during the Wilberforce negotiations which marked the end of most dramatic

weakness of the workers movement. Yet the redundancy tactic was met with occupations of factories in defiance of the laws of private property. The majesty of the Courts has been met with workers refusing to obey injunctions or pay fines, and striking to get workers out of jail.

All the pomp of Parliament has not stopped nurses, council workers and miners from striking against its laws. The police have been fought and beaten on the picket lines in

relief for the rich has never been more generous.

Yet the prospects for British capitalism remain grim. During the year 1972-73, gross pre-tax profits rose by 18%. Yet this raised the share of profits in the national income by only 0.1%, to 6.7%. This is nothing like the 14% share it enjoyed in 1960.

While between 1970 and 1972, undistributed profits rose by £1,500 million, investment rose by only a quarter of that amount (including foreign investment). Business confidence never got off the ground. The 3-day week, the oil crisis, and the threat of recession throughout Europe in 1974 are the last straws.

Finally, the Tories have failed to solve the Irish question in favour of British imperialism. The armed resistance of the nationalist population has undermined the Protestant monolith in the North, and no permanent solution is in sight. The British Army has gained valuable training in the streets and torture chambers of Northern Ireland to use against workers in Britain but it has cost British imperialism dear in terms of men, material and morale.

## LABOUR GOVERNMENT

A central plank in Labour's election policy has been its plan for a 'voluntary' wage agreement with the TUC. But such a deal could only survive if major concessions on prices and the social services were offered, along with 'anti-capitalist' gestures like limited nationalisation.

Even then success would be brief. For Labour will have to seek massive foreign loans to meet the trade deficit, and subsidies on food and nationalisation with compensation will be extremely expensive, without providing any immediate stimulus to the economy.

Labour will be a paralysed Government. But it will be faced with a workers' movement, undefeated and politically primed to explode in the face of capitalism.

## By DAVE BAILEY

where strikes had been high in the 1960's: engineering, automobiles, docks and construction. The trade unions to which unofficial strikers belonged could be hauled before the NIRC by employers and fined huge sums of money. The aim was to force the trade union bureaucracy to discipline their own militants. To assist them, an official Registrar would be given power to re-write the rule books and lay down procedures for calling strikes.

## BLUNT WEAPON

Although the TUC never mobilised the movement to seriously fight this Act, and although the T&G and AUEW have suffered large fines under the NIRC, the Act has proved a blunt weapon. The most significant defeat was the upsurge which greeted the imprisonment of the five dockers, when the lawyers made the stupid error of making the militants themselves legally liable (instead of the unions).

In the sixties, workers with little economic power, especially those in the nationalised industries, suffered a sharp fall in real earnings. These now went into battle with national strikes.

At first, the Tories breezed to victory. They had rejected conciliation with the trade union bureaucrats, choosing instead the tactic of threatening blood and thunder to any leader of a nationalised

strike since the War: 'the miners could have had the shirt off Heath's back.'

The TUC failed to press home the advantage and mobilise to remove the Tories from office, and the Government counter-attacked by introducing state control of wages. At no time did the Tories seriously believe in a voluntary incomes policy. They knew it would be swept aside by the militancy of the workers. The talks with the TUC were designed to weaken the TUC's position and strengthen the Government's hand for electoral purposes.

But the workers movement did not give the Tories an easy ride. Several strikes occurred, although they suffered eventual defeat. Only the firemen managed to stretch the terms of Phase 3. Finally, however, the Tories had to face once again those workers who just would not go away: the miners.

In his effort to defeat the miners and save the Tory incomes policy, Heath has been forced to sabotage the economy. The 3-day week, even though it has virtually washed out the engineers' struggle, must be one of the most costly anti-strike manoeuvres of all time. It failed. With the miners, even the ultimate manoeuvre of a general election has failed.

Heath has therefore failed to deal the workers movement a decisive blow. The confrontation strategy relied for success on the political

several big battles, such as Saltley in 1972. The trade union bureaucrats, even those of the 'left', have lost some of their authority, and the workers' movement has developed tactics, such as flying pickets, which have outflanked the bureaucrats more than once.

## RULING CLASS FORMULAS

On top of all this, certain ruling class political formulas have been exposed. No longer can a capitalist Government say with confidence that modern capitalism will never again create unemployment. No longer will a Government be able to appeal for wage restraint with the glib argument that this will produce economic growth and hold down prices.

Heath, with the assistance of the TUC, may have managed to get through it all without bringing on a general strike and a revolutionary upsurge of the workers movement. But the new government will have to confront the workers movement with fewer miles to the gallon in its political tank.

Certainly, Heath has managed to redistribute wealth away from the working class to the capitalists. The rate of price increases has overtaken the rate of increase in hourly earnings. Council rents have been raised by 40%. Barber's latest budget has cut education spending by £200 million. Free school milk has gone, and the price of school meals raised. Tax

# Kent student president defends campaign against victimisation

The present trials of student militants at Oxford and Essex Universities, reported on the back page, were preceded last month by the victory of Kent students. They forced the reinstatement of Joe Cotter, a member of the Communist Party who had been suspended on trumped up charges.

John McGeown, President of Kent Students' Union and a member of the IMG, describes the outcome of the campaign, which sets the tone for the NUS conference on student victimisation to be held on 16 March.

The last week has seen an hysterical attack launched on the students of Kent University by the ruling class press. 'Marxist violence overshadows Kent... Stop these student mobs,' screamed the Daily Mail. The Daily Telegraph talked of 'Mob rule in Kent.'

These attacks came a week after a campaign to reinstate Joe Cotter, a student victimised on academic grounds, was won hands down. The dean of the faculty involved, Professor Chilver, has resigned, thus fulfilling the full demands of the campaign: 'Cotter IN, Chilver OUT.'

The Telegraph suggested that Kent is now a place of darkness and gloom. What a joke! If there is any darkness and gloom at Kent University this possibly has more to do with the Tory Government's restrictions on heating and lighting than it has to do with the Students' Union. For during the last few weeks more students have actually participated

in what goes on at this place than at any other time in its history.

## 'MOB RULE'

This is what really scares the university authorities and the Tory press - and if this is 'mob rule' then we at Kent are all in favour of it. Margaret Gowing, who received no recognition here but was appointed to an Oxford Chair in the History of Science, told the Times Higher Education Supplement that there was 'more freedom of speech in the Civil Service than at the University of Kent at Canterbury.'

This has begun to change. The occupation and the campaign against victimisation was characterised by daily mass meetings. These mass meetings were the decision making bodies of the Students' Union - such is our conception of the direct democracy of those actually involved in the struggle. Unfortunately this cannot be said of all those forces who call them-

selves 'left' - particularly the Broad Left.

The IMG has pointed out the bankruptcy of this amalgam time and again, but never has this been more clearly demonstrated than at Kent. Initially the occupation of the Registry received no reply from the authorities on its demands, and inevitably a small group of right-wing students crawled out of the woodwork to organise names for a referendum designed to block the reinstatement campaign.

This, combined with the decision of the Association of University Teachers to 'strike' (by 89 votes to 87 with 12 abstentions) on the kind offer of full pay from the university, put the wind up a small section of the left - the Broad Left, of course.

## BROAD LEFT DISGRACE

Instead of confronting the arguments of the right-wing students, the seven Broad Left members of the Student Union executive went behind the back of the occupation and called an emergency executive meeting to end the occupation. At this meeting one of their leading spokesmen told us we were defeated and should retreat and cut our losses. Others used more militant rhetoric about 'letting all hell loose' if our demands were not met within three days.

These people obviously have a completely bureaucratic conception

of student struggles in which the masses can be turned on and off rather like a tap in order to fit into their manoeuvres to placate the right wing and protect their positions. Not surprisingly one of the things the bourgeois press has omitted to mention is the actual role of the Communist Party in this campaign. That would not fit in with their 'red scare' campaign.

The attacks from the Tory press can only mean that further repression is on the way for students, particularly if a Tory Government is re-elected. The beginnings of this can be seen in the trials of students at Oxford and Essex and the threat of further victimisations at Kent.

These must be rigorously fought. If College Authorities succeed in victimisation this will cut the feet from under all the other campaigns, on grants, housing, course content and exams, that may require direct action to be taken.

This gives a new urgency to the Conference on Victimisation to be held at Essex University on Saturday, 16 March. And it means that the slogan on which the Kent occupation was ended - 'What do we want - a Fighting Union' - should be popularised throughout NUS in order to combat both the attacks of the college authorities and the lies of the bourgeois press.

Kent occupation provoked hysterical press - in this case, the Daily Mail

WHAT is happening to our universities? Has student power gone mad?

More and more academics are worried as undergraduates demand with menacing powers undreamed of a decade ago

At Kent University a student who was expelled for failing to reach the required standard was reinstated last week after militant Left-Wingers had occupied the administration building and brought the entire place to a halt.

Daily Mail, Thursday, February 23, 1974

This incident was the crucial one for 64-year-old Professor Guy Chilver, Dean of the Humanities Faculty. For years he had watched the situation deteriorate. This week he resigned as Dean. Here he tells why...

# Stop giving in to these student mobs!

BY PROFESSOR GUY CHILVER

IT WOULD be far better for any university to close its doors - for months if necessary - rather than surrender its academic life to mob rule.

What is going on at Kent University is a disgrace. It is a disgrace to the name of the University. It is a disgrace to the name of the country. It is a disgrace to the name of the civilisation.

The IMG election campaign has certainly achieved its main objects. Firstly, it ensured that the revolutionary alternative to reformism was raised, and that the decisive issues such as the Pay Laws, racism, equal pay and the need to fight and break the laws of the ruling class were given a real hearing. Secondly, it has enabled the International Marxist Group to win new members and supporters as well as extend the influence of *Red Weekly*.

## SHEFFIELD, ATTERCLIFFE

The campaign for Tariq Ali gained considerable momentum in the last five days before polling day. Running to a schedule of never less than three meetings a day, Tariq spoke at factory gates, in the local wards, to immigrant workers, on street corners and to miners.

At the big engineering factory of Shardlow, after addressing over 80 workers outside the gate, he was then collared by the night-shift shop steward, who demanded on behalf of his shift that Tariq stay and repeat his speech. Tariq later remarked that it was the first time he had been given an encore outside a factory.

Over 150 Shardlow workers heard the policies of the IMG and a number bought tickets for Wednesday's election rally. The next morning some thirty copies of *Red Weekly* were sold to the day shift.

BELOW: Gerard Vergest of the French ex-Ligue Communiste speaking at a London IMG meeting on the election on Tuesday. Also on the platform (l to r): Tariq Ali, Linda Smith (chair), and John Ross.

# IMG CAMPAIGN HAS BIG IMPACT

At a meeting in Birley Ward on Monday night 60 electors turned up. This contrasted with the 'enthusiastic' audience of 11 who turned up to hear Labour candidate Duffy on the same evening. The leaders of the Yemeni Workers Union also invited Tariq to address them, and contrasted his anti-imperialist position on Palestine with the support given to Zionism by the other candidates.

At a meeting organised under the auspices of the Community Relations Group and a meeting for Pakistani workers, where he spoke in Urdu, Tariq attacked the openly racist policies of both Tories and Labour. Both these meetings were well attended by workers from the local immigrant community.

BELOW: Bob Purdie (centre) and his campaign organisers about to hand in his nomination papers last week



As one Pakistani worker said at the end of the second meeting: 'Labour cannot fight against the Tories' racist laws. The IMG is the only organisation that not only opposes these laws, but really struggles against them amongst white workers.'

As a result of Tariq's meetings in the mining areas, a number of very useful contacts have been made which have been followed up by the local IMG branches. Special transport was being arranged for miners who had bought tickets for Wednesday's rally. Already by Tuesday evening 300 tickets had been sold for the rally.

## GLASGOW, QUEENS PARK

Denouncing the programmes of both Communist Party and the Labour Party, veteran revolutionary Harry McShane urged Queens Park voters to 'vote revolutionary' on 28 February. Addressing Purdie's election rally, he said: 'It is the first time for 25 years that I have spoken at an election meeting.'

Amongst those present at this meeting was the Apprentice Convenor of one of the Glasgow ship yards, who not only supported Purdie's election campaign but also expressed interest in the IMG. He is one of the

many workers who have been attracted around the IMG in Glasgow as a result of the campaign.

John Freil, one of a number of Maclaren's workers sporting a 'Vote Purdie' sticker, told us: 'I support Bob in this constituency because of everything the IMG has done to assist the Maclaren's workers in their struggle.'



Another Maclaren's worker who supports Purdie, Andy McCoil (above), added: 'Right from the start of the struggle the IMG was there. Had their intervention been acted upon this fight would have been won by now.'

Sellers of *Workers Press* received short shrift from Maclaren's workers when they arrived last Wednesday. Irate workers shouted: 'Where have you been for the last seventeen weeks?'

Sales of *Red Weekly* have shown a dramatic increase in the last five days, and many new readers have asked about the IMG and its activities.

At St Luke's Catholic School, the children held a mock election. Understanding workers' democracy much better than many of their elders, they started off by banning the Tory candidate from standing. The final result was four votes for the Scottish Nationalist Party, ten for the Labour Party, 12 for the Communist Party, and 29 votes for IMG candidate Bob Purdie. That's one class with a future!

## NEWHAM, NORTH-EAST

Jung, the influential Pakistani paper for the Urdu speaking-population in London, ran a special article on Newham North-East this week, asking immigrant workers to cast their vote for IMG candidate John Ross. This followed a statement signed by Z.D. Butt, Barrister at Law and President of Tahrik-I-Istiqal (Britain); M.A. Jananagar, President of Pakistan Peoples' Front; M. Arif, convenor of Pakistan Socialist Society (London); and G.D. Ahmed, President of Pak-Bangladesh Friendship Society (Blackburn).

The statement says: 'We have ideological differences with the IMG. But in spite of these differences we appeal to all immigrants to vote for the candidates of this organisation.' The reasons given are: 'IMG has always been in the forefront of those who support Palestinian, Vietnamese, Irish and other freedom fighters engaged in bloody struggle against the imperialists'; and that, 'no other organisation has played such an active role as the IMG in the fight against the racials...'. The statement was widely distributed in all three constituencies and got a very good response in Newham.

From Friday until Wednesday well over 1000 copies of *Red Weekly* were sold in Newham, either at street meetings or through door-to-door sales. Factory gate and college meetings as well as a meeting in East Ham Town Hall have attracted attentive and often sympathetic audiences. One local branch committee member of the Labour Party told an IMG canvasser: 'I will probably vote Ross. Prentice is so bloody right wing that he in no way represents the interests of the working class.'

The active campaign run by the IMG was in vivid contrast to the lukewarm efforts of the Newham North-East Labour Party. Labour canvassers were almost as rare a sight as Trotskyists at a Buckingham Palace garden party. Those few who were in evidence simply relied on the anti-Tory instincts of the working class: they were not interested in, of capable of, winning the electors to socialist ideas.

John Ross at Newham meeting last Friday



Neither Ali, Purdie nor Ross will be entertaining workers to tea on the terrace at the House of Commons. The St Luke's vote cannot be taken as an omen. Nevertheless, their campaign has achieved the aims set when we decided to run candidates, irrespective of the number of votes gained.

The need to continue the struggle, and the need to rely only on the independent strength of the working class, has been firmly driven home. In the constituencies the IMG has increased its strength and widened its circles of contacts and readers of its paper. It has also gained valuable experience in learning how to agitate on the issues facing the working class in a way that can find a ready response amongst workers.



'Miners Right, Government Wrong'. The headline of a left-wing newspaper? No, the slogan comes from the December issue of *Spearhead*, paper of the fascist National Front.

'The claim of the miners for more pay is in fact a thoroughly just one in the light of galloping inflation and of the harsh conditions of work that are inherent in the industry,' says *Spearhead*.

This attitude is not an aberration on the part of the editors. The National Front is changing its image. It does not condemn trade unionists as such as subversive of the capitalist system - it supports - only the 'politically-motivated troublemakers' and 'communist elements'. Support for the miners is part of a new effort by the NF to become known and treated as a 'working-class organisation'.

### SPEARHEADING ACTION

In the same issue of *Spearhead*, we read: 'Widespread Industrial Action urged to Back Sugar Workers'. Below, the news is revealed that the NF in Newham, East London, supports the efforts of local sugar refinery workers to resist redundancies brought about by EEC preference for beet sugar production.

It's not just passive support either: 'Realising that the present wave of sugar workers' protests

## National Front woos the workers

are likely to be ineffectual, we are planning to aid the sugar workers by laying the foundations for a second line of defence. We are now producing a leaflet entitled 'Sweet Talk - But Nothing Else', which is intended for trade unionists in other local industries, and for members of the general public.

'The NF in Newham is convinced that both public understanding and inter-industrial solidarity are necessary to make the sugar

workers' fight effective... (and) are making a special point of issuing the "Sweet Talk" leaflet through the docks asking dockworkers to "black" all European cargoes if Parliament insists upon betraying British cane-sugar refinery workers.'

The appeal for solidarity action is coupled with warnings to the sugar workers not to trust their employers, Tate & Lyle. The employers, warns the Front, will almost certainly sell-out their workers to Brussels: 'We suspect the employers of making contingency plans to abandon their workforce... Already they are seeking to find out if any of their drivers are willing to drive in Europe.'

### 'NATION-CLASS'

How does this call for trade union action fit into the Front's political outlook? 'Newham National Front contends that British workers will only defend their national-class interests by joint industrial and political action.' The term 'nation-class' is found in many reactionary philosophies. It attempts to combine nationalist sentiment with the apparent immediate interests of a group of workers in struggle.

The sugar workers find themselves opposing EEC policies, and NF patriotism applauds their action. The same encouragement, however, would greet farmers or small businessmen resist-

ing the pressures of international competition or combatting internal 'subversion'.

These examples demonstrate the difficulties of fighting the fascists. It is one thing to denounce the fascists as 'tools of the bosses', but life isn't as simple as this suggests.

The fascists will denounce big bosses—the big monopolies and international bankers—but support the little bosses driven to the wall by the lack of 'patriotism' shown by big capital. The 'anti-capitalist' radicalism of fascist movements can prove fatally attractive to some sections of workers, especially those whose industries are ruined by international competition or capital concentration.

### BLUNT WEAPON

All fascist movements have a certain autonomy from big capital in their initial growth periods. But a *masse* fascist movement soon becomes a weapon in the hands of big capital to smash the workers' movement.

The price to the British ruling-class of a revival of extreme-right activity at this time, may well include fascist involvement in strikes and blackings detrimental to employers' interests. In the longer run, however, they may take the view that the NF as a blunt weapon of the future may be worth the price.

TOM CAMERON

Britain's introduction to the 'energy crisis' came in the wake of the last Arab-Israeli war. Since then it has become a well established feature of our daily life, making an almost ritualistic appearance in the headlines.

Whatever its effects may have been on most of us, for Tory politicians it has been a veritable godsend. Every embarrassing problem that has dogged them during the present election campaign—from the 3-day week to the massive trade deficit—has been, in whole or in part, blamed on the escalating price of international oil.

The popular press—long adept at covering over the crimes of western imperialism—has gleefully seized on the opportunity to paint a heart-rending picture of the helpless industrial nations being held to ransom by the rapacious 'oil sheiks' of Arabia.

'Sheik bashing' has become practically the last symbol of 'national unity', being taken up by both the Tory Government and the Mineworkers alike.

### THE MONOPOLIES

But one of the actors in the real-life version of the 'energy crisis' is curiously absent from the entertaining scenarios drawn up by the press—the international oil monopolies. It is these companies who are responsible for producing, shipping, processing and selling the precious substance that we now find ourselves so short of.

Seven top companies have more than 75 per cent of world oil production sown up between them. The biggest of them all, Exxon—known in the UK as Esso—is the largest industrial corporation in the United States, while another four are among the top ten US firms. The remaining two are right on our own front door step:

Royal Dutch Shell (the biggest corporation outside the US) and British Petroleum.

As we shall see, these giants of world capitalism have their oily fingers planted far deeper in the 'energy crisis' than the tales of the popular press would suggest.

Our introduction to the 'energy crisis' came through the decision of the Arab oil-producing countries to cut back on world oil supplies in order to apply political pressure in favour of a favourable settlement of the Arab-Israeli war. It was this action which made it possible for the Arab sheiks to be cast in the role of 'evil demon'.

### 'CRISIS'—IN 1972

But shortages and rising prices of oil hit the United States almost a full year before the outbreak of war in the Middle East. In September 1972, Allan Hamilton, treasurer of the giant Exxon Corporation, spelled things out:

'Unless and until the real nature of the crisis is understood, and profit levels become such that the industry is confident that its investments will bear fruit, the supply of energy will not be forthcoming.'

This marked the beginning of a campaign by the oil monopolies to carry out in the field of oil supply a manoeuvre they had already successfully executed over natural gas.

Natural gas, usually found in conjunction with oil, is another energy source in which the oil companies have long had a stake. Almost one-third of US energy needs are met from this source. However, unlike other fuels, natural gas prices have been subject to government regulation.

Prices have been pegged at a level sufficient to guarantee the oil companies a 15 per cent profit margin. But, used to the soft touch of oil monopoly profits, 15 per cent is not

a very attractive figure to the oil giants, who have long campaigned for an end to price controls.

Their main tactic has been to insist that existing profit levels were insufficient to finance exploration and development of new gas reserves, and were thus jeopardising the long-term supply of this key fuel.

### JUGGLING THE BOOKS

There is overwhelming evidence that this 'crisis' was a classic case of juggling books. Just as the oil industry's campaign against gas-price regulation got into high gear in 1968, the figures on gas reserves suddenly started to go awry.

First it was mysteriously discovered that some 600 billion cubic feet of reserves didn't really exist at all. Then new additions to reserves suddenly went into a dramatic decline compared with previous years.

One US Government agency which tried to check up on company figures about reserves found that the figures entered in companies books were much higher than those turned in to the Government—in some cases as much as ten times greater!

Despite this exposure of the oil companies' trickery, the Nixon administration—its path greased by generous bribes—has moved to meet many of the gas producers' demands.

And the companies have shown that they are prepared to take even tougher action if anyone tries to stand in their way. In the winter of 1972, for example, they practically cut off all gas supplies to the Texas town of San Antonio until they were awarded a new contract with improved prices.

### OIL CUT-BACKS

The oil monopolies adopted a similar approach with regard to oil and petroleum. For some time they

have been holding back the expansion of oil refineries, lamenting that the 'economic incentive' did not exist for such new investment, and that pollution-control laws were pushing costs up.

When this did not produce sufficiently rapid results they adopted the expedient of cutting back the level of production in the existing refinery facilities. As a New York newspaper's summary of an official Senate inquiry put it:

'The largest refinery operators in the US made last winter's shortage inevitable a year earlier. They did so . . . by reducing operations of their refineries in the first four months from 92 per cent of capacity . . . to an average 89 per cent of capacity. Moreover [the oil companies] deliberately reduced their inventories of oil products until by September, 1972, stocks of heating oil were as much as 10 per cent below 1971 listings.'

Towards the end of 1972, the Government responded to this supposed 'shortage' by easing the restrictions on the import of oil into the US, allowing companies to increase imports by up to 10 per cent. Significantly, several of the larger firms did not bother to take this option.

As a result, there was a major crisis in supplies of heating oil by early 1973. In January of that year Texaco told the State Government of Massachusetts that it was running out of supplies of the cleaner heating oils, and would cut off all its customers by the end of the week unless pollution regulations were dropped.

All across the country schools and public buildings were forced to shut down as stocks of heating oil singularly dried up.

### A MARGINAL EMBARGO

The recent shortages in the United States stem from precisely the same

cause—not the 'total embargo' by the Arab producers. This embargo might sound very serious, until you realise that imports from these countries account for only 6 per cent of total US oil supplies.

Just as the oil monopolies are responsible for the oil shortages, they have played a decisive role in the recent wave of price increases by the oil producing states.

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the companies, far from being the victims of the producers' price rises, are the active architects of such a policy.

Washington columnist Jack Anderson, who has been the first to disclose many aspects of the Watergate scandal, has published an account of secret documents of the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco), which operates the big Saudi Arabian oilfields and is jointly owned by four of the US monopolies.

### ENCOURAGING PRICE RISES

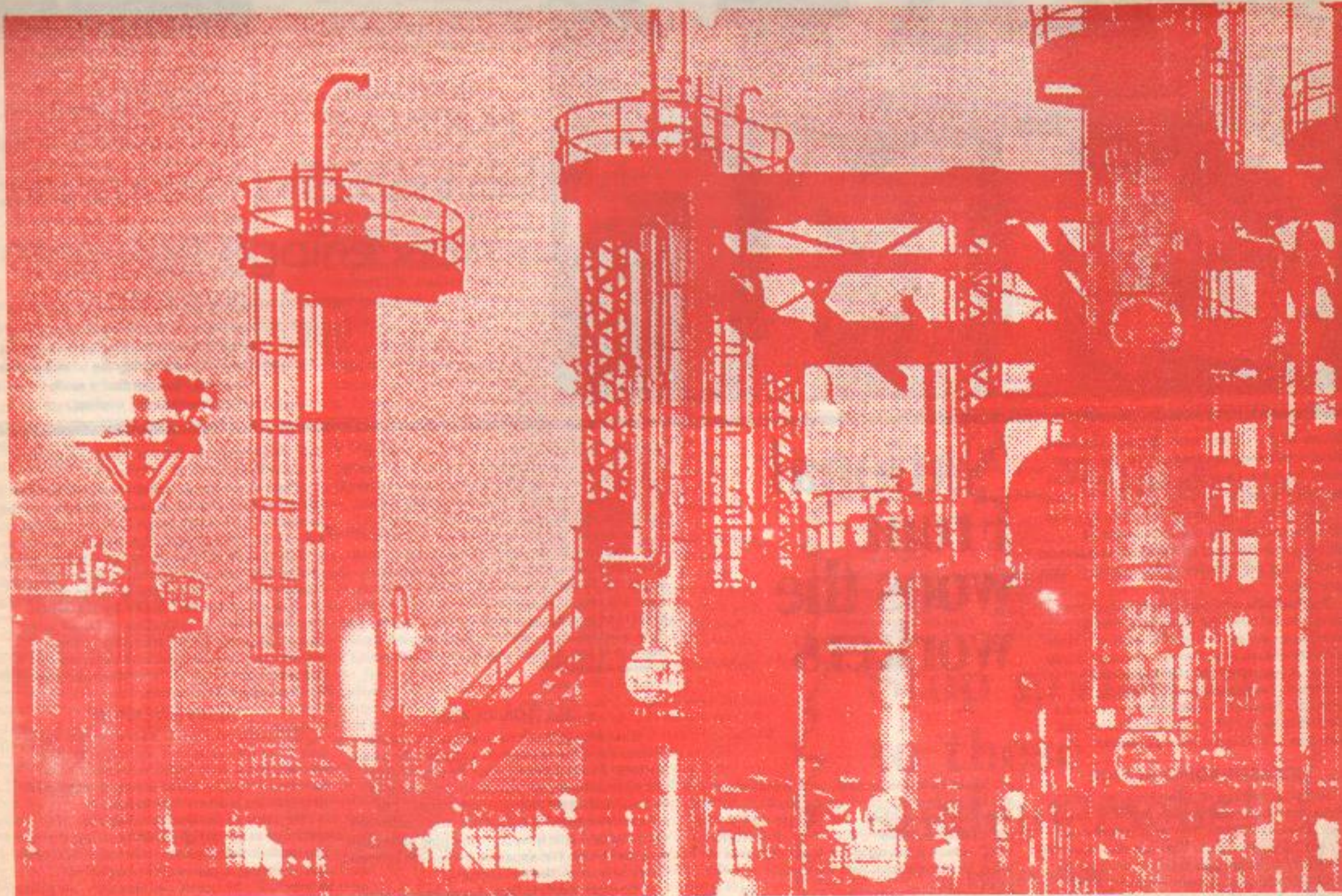
These documents reveal that Aramco actively encouraged the Saudi Government to push for price rises shortly before the December decision of the oil-producing states to double official prices.

Aramco then became concerned that the extent of price increases was too great—not because it involved any economic hardship for them, but because they were worried about the possible 'political repercussions' of such massive increases in western Europe.

In order to understand the attitude of the oil monopolies it is necessary to grasp something of the intricate economics of the international oil industry.

When the Middle East oil fields were opened up in a big way after the Second World War, the American oil giants' principal interests were in US operations, but the rich Middle East fields offered oil at a fraction of

# OIL MONOPOLIES: ARCHIT



what it cost to produce in the US. In order to protect the American industry a strict quota was imposed on oil imports into the US—first by voluntary agreement with the big companies and then by law.

### SUPER-PROFITS

As a result, the domestic price of US oil has been well above the international market price—almost double throughout the 1950's and 60's—with the oil monopolies making immense super-profits on the limited quantities of Middle East oil they were allowed to import.

The difficulty has been that US industry has had to pay through the nose, compared with its Western European and Japanese competitors, for its oil supplies. The recent price rises solve that problem, actually making US oil cheaper than oil bought on the world market.

The 'posted prices' which the oil-producing states set, and which they have just raised so sharply, are not the actual market price of oil—they are purely arbitrary prices used to work out the producing states' royalties and taxes on oil (which are now set at about 60 per cent of posted prices).

Thus, with posted prices now standing at \$11.60 a barrel, the states collect about \$7 in revenue on every barrel produced. The actual production costs vary considerably, but in Saudi Arabia they run at about 5¢ a barrel.

With the world market price standing at about \$8.30 this still leaves the oil monopolies with a handsome profit of about \$1.25 a barrel on Saudi oil, for example. Even allowing for the higher production costs in other parts of the Middle East, this compares very favourably with the 30¢ a barrel the oil companies were making in 1969.

Of course, the big oil monopolies are not just oil producers. The seven

top world companies between them control more than 50 per cent of every stage of oil and petroleum production in the capitalist world—shipping, refining and distribution. This integrated structure of multinational firms allows room for all sorts of fiddles.

One of the reasons why the Arab states insisted on the 'posted prices' system was that they were convinced (correctly) that the oil monopolies were avoiding payments to the producing states by selling oil at below market-prices to their affiliates, who were then taking huge profits at the refining and distribution end of the business.

### TAX CONCESSIONS

Today the boot is on the other foot. The oil companies receive vast tax concessions from their 'home' Governments. All payments to the Arab states can be deducted from taxes due to the American and British Governments on the profits earned from oil production. It is thus in the company's interest to push the price of crude oil supplied to their own refineries up to the point where the refineries are making nil profit. The refineries will then have no profit on which to pay taxes, and huge production profits will be free of tax because of the deduction of payments to the producing states.

If the rise in world market prices should actually push costs to the refineries too high (so they actually end up making a loss, for example) then this can be met by passing the buck to the consumer through higher retail prices.

A useful side effect of this financial manoeuvre, for the oil monopolies, will be to hit their main competitors—the 'independent' oil firms who are not involved in oil production, but buy crude oil in the world market for processing in their refineries. A dramatic rise in world prices of

crude oil would undermine the profitability of these firms refining operations, and strengthen the hold of the monopolies on the refining side of the business. (The same process has gone on in the retail business in the US. There the monopolies have used the excuse of 'shortages' to cut off supplies to independent petrol stations, forcing them to close and leave the field open to the monopolies' own retail outlets).

All this is reflected in the profits of the oil giants, which have become something of an embarrassment to them in the midst of all the hubbub about the 'energy crisis'. In the first nine months of 1973 the US oil industry profits rose by 47% over the previous period in 1972. The top industry giant, Exxon, rung up an increase of 59%. Foreign operations were the main sources of these gigantic profits. Only 2% of US overseas investment is in the Middle East, but these investments account for 20% of the total profit earned by overseas investment.

### LONG TERM STRATEGY

The big rise in world prices is also related to the long term strategy of the oil monopolies. Increasingly the oil giants have found the political climate in the Middle East—and the non-industrialised countries generally—too risky. Political upheavals that can disrupt their operations (like the Middle East wars) and the growing nationalist feeling in favour of nationalisation threaten their interests in these parts of the world.

Moves such as the increase in posted prices can help stave off the threat of nationalisation while promoting the interests of the oil companies. Concessions such as 'participation' (allowing the oil states to purchase a slice of the producing companies) operate in the same way: they avoid outright

nationalisation, provide the company with important new sources of capital from the producing States' oil revenue, and tie the interests of the oil States even closer to those of the international monopolies. In the words of Sheik Yamani, Saudi oil minister and chief spokesman for the Arab producing states, 'Our aim is firstly to strengthen the majors [ie the oil monopolies] and their role, whether directly or indirectly, in the world market in order to maintain prices.'

There is, however, a danger that as the 'participation' of the oil states turns into a majority interest and control (which by agreement is supposed to happen in 1983, when the oil States acquire a 51% interest, but has already taken place in Kuwait where the Government has acquired a 60% interest) the policies pursued by the producing companies could come into contradiction with the interests of the oil monopolies refining and sales operations in the industrialised countries. In order to prevent such a development the monopolies are seeking to strengthen their control over the other stages of petroleum industry, so that the producing States will remain dependent on the monopolies for the transport, refining and marketing of their oil, even if the oil States do assume control of production.

### EXTENDING THE STAKES

Another move which the monopolies have made to strengthen their hand against the producing states, and, at the same time, to hedge their bets in case anything goes wrong, is to extend their stake in other sources of energy.

They already have substantial control over natural gas, both in the US and in Britain. Other possible sources from which oil can be extracted—tar sands and oil shale—are being rapidly

bought up by oil companies, who are also branching out into coal mining and atomic energy.

Of the top ten US oil companies, all have interests in natural gas and oil shale, nine are involved in uranium production, six in coal mining, and five have a stake in tar sands. The second and third largest coal companies in the United States are owned by oil companies.

Many of these industries and processes would simply not have been profitable in the face of competition from cheap Middle Eastern oil. Coal mines, for example, were being shut down around the world for this reason. Now coal is once again a profitable fuel: indeed it is economically practical to talk about the liquefying of coal and its use as a crude oil substitute in the production of petroleum (a process which was developed in Germany during the Second World War and which kept the German air force flying in the final years). The same goes for the extraction of oil from shale and tar sands.

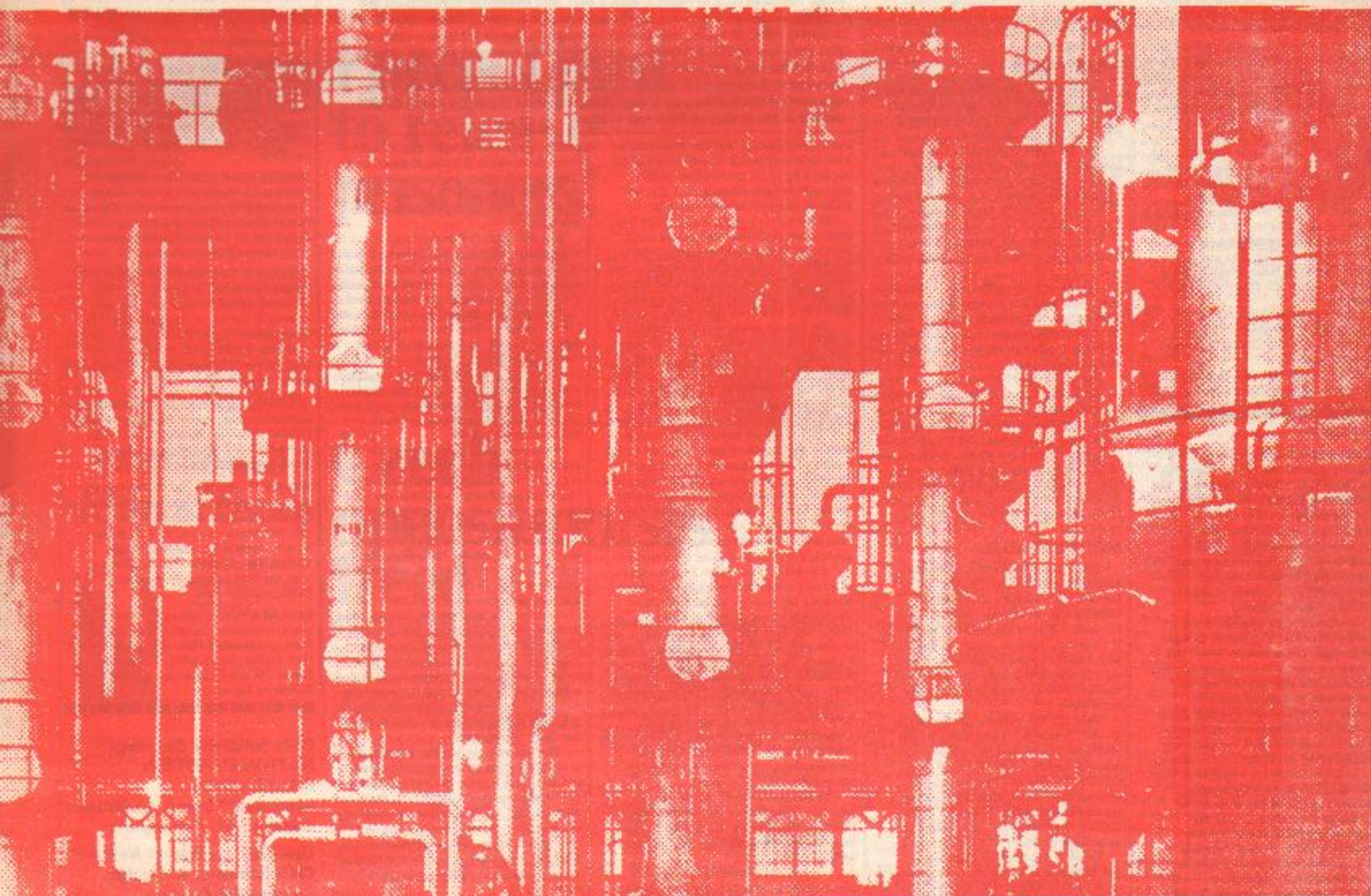
The oil price rises have given the oil companies an incalculable windfall in the increased value of their energy assets—oil and natural gas reserves, coal mines, leases on oil shale, etc.

There is no doubt that the pay-off from the 'energy crisis' for the oil monopolies has been immense. But the 'crisis' is a phony from beginning to end—a typical ploy of monopolistic blackmail—and the masterminds behind it are to be found in the boardrooms of New York, London and Amsterdam, not in the deserts of Arabia.

*Next week we will look at Britain's recent 'oil crisis' in detail and analyse the manoeuvre of the oil companies in this country.*

**RAY ALEXANDER**

# EFFECTS OF THE 'ENERGY CRISIS'



# THE WORKERS' RESISTANCE IN CHILE

## WHAT'S ON

Jean-Pierre Beauvais, recently returned from his second visit to Chile since the coup, shows how the junta has decisively failed in its main objective: to crush the workers' movement.

Since the coup on 11 September last year, the military junta in Chile has maintained its bloody repression in order to advance towards its main objective, the very condition of its success: the enslavement of the Chilean working class.

To achieve this, every possible means has been used to capitalise on the political defeat of 11 September: from massacres to massive redundancies, from the systematic destruction of the organised workers' movement (its parties and trade unions) to the military regimentation of the main centres of production.

It cannot be repeated often enough: this policy—so systematic, and so bloody applied—has hardly a precedent in Latin America. One must go back to Western Europe in the tragic years between the two world wars to find anything comparable. Despite certain differences inside the Chilean bourgeoisie—and the splits these imply inside the military regime itself—this basic 'political axis' still continues virtually unchanged.

### LOGIC OF SYSTEM

The reason for this is simple. It is not to be found in the bloodthirstiness of this or that member of the junta, but in the logic of the system of which the generals are merely servants. To revive the economy and attract investment from the imperialist powers requires the intensive super-exploitation of the Chilean workers, the abolition of social benefits won through years of glorious struggle, and the passivity and obedience of a working class whose traditions of independence, organisation and militancy are unique in Latin America.

In the days following the coup, everything seemed to indicate that the military were well on the way to succeeding in this aim: after a few days the main working class parties were disabled and smashed, victims of their reformist and legalistic illusions. The trade union organisations, too—without their leading militants, and with their structures similarly in ruins—seemed hardly capable of putting up any resistance to the plans of the junta.

And it was very clear that a revolutionary organisation like the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), whose implantation in the Chilean working class was still limited, could not hope to substitute itself in the role of the organised workers' movement.

Today, however, five months after the coup, one conclusion sticks out a mile: the military have failed to achieve their objective.

It is true that they have reduced a large part of the organised workers' move-

ment to impotence. It is true, also, that they have taken away many of the economic and social gains won by the Chilean workers, a number of whom are now subject to what is basically a system of forced labour.

But they have failed in what will turn out to be the most important thing: the destruction, fragmentation and enslavement of the working class as a social class, possessing its own traditions of struggle and organisation, and carrying within it the historical seeds of revolutionary change.

### SIGNS OF SETBACK

The signs of this setback are numerous, though of differing importance and significance.

The first—the least precise, but most significant because it is so overwhelming—can be read in the figures published by the junta itself:

From 11 September to 31 December, total industrial production in Chile increased by 4.01% in relation to the last four months under the Popular Unity government. If one excludes copper mining, where every effort was concentrated to boost production, this percentage for growth falls to 2.41%. However, the reference period, the last four months of Popular Unity, was a period of complete stagnation, of complete disorganisation of production—thanks largely to the sabotaging activity of the bourgeoisie and the inability of Popular Unity to put a stop to it. According to the bosses' organisations themselves, production fell by more than 50% during this reference period.

One hardly needs to emphasise how ridiculous this makes the new growth figure of 2.41%! The battle for production waged by the military has been a complete fiasco.

### RESISTANCE

Some part of the explanation for this must undoubtedly be sought in the confusions which abound in the economic policy of the present regime.

But the basic explanation lies in the massive, systematic phenomenon of 'passive' resistance adopted by the Chilean working class in the face of the military regime and its 'battle for production'. This 'passive' resistance takes a number of diverse forms—for instance, a lower work-rate, or more frequently, absenteeism.

The description of 'passive' resistance is in some ways unsuitable, insofar as it underestimates how important it is when the work-rates assigned are deliberately ignored, or when systematic waves of absenteeism occur.

But it is a useful term in the context of other actions by Chilean workers which are real acts of 'active' resistance. By these we mean the strikes, which started timidly in November among construction workers on the Santiago underground, to be followed later by a strike of one hour in solidarity with the expelled Swedish ambassador at the Samar factory, one of the traditional bastions of the workers' movement.

### MORE STRIKES

Since then, these strike movements have tended to increase. At the end of January, for example, nearly all the building sites in Santiago were deserted for several days as the result of a strike by the workers. Because of the censorship which aims to prevent any news about such movements getting out, what does leak out here and there is particularly significant.

Thus the IRT factory (owned partly by the US firm RCA and partly by the State), an 'electronics factory of international prestige', was the scene of a strike at the end of January over the non-payment of the legal wage increases granted in December. A section of the factory 'downed tools', demanding the immediate payment of these 'bonuses'.

Pressure followed by threats was not sufficient to break the determination of the IRT workers, who showed tremendous courage. And at a time when the authorities were threatening to imprison employers who did not stick to the wage



One of the most energetic campaigns in solidarity with the Chilean resistance has been that in France, where over 400 solidarity committees are functioning. A new impetus to this campaign has been given by the secret arrival in Paris of a new ambassador—Fernando Duran Villareal—representing the most fascist strands in the regime. His presence did not remain a secret for long, however, as on 15 February militants of the solidarity movement decorated his residence with a Nazi banner (see above). This was part of the build-up to a mass demonstration involving about 20,000 people in the streets of Paris last Friday.

levels laid down by law, the management were obviously not in a good position to put up a fight. So the workers of IRT were able to take advantage of this, and make an example of their struggle.

In the last few days, a new strike has broken out at Samar—one of the most important Chilean textile plants, which has just been returned to its former owners. In this instance, there has been bloody repression: several workers have been killed and more than thirty arrested.

The bakery workers in the capital have also led a struggle which, while not open and declared, has nonetheless had repercussions which it is impossible to explain away. Let *El Mercurio*, the newspaper of the big bourgeoisie which has 'kindly' publicised this struggle, take up the story:

"Once more we have seen the reappearance in the capital of queues to buy bread, a sight which had already been forgotten. They have grown, especially in the popular quarters and areas away from the city centre, like La Granja, San Miguel, San Bernardo, Puente Alto, La Cisterna, Conchalí, Ronca, Barrancas—the most densely populated working class areas.

"The explanation given by a number of bakery manufacturers and employers has been the same as on previous days: the mills have not turned out enough flour, and there has been an increase in absenteeism among the workers. Luis Gutiérrez, the secretary general of the federation of bread-workers, has repeated that, 'many compañeros have not been to work because their wages are much too low'. The Minister for Industry and Commerce, General Cabello, has confirmed that there is no rationing of flour for bread-making. He attributes the loss to absenteeism by the workers."

To be more precise, we should just add that according to the official figures, this 'absenteeism' by the bakery workers had reached 85 or 90% by the first week of January!

It is true, of course, that nearly all these strike actions have had immediate and limited objectives. The defence of the workers' purchasing power—which has been cut by more than half since 11 Septe-

MBER—has been the main aim in most of them. Sometimes this demand has been coupled with others, particularly against the regime's attempts to increase the number of hours worked and speed up the work-rate.

But the demands themselves are not the main thing. What is most important is that in the present situation in Chile, any such actions mean a direct confrontation with the State authorities at the highest level.

The military are well aware of this. And for the moment they are trying for tactical reasons to avoid such confrontations, so as not to give publicity to these actions. They prefer to try to isolate them by erecting a wall of silence—even at the expense of making some small concessions—and waiting until the movement comes to an end before clamping down.

Hence our first, basic conclusion from these examples of resistance by the working class—whether 'passive' or 'active'—is clearly to say that not only has the working class movement not been smashed as the junta had hoped in the euphoria of its victory; but on the contrary, five months after the coup, this working class is a major factor in the political, economic and social situation in the Chile of Pinochet and his colleagues.

The Chilean military are thus learning to their cost to distinguish between the traditional organisations of the workers' movement—which they destroyed so easily—and the working class itself, with a high level of political consciousness born out of a long tradition of struggle and considerably radicalised by the events of the last three or four years.

This situation inside the working class is the key factor in the present situation in Chile. And it is on the basis of this that the revolutionary militants—and most importantly, the MIR—pose the problem of organising the resistance to the dictatorship, which in its outward appearance takes for the moment mainly the form of such spontaneous resistance by the Chilean workers.

It is on this basis, too, that the debates on the resistance inside the solidarity movement must also take place.

**SOCIALIST WOMAN:** New Spring issue out now. Articles include General Strike, SPUC, Equal Pay, etc. Orders to: 21 Highview Court, College Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex. Price 10p plus 3p p&p, 10% off on orders for more than 10 copies, sent post free.

**'NATIONALISATION OR EXPROPRIATION?'** pamphlet translated from original by ex-Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. Copies still available from: Alex Stein, c/o 72 Cambridge Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham. All profits to Red Weekly Fund Drive.

**BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and *Lawa* (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mullvadén, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

**LONDON RED FORUM:** Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, N1. (5 mins Kings X tube). This week (15 March): 'The struggle in Ireland'.

**NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES:** Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

**FREE IRELAND FORUMS:** Fridays at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (Kings X tube). 1 March: 'Irish Solidarity Work in West Germany'—speaker from Ireland Solidarity Committee, Germany. 8 March: 'Ireland after the elections—what now?'—Gery Lawless.

**'SALT OF THE EARTH':** Showings in the North-East of this film about the struggle of miners' wives during a strike in the US. Monday 4 March: Northumberland College of Education, 7.30 pm. Tuesday 5 March: Newcastle University, 7.30 pm. Wednesday 6 March: Northern Counties College of Education, 2 pm; People's Place, South Shields, 7.30 pm. Thursday 7 March: Boldon Colliery Miners' Hall, 7.30 pm. Friday 8 March: Durham University, evening. Each showing will be followed by discussion with members of Tyneside Socialist Women's Action Group and miners' wives.

**MINERS' BENEFIT:** Saturday 2 March at 8 pm. Disco plus groups—Chili Willi and the Red Hot Peppers, Bearded Lady. 60p at University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1. Organised by London Student Organisation—Miners Support Committee, and CHE.

**MINERS—SHREWSBURY BENEFIT:** Monday 11 March at 7.30 pm. Henry Cow plus Alex Glasgow and the Combine. 50p at Theatre Royal, Stratford, E15. Organised by London Student Organisation—Miners Support Committee.

**'WOMEN & THE TORY OFFENSIVE':** 25-page pamphlet analysing the Tory offensive against women workers and women in the home, and taking up the immediate struggle. Price 15p inc. postage—10p for orders of six or more—from: IMG Women's Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

**'UKRAINE: UNREST & REPRESSION'**—pamphlet produced by the Committee to Defend Ukrainian Prisoners, price 15p plus p&p from: 83 Gregory Crescent, Eltham, London SE9.

**HENRY IV—Parts I and II:** Politicised version as benefit for Shrewsbury building workers. Monday 4 March at 7.00 pm in the Half Moon theatre, 27 Alie Street, Street, London E1. Tel. 480 6465. Tickets 50p. Organised in conjunction with the East London Shrewsbury Defence Committee.

**QUILAPAYUN!** Leading Chilean song group in concert, Sunday 3 March, at 8 pm in Assembly Rooms, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1. Tickets £1 and 50p at the door. Organised by Chile Solidarity Campaign.

**Chile Solidarity Campaign NATIONAL ACTION CONFERENCE**  
Saturday 23 March, 11.00 am  
Digbeth Hall, Birmingham  
Delegates' credentials from:  
Chile Solidarity Campaign,  
Co-operative Centre,  
129 Seven Sisters Road,  
London N7 7QG

Dear Comrades,

Last November, members of the Chile Solidarity Committee in four Canadian cities (Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver) occupied offices of the ministry of Manpower and Immigration. Their protest was aimed at challenging government policy towards Chile. Canada had rushed to recognise the military junta and subsequently had bureaucratically deferred processing of hundreds of applications for refugee in Canada.

Participants were arrested in the sit-ins in Toronto and Vancouver. Charges were dropped in Vancouver where the occupations were still quite popular but, in Toronto, the immigration ministry has obviously decided to make an example of the fourteen arrested, many of whom were militants of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International.

The Chile Solidarity 14 come to trial in March. You can help by sending protests to the Canadian embassy in your country demanding that the charges be dropped. Funds are also needed to assist with legal expenses and fines. Donations may be sent to the Chile Solidarity 14 Defence Fund, Box 1183, Station Q, Toronto, Canada.

Fraternally,  
Walter Davis.

# THE WATERGATE CRUNCH COMES CLOSER

If Watergate proves anything, it is the validity of the Foster Dulles 'domino' theory, as each unfolding scandal exposes yet another. Most of Nixon's former top cronies are now either inmates of America's penal institutions or destined to become so. The president himself could face various charges carrying a total of 137 years in jail!

The third-rate bunglers who messed up Watergate committed the cardinal sin—they got caught. Furthermore, they got caught using their power against the other capitalist politicians of the Democratic Party, for so long a key instrument of the American ruling class.

Nixon had surrounded himself with the representatives of the 'new' money. These were the brash, highly motivated supporters, and often, the actual products of West Coast and Southern wealth. These 'cowboys', however, went too far. Use of the State machine against radical groups and minorities is one thing. Bugging the Democratic Party, and phone-tapping trusted civil servants and military brass, is quite another.

Such actions sent shivers of alarm through sections of the American ruling class. The Nixonites' appropriation of the enormous power of the executive for their own narrow interests threatened to undermine the myths on which the continuation of capitalist democracy is so dependent.

Advanced capitalist society is based on a compound of repressive force and political persuasion. As long as important sections of the population can be persuaded to put their faith in the institutions of capitalism, then so-called capitalist democracy is the least expensive and most preferable form of rule.

The shattering disclosures following the Watergate revelations, however, have seriously affected people's confidence in these myths. They have also occurred at a critical time for America's rulers. Forced back in

South East Asia, and plagued by inflation, growing unemployment and a fast developing energy crisis, they need the maximum room for manoeuvre. Internationally, the United States faces sharper competition for the world markets and a rising hostility to its imperialist policies by millions of oppressed

into the Dominican Republic or the mining at Haiphong Harbour cannot be delayed by congressional debates.

If the American State is to fulfil its function of acting as the guard-dog of the interests of American capitalism at home and abroad, it must of necessity invest ever greater power in the hands of its executive. But this need introduces big dangers for the ruling class. The concentration of this power increases the danger both that it will be misused and that big tactical and strategical errors will be made.

Nixon and his aides were guilty on both counts. They used their power not only to line their own pockets, but also to discredit other sections of the capitalist class. Furthermore, their hardline policies clashed with the ideas of important sections of the ruling class who favoured a more 'liberal' line.

Inflamed at the way the Nixon praetorian guard sealed off the President, the more sophisticated sections of the ruling class saw Watergate as a way of bringing the Nixon aides to heel, and making Nixon more amenable to a consensus of the overall interests of American capitalism.

The process they allowed to be initiated has however taken on a

powerful dynamic of its own. Trained in the fundamental ethos of capitalism, the Nixonite underlings firmly believe in self survival. And showing a marked reluctance to defend their bosses, they have sung like canaries.

Dean is still being questioned and now has to face only one possible charge, that of perjury—and that only if he is found to be lying about Nixon. The fact that special prosecutor Jaworski continues to question Dean is strong evidence that the White House tapes he has so far obtained do not contradict Dean's testimony against the President.

As for Ehrlichman, *Newsweek* commented: 'He's been without a paycheck for a long time'—a disturbing predicament for a fervent believer in capitalism! A staff member at the White House has stated: 'A lot of people here are worried about John.' A more realistic colleague sadly remarked: 'He's copped out on us.'

The quick ditching of Spiro Agnew has also rattled other former Nixon acolytes and made them look for new ways of saving their skins.

Meanwhile, Nixon's prestige continues to plummet. A Gallup poll released early this month showed only 26 per cent who still approved of Nixon's performance as President. A Roper poll last December found 62 per cent in favour of either his resignation or impeachment.

Republican congressman William Hudut bitterly complained: 'People he is trying to persuade laugh at him.' He added: 'They say "Who are you to talk about saving energy or election

reform."'

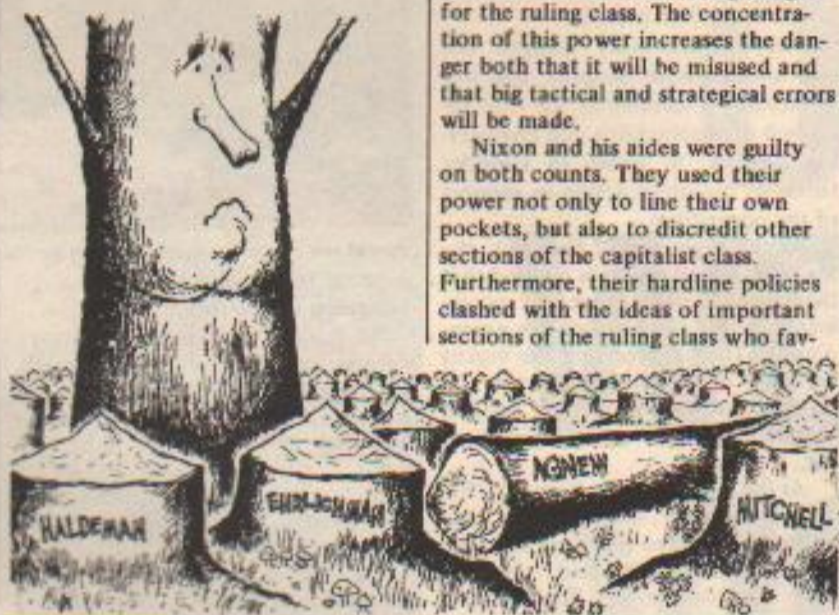
So the congressmen and senators wait anxiously for their go-ahead from the bourgeoisie of the East Coast sea-board, the real owners of America's wealth, and in effect its real rulers. A discredited President carries negligible influence at home and is viewed with suspicion on the international scene. His ability to gain congressional approval for his actions is nil.

But there can be no turning back of the clock to give Congress more powers. The need for the use of secrecy and the concentration of executive authority is determined by the interests of monopoly capitalism, and it cannot be constrained by sectional or local interests.

The jettisoning of Nixon presents immense problems for the ruling class. A resignation would, as one commentator remarked, be seen as a capitulation to 'minority influence'. He did add, however, that he was opposed to 'giving in even to majority influence'. In other words you cannot have the mass of the people interfering in who runs the country.

And impeachment carries its own dangers. Further scandals and dirty-dealings would undoubtedly be revealed. Who knows what other powerful individuals and corporations an impeached President might not implicate to save his own skin. One hundred and thirty seven years is a long time. And Richard M Nixon is unlikely to go down as a tight-lipped capitalist martyr. After all, it would be against the best capitalist traditions of individualism.

JEFF KING



Cambodia at a moment's notice. Decisions such as sending the marines people. The halcyon days when dissidents at home could be silenced by mobilising patriotic hysteria have also gone.

To operate successfully in this complex and fast changing situation, the ruling class must be able to move speedily and decisively. It needs to be able to throw its bombers into

oured a more 'liberal' line. Inflamed at the way the Nixon praetorian guard sealed off the President, the more sophisticated sections of the ruling class saw Watergate as a way of bringing the Nixon aides to heel, and making Nixon more amenable to a consensus of the overall interests of American capitalism.

The process they allowed to be initiated has however taken on a

By March of last year, amid great publicity, all the military prisoners held by the Thieu regime in South Vietnam had been released. Then the releases stopped. It was only on 8 February this year that Thieu was forced into releasing some of his civilian political prisoners, and then only 400 of them. Almost 300,000 are still rotting in his prisons.

The conditions in which the prisoners live are horrifying. Almost all the prisons are grossly overcrowded, with 300 adults confined in rooms measuring 25 feet by 60 feet—barely enough room to sit, let alone lie down. But these are positively luxurious compared to the 'tiger cages' on Con Son island, where the most recently built cages are two square feet smaller than the previous ones.

The few prisoners so far released are for the most part hideously crippled, simply from the overcrowding. Diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid, dysentery, hepatitis and skin disorders are endemic. With rare exceptions there is no medical care. Nor is

## Force Thieu to release prisoners!

there much food, the average diet being 400 grammes of rice a day, supplemented by stones, lice and sand. In Con Son even water is withheld (three swallows a day allowed), forcing prisoners to drink their own urine.

The prisoners fall into three categories: civilian and military members of the National Liberation Front, plus NLF sympathisers (including people accused of being in the NLF because they were

in the wrong place at the wrong time); non-NLF opponents of the regime; and people convicted of criminal offences. Members of the last group frequently serve as 'trustees' and prison guards.

The police and army have very wide powers of arrest: sympathy with the NLF or the neutralist opposition, taking part in anti-Thieu activity, and taking part in a strike are all illegal. Under the F6 programme a casual denunciation by a

neighbour is sufficient evidence for arrest as an NLF agent. It is rare for prisoners to be tried, and rarer still for any to be set free. Many of them are tortured as well.

Needless to say, the cost of this fantastic operation is very high, but the expenses are borne almost entirely by the USA. In fact, the US controls the police and prison system both economically and administratively. At least 1,000 US 'advisers' are employed in running the system; US computers centralise information and records; and US money buys recruits to the police force and enables them to be trained. USAID documents make it quite clear that Washington is concerned not merely to maintain the present level of police surveillance but also to increase it further.

Out of the 23 points of the ceasefire agreement signed in January 1973, only one article (number 8) dealt with the position of political prisoners, and that only very sketchily. Yet since then, one of the main activities of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) in the Saigon discussions has been to agitate for their release. Indeed, this was one of the three demands which the PRG requested its international supporters to push forward as key to the successful development of the present situation.

### BATTLE FOR CITIES

The importance attached to the prisoners is a reflection of the objective conditions in South Vietnam following the liberation of almost all the rural areas by the NLF. The dominant feature of the present period of the struggle is now the battle for the cities.

Already the beginnings of a serious mobilisation against Thieu here can be seen in the strikes of urban workers and the demonstrations by students, intellectuals and even the Catholic and Buddhist elites who formerly constituted Thieu's main power base. Many of these groupings identify strongly with the NLF, while even those who call themselves neutralists (sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and intelligentsia) are objectively playing a role which aids the revolutionary process.

It is within this framework that the importance of the release of the political prisoners lies. All of them are opponents of Thieu, and many are hardened NLF cadre (although there is reason to believe that a large number of captured NLF members were murdered before the ceasefire). Others were prominent leaders of

opposition groupings before their arrest.

The release of these men and women, as well as the thousands of other prisoners who have been politicised in the jails, would give a massive boost to the urban resistance, crystallising out the opposition and accelerating its development into an organised force. This would establish the conditions for a strong intervention by the NLF into the cities, and successful completion of the next phase of the revolution.

### MANOEUVRES

This is why the PRG lays such stress on the prisoners—and why Thieu has resorted to all manner of tactics to hold up their release. At first he simply denied their existence, claiming that there were no political prisoners in South Vietnam. To give this claim some vestige of legitimacy, he replaced the category of 'political prisoner' with that of 'special common prisoner' or 'member of group of evil-doers'. Moreover, in the legal statutes the expression 'charged with being an agent for the communists' was altered to 'disturbing the public order'.

When this manoeuvre was exposed, Thieu systematically sabotaged the joint discussions for as long as possible. Then, when it became evident that he would have to agree to the release of some prisoners, South Vietnamese bombers were sent to destroy the airfields in the release zones. The final ploy was to insist that all released prisoners, wherever they came from, should be sent to PRG zones and banned from Saigon-controlled areas, in an attempt to minimise the threat to his regime.

However, there are still almost 300,000 political prisoners left in Thieu's jails. Amnesty International estimate that of these at least 200,000 have been there for several years. Furthermore, some 50,000 people have simply 'disappeared' since the ceasefire.

Thieu was forced to release the recent batch of 400 by the weight of international condemnation and the NLF's bargaining strength. The rest must also be released. With the unfolding of the next and potentially final phase of the revolution in Vietnam, it is vital that the demand for the release of the political prisoners should be an integral part of the activities of the solidarity movement.

DAVID JOHNSON

## International Marxist Group

(British section of the Fourth International)

97 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.



I would like more information about the IMG and its activities

NAME .....

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## Czech oppositionists freed

According to reliable reports, the Czechoslovak government has recently released a number of prominent oppositionists, jailed after the wave of trials in the summer of 1972. Although, in many cases, the prisoners were due to be freed in the coming weeks or months, sizeable reductions were made in the cases of, at least, Alfred Cerny, a leading Socialist Party member, and M. Sihan.

We must see in this decision a small, but very real victory for the broad international campaign that has been organised in defence of Czechoslovak socialist prisoners. If the Husak regime has not been able to step up the trials, this has been due in part to the maintenance of solidarity work by the Western left.

However, the repression goes on unabated in the sphere of 'everyday life,' where refusal to co-operate with the

authorities brings dismissal from one's job, police surveillance, intimidation of relatives, and a whole series of other administrative measures. Equally disturbing are the reports that the five-year sentence on Dr. Jaroslav Sahata of Brno, former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, has recently been extended as a result of his particularly firm stand.

Whilst a fresh wave of trials seems unlikely at present, the facade of stability constructed in Prague rests on the selective imprisonment of the most vocal opponents of the regime, combined with the maintenance of a bureaucratic vice on all channels of communication.

Information about the work of the British 'Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists' can be obtained from 32 Belisha Villas, London, N.1.

# Shrewsbury: Miners hold the key!

While Heath and his bully-boys have been lecturing the electorate on the need for 'firmness and fairness', the courts have been busy dispensing generous fistfuls of this product to building workers' pickets.

Last week another five pickets on trial in Shrewsbury were convicted of various offences, and received suspended sentences. This comparatively mild treatment was dished out to those whom the capitalist courts felt were the 'small fry', those responsible for the actual organisation of pickets being safely behind bars for up to three years.

No one should think that these latest sentences are not serious. All those convicted now carry criminal records and must 'behave themselves' for as much as two years. This makes them especially vulnerable to blacklisting by employers (a practice well developed in the building trade), and allows the police to haul them in on the most trivial grounds.

Meanwhile the appeals from the first batch of vicious sentences came before the Court of Appeal on 19 February. Hearings are not due to resume until the week of 4 March, but already the main judge in the case, Lord Widgery (who has gained a reputation as an inveterate 'picket-basher' in two important recent cases), made it clear that they were not likely to reverse the convictions on the more serious 'conspiracy' charges.

This means that the most that can come out of the appeal is a reduction in sentence. The principle of being able to use the criminal law against peaceful pickets will stand, and the trade union movement will be made to swallow the spectacle of trade union militants imprisoned for normal union activity.

This makes it imperative that the

trade union movement prepare a determined fight to get the Shrewsbury militants out. A delegate conference has been called for 16 March by the construction unions, UCATT and the T&G construction section. Delegates are expected from all sectors of the trade union movement. On 20 March the 'Day of Action' called by the Liverpool Conference which met earlier this year will take place.

These actions are all very well. But conferences and 'days of action' are not ends in themselves: unless they lead towards *decisive forms of struggle* they only serve to demoralise.

A way forward in the struggle to free the Shrewsbury workers has been pointed out clearly by Jack Collins, Kent Area representative of the NUM executive, who has, on several occasions, said that the miners should not return to work until the Shrewsbury lads are set free.

Such a move by the miners would have an electric effect on the rest of the working class. It would give militants in the building trade the kind of example and inspiration they need to organise an all-out strike throughout the trade. It would provide militants in every other union with a model for organising solidarity. Such a step by the miners would swing open those fast-locked prison doors in a matter of days.

But Jack Collins call has had no official weight behind it: A campaign should be mounted throughout the NUM immediately to inform its members of the facts of the Shrewsbury case and to get pledges that miners will not return to work as long as fellow trade unionists remain in jail for their picketing activities. Such resolutions should be passed by NUM branches, Area Councils, and the National Executive. *This* is the way to free the Shrewsbury lads and defend the right to picket.

CARL OWEN

## STRIKE FOLLOWS SACKING OF MILITANT CONVENOR



Workers at William Wain, a rubber component plant in Barking, Essex, are demanding an inquiry—if necessary by the local trades council—into the dismissal of the T&GWU convenor, Terry Barrett (with microphone in photograph) last Monday.

This victimisation was immediately met by a total walk-out of T&GWU members, and on Wednesday a mass meeting voted overwhelmingly to continue with an all-out strike.

Barrett's dismissal was ostensibly because of a row over the condition of chairs provided for a changing room. When Barrett objected to their filthy state, he was told by a supervisor, 'they're good enough for wogs,' and then accused of behaving in an 'uncontrolled and threatening manner'.

He told Wednesday's meeting: 'Since I was elected convenor I've met considerable hostility from every manager. In July last year we learned I was being investigated by management, who were compiling a dossier on my movements.'

Barrett, a member of the Barking & Dagenham Shrewsbury Defence Committee, considers that the management is attempting to weaken shop-floor organisation during the three-day week. 'My only worry,' he told *Red Weekly*, 'is the reluctance of the T&GWU to make the strike official, with the threat of a £50,000 fine.'

'We are demanding an enquiry where our evidence can be heard, and if the management continues to refuse this, the 1/40 branch should ask the trades council to hold one.'

# Red Weekly

## GLASGOW STEWARDS BACK MACLAREN'S OCCUPATION

Two hundred shop stewards representing every major engineering and shipbuilding company in Glasgow attended a meeting at the occupied Maclaren's factory on Wednesday to hear about the circumstances surrounding the occupation of this subsidiary of the giant multinational ITT, which is now in its fifth month.

They unanimously pledged full and unconditional support, and will be holding a meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, in order to consider forms of industrial action in support of the occupation.

At the beginning of the week, the Maclaren's shop stewards realised that they would either have to recommend ending the struggle—or extending it. They appreciated the urgent necessity of involving the rest of the trade union movement, and decided to hurriedly call Wednesday's meeting.

At the meeting, Alex Ferry, AUEW district secretary, described the basis of the struggle, and the latest developments. 'Initially,' he said, 'this dispute was over wages. But within a few weeks it was apparent that the struggle was over much more: redundancies, and the right to work. A struggle not against the local Maclaren's factory, but against the multi-



Part of the occupying force—women workers have been active throughout the struggle. national International Telephone and Telegraph corporation.

'In the past five weeks the workers were willing to do anything to reach a settlement, and the management demanded that the union must accept the inevitability of redundancies. They were aware of the lack of solid support from the trade union movement as a whole, and from Glasgow especially.'

He went on to say that the workers had been prepared to talk about redundancies, provided that all workers were first reinstated. The management had started by demanding that 50 per cent of the workforce—165 workers—would have to go. Then

they raised the figure to 70 per cent. Finally, at a meeting last Monday, the management added that the sit-in must end before negotiations could begin.

It was then that the shop stewards decided in favour of extending the struggle.

The convenor of the Standard Telephone & Cables factory in East Kilbride—also part of the ITT empire—is calling a meeting early next week to discuss strike action in support of the Maclaren's occupation, and there is likely to be sympathy action taken at an STC plant in the north of Ireland.

## ESSEX CAMPUS RINGED BY STUDENT PICKETS

Student picket lines at Essex University, supported by trades unionists, are turning back all goods from the campus. This action, decided by a mass meeting of 300 students on Wednesday, is being taken in response to the sentencing of the first of 32 students charged with participating in the occupation last term in support of the grants campaign.

While some of the victimised students are on as many as 19 charges, the first student to be dealt with had only one, and he was sentenced to *expulsion*. The sentence was suspended, provided he takes no future part in any 'undesirable' activities.

When this was announced, the Students' Union decided to withdraw the students sitting in on the disciplinary hearings, and to stop all goods entering the campus. The Union is demanding that all charges are dropped.

Support for this demand has come from members of the T&GWU and ASTMS on the campus. The Secretary of Colchester Trades Council has also given the students his support and he is to approach other members of the council for theirs.

The university administration has reacted sharply to this mounting pressure on its disciplinary powers. In an effort to turn campus workers

against the students, shop and canteen staff, who are providing a reduced service because of the effectiveness of the pickets. The administration is now threatening to close down the whole campus.

What now shows every sign of being a militant challenge to the trials is in marked contrast to what happened with they began last week.

The Broad-Left-based Students' Union executive at first felt that it was sufficient to have three student representatives watching the hearings. When the first 'guilty' verdict was announced, the executive proposed a 24-hour occupation of the vice-chancellor's suite—calling on the judges to explain the logic of their verdicts!

In an amendment, IMG members called for: No victimisation, end the trials, and that a warning be issued that the occupation would only be the beginning if others were found guilty. This was passed, and when the sentence became known on Monday, the student body proved it was prepared to mount a real offensive against the trials.

## Oxford students prepare for trials

There is to be a national mobilisation for the demonstration to be held in Oxford on Monday, 4 March, over the beating up of the Oxford University students who peacefully occupied a campus building two weeks ago.

The occupation was in pursuit of the campaign for a central students' union, and the demonstration will be taking up this demand, along with that for the abolition of the university's 'proctor' police force and the disciplinary system.

The students are also calling for a public inquiry into the violence used against the occupiers—by hired thugs. The proctors will be summoned to appear at the inquiry.

Nineteen students are on university disciplinary charges, and these trials will begin on 11 March, which just happens to be the last week of term. Another 12 students are on police charges, and the first case comes up in court next Monday, the day of the demonstration.

The issues arising from these prosecutions will be debated at the conference on student victimisation on 16 March.

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## International Women's Day march

The International Women's Day march is being held on Saturday, 9 March, and will leave Charing Cross embankment for Hyde Park at 1.30 pm. Contingents from all over Britain will be joining the march.