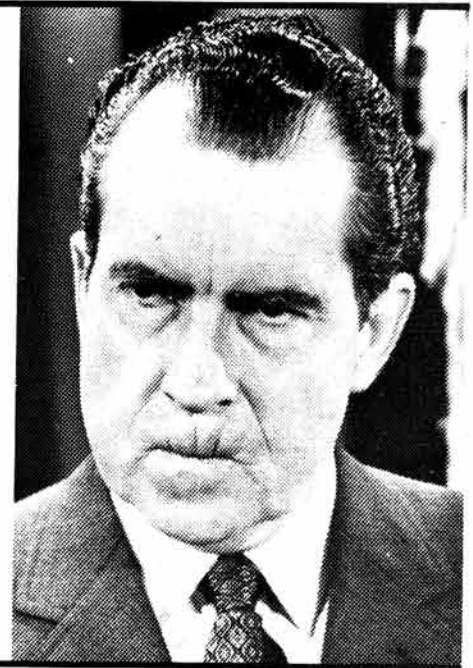




Grain Rots on Docks As Famine Spreads In Southern Ethiopia

Nixon Losing Conservative Support

Mounting Scandals Drive Congress Toward Impeachment



Britain

What the Ruling Class Expects From Wilson

Conference Discusses Soviet Dissidents

A two-day Conference in Defense of Soviet Ukrainian Political Prisoners was held in New York March 2-3. The conference was sponsored by the Ukrainian student magazine *Novi Napriamy* (New Directions) and hosted by the New York City Ukrainian Student Association.

The opening session was a panel discussion featuring reports from representatives of defense committees in New York, Chicago, Toronto, and London.

This was followed by a panel on the national question as it affects Ukraine. The panelists were two political activists from Russia and two from Ukraine.

The March 3 afternoon session featured a talk by Peter Reddaway of the London School of Economics. Presently a visiting lecturer at Columbia University in New York, Reddaway is well known for his book *Uncensored Russia*, which contains material from the first eleven issues of the Soviet samizdat journal *Chronical of Current Events*. He spoke on the nature of the Soviet penal system.

During the discussion, Reddaway provided some new information on the case of Pyotr Grigorenko, a former major general who has been confined in Soviet psychiatric hospitals since 1969 because of his political beliefs. Reddaway said that hospital officials had agreed several months ago to release Grigorenko but were overruled by their superiors at the Serbsky Institute in Moscow, who would permit his release only if local officials would "guarantee" that Grigorenko would not resume his political activities.

The final session of the conference was a panel discussion entitled "The American Left and the Struggle in the Soviet Union." Speakers were Dave Frankel of *The Militant*; Julius Jacobson, editor of *New Politics*; and the Reverend Paul Mayer, a leader of the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, who created a stir last October by speaking out in defense of Soviet dissidents at a Stalinist-organized peace conference in Moscow. □

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EDITOR: Joseph Hansen.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

COPY EDITOR: Lawrence Rand.

EDITORIAL STAFF: Candida Barberena, Gerry Foley, Ernest Harsch, Allen Myers, Jon Rothschild, Ruth Schein.

BUSINESS MANAGER: Reba Hansen.

ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER: Steven Warshell.

TECHNICAL STAFF: H. Massey, James M. Morgan, Ruth Schein.

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PARIS OFFICE: Pierre Frank, 10 Impasse Guemenee, 75004, Paris, France.

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White House Said to Expect Nixon's Impeachment

By Allen Myers

"It's devastating," commented Bill Brock, a Republican senator from Tennessee.

"It" was the March 19 statement by New York Senator James Buckley calling on Nixon to resign. "Devastating" was probably not an exaggeration of the impact of the statement, for it dramatically revealed the rapid erosion of support for Nixon even in the conservative wing of the Republican party.

Buckley lists himself as a "Conservative-Republican." He was elected in 1970 on the ticket of New York's Conservative party, defeating the incumbent, a liberal Republican. Buckley's victory was made possible by the open and active support of the Nixon administration against the regular Republican candidate. It had therefore been assumed that Buckley would be one of Nixon's last-ditch defenders.

"Mr. Buckley's plea," James M. Naughton wrote in the March 21 *New York Times*, "startled his colleagues in Washington . . . because of the political implications it conveyed. The fact that the plea came from a lifelong Republican, a Conservative ideologue and a previously staunch ally of Mr. Nixon at least diminished and perhaps crippled the current campaign by the White House to suggest that the President's critics are either irresponsible liberals or Democratic partisans."

Most commentaries failed to note what may be an even more significant aspect of Buckley's statement: It assumes as almost a certainty that Nixon will be impeached by the House of Representatives and tried in the Senate. The heart of Buckley's call for Nixon's resignation was his fear of what such a trial would involve:

"I don't think many of us have seriously considered what an impeachment trial would be like in the era of mass electronic communications. Public opinion would compel the proceedings to be televised.

"For three months or more the Senate chamber would be transformed

into a stage set for the greatest melodrama ever conceived. History would come to a stop for the duration—in the country and throughout the world. The ruler of the mightiest nation on earth would be starred as the prisoner in the dock. The chamber would become a 20th-century Roman Coliseum as the performers are thrown to the electronic lions.

"The most sordid dregs dug up by the Watergate miners would inflame the passions of the domestic audience



SCOTT: Warns Nixon of dwindling conservative support.

and provoke the guffaws, prurient curiosity, the amazement of the outside world."

Buckley likes to pose as an intellectual, and this fact, combined with his sincere concern for the welfare of U. S. imperialism, is sufficient to account for his rhetorical flights. But behind the exaggerated image of history grinding to a halt there is a perceptive analysis of the damage that Watergate has done to the interests of the U. S. ruling class:

"The outward signs of the depth of

the crisis are obvious: The unparalleled downfall of virtually the entire staff of the head of Government; the formal initiation of impeachment proceedings, the confessions, indictments and trials. I won't repeat the list of what all of us know much too well.

"Yet at the very heart of the crisis are things which cannot so easily be listed, for they consist of felt truths which do not lend themselves to the confines of charts and graphs and polls and headlines.

"I speak of the spreading cynicism about those in public life and about the political process itself. I speak of the pervasive and undeniable sense of frustration and impotence that has become the dominant political mood in the nation. I speak of a perception of corruption that has effectively destroyed the President's ability to speak from a position of moral leadership. And I speak of the widespread conviction that Watergate and all that it has brought in its wake has done unique and perhaps irrevocable damage to our entire system of government."

Buckley's unspoken assumption that Nixon will be impeached is shared by a growing number of observers. "In a nutshell," Joseph Alsop wrote in his March 20 syndicated column, "the betting a short two weeks ago was still against the House of Representatives voting a bill of impeachment. But today, it is a reasonable bet that a bill of impeachment will be voted and sent to the Senate."

Writing in the March 22 *Washington Post*, Lou Cannon reported "growing skepticism both in the White House and on Capitol Hill that Mr. Nixon can now head off the impeachment process in the House.

"[House] Minority Leader John J. Rhodes of Arizona, asked at a closed-door Wednesday night meeting of Republican press secretaries whether the President could 'pull a rabbit out of the hat' and avoid impeachment, re-

plied: 'Don't bet on it.'"

"Privately," Cannon added, "White House aides have become increasingly skeptical that they can head off impeachment in the House, although they remain convinced that the President can win any Senate vote."

Contributing to the expectation of Nixon's impeachment is his apparent inability, despite strenuous efforts, to suppress the evidence linking him to Watergate and other crimes, or to divert attention to other matters. In the March 18 *Wall Street Journal*, Fred L. Zimmerman portrayed Nixon's strategy as an unsuccessful rearguard action:

"In recent days, Mr. Nixon has been trying a combination of tactics to slow the impeachment drive.

"Appearing before audiences known beforehand to be friendly, he has hoped to induce displays of support that might convince Congressmen the public still is with him.

"Offering limited cooperation with the [House] Judiciary Committee, he has hoped to create a sufficiently plausible defense so that Republican Congressmen, whose attitudes on impeachment will be crucial, will chose to side publicly with him.

"Engaging in Byzantine maneuvers endemic to Washington, such as leaking information and attacking the committee's staff, he has hoped to set Judiciary Committee members to quarreling among themselves over important procedural issues, perhaps turning the impeachment drive into a partisan shambles.

"But none of this seems to be working."

The efforts to suppress the evidence received an expected setback March 18, when Judge John Sirica ruled that a secret grand-jury report believed to link Nixon to the Watergate cover-up conspiracy should be turned over to the House Judiciary Committee. Lawyers for three of the defendants indicted March 1 appealed the ruling, but the Court of Appeals in Washington upheld Sirica on March 21.

Nixon and his chief lawyer, James St. Clair, had pretended to have no

interest in whether the report was handed over to the committee. Because Nixon could not afford to argue openly for suppression of the evidence in the report, the task was left to lawyers for former aides H. R. Halde- man, John Ehrlichman, and Gordon Strachan, who claimed that the contents of the secret report might be made public and thus jeopardize their clients' chances for a fair trial.

Both Sirica and the appeals court, in their decisions, emphasized the fact that Nixon had not objected to turning over the report. "The person on whom the report focuses," Sirica wrote, "the President of the United States, has not objected to its release to the committee." In effect, Nixon had been forced by his weak position to provide the rationale for a further undermining of his chances of survival.

Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski exploded another of Nixon's justifications for suppressing evidence when he revealed March 21 that he had issued a subpoena for a number of White House documents that Nixon had refused to hand over voluntarily.

Only the day before, speaking to the convention of the National Association of Broadcasters in Houston, Nixon had argued that there was no need for him to give the House Judiciary Committee any more material than he had given Jaworski. The special prosecutor, Nixon implied, had been given everything he needed to convict all the Watergate culprits. Jaworski's subpoena thus exposed what a *New York Times* editorial called Nixon's "latest instance of double-dealing and double-talk."

Neither Jaworski nor anyone in the White House would specify the areas covered by the subpoena. However, the type of subpoena indicated that it was sought for an investigation that has not yet produced indictments. This could include the ITT payoff for a favorable antitrust ruling, dairy industry campaign contributions in exchange for an increase in milk-price supports, and the erasure of 18.5 minutes in one of the White House tape recordings delivered under an earlier subpoena.

Jaworski's action put increased pressure on Nixon to hand over forty-two tapes that have been asked for, but not yet subpoenaed, by the House Judiciary Committee. The March 23 *Los Angeles Times* carried an article suggesting that Nixon had already

changed his position and was planning to hand over the tapes.

This account was loudly denied the same day by Ronald Ziegler, Nixon's press secretary.

"The tough White House attitude," R. W. Apple Jr. reported in the March 24 *New York Times*, "appeared to increase the possibility of a fateful confrontation between the committee and President Nixon—a confrontation that, in the opinion of Capitol Hill observers, would increase the possibility of Mr. Nixon's impeachment by the House of Representatives."

Apple wrote that St. Clair had been warned against such a confrontation by Hugh Scott, the Republican leader in the Senate, in a March 19 meeting.

"'I gave a clear message,' the Pennsylvania Senator said. He also told Mr. St. Clair that defiance of the wishes of the House committee would 'imperil' Mr. Nixon's position in the Senate—the first suggestion from a major Republican official that, if impeached by the House, the President might be convicted by the Senate."

The Washington mood favoring Nixon's impeachment or forced resignation is being pushed further by the accumulating evidence of Nixon's habit of filling his own pockets at public expense.

On March 21, Congressman Jack Brooks, the head of a subcommittee that has been investigating government spending on Nixon's homes in California and Florida, charged that \$17 million had been spent on the two estates. The highest figure previously mentioned had been \$10 million.

In the March 23 *New York Times*, Philip Shabecoff reported that even \$17 million may be too low a figure. Shabecoff said that the House Judiciary Committee and the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation—which is investigating Nixon's taxes—were both looking into additional spending on the estates. The committees have reportedly found evidence that money was expended from the \$1.5 million "special projects fund" appropriated for White House needs not anticipated in other legislation and from a secret "military fund" under the president's control.

The joint committee's inquiry into Nixon's tax evasion appears to be gathering convincing evidence of deliberate tax fraud. Eileen Shanahan reported in the March 24 *New York*

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Times:

"Congressional staff experts who are investigating President Nixon's taxes have reportedly become convinced that the deed establishing the President's right to a \$576,000 tax deduction never existed, despite the contention of his lawyers to the contrary."

It has already been admitted that the only existing deed was not made out until April 10, 1970, and was backdated to March 27, 1969. (The law allowed deductions only for gifts made before July 25, 1969.) Nixon's lawyers claim that the backdated deed was a copy of an earlier deed. It is this earlier deed that the investigators believe never existed.

Nixon's lawyer, Frank DeMarco, has refused to tell the committee what Nixon knew about the backdating, but if the earlier deed never existed, Nixon would have had to know that the later deed was fraudulent.

Moreover, DeMarco's reason for refusing to testify on the matter is the so-called attorney-client privilege. But this privilege can be claimed legally only to protect the client. It could be waived by Nixon, but he has refused to do so despite requests from the committee, the Internal Revenue Service, and the California secretary of state's office.

The accumulating scandals have produced a situation in which it seems that the main question is no longer whether Nixon will be impeached, but rather what the charges will be. In the March 24 *New York Times*, Apple described negotiations that sound like the impeachment equivalent of plea-bargaining. He quoted "Congressional sources" as saying that the House Judiciary Committee "was willing, in return for the surrender of the tapes of the 42 conversations, to eliminate certain issues from the original list of 53 that the committee has been considering. . . ."

"Among the issues that the committee was prepared to drop, according to these sources, were the bombing of Cambodia, the impoundment of Federal funds, the dismantling of the poverty program and possibly, if there was no evidence of fraud, Mr. Nixon's tax problems. That would leave the Watergate cover-up, 'dirty tricks' in the 1972 Presidential campaign, the activities of the White House 'plumbers' and alleged campaign finance abuses as the focuses of the committee's investigation." □

Grain Rots on Docks While Peasants Starve

Ethiopian Famine Spreading Through South

By Ernest Harsch

The famine in Ethiopia, which has so far claimed more than 100,000 lives in the two northern provinces of Tigre and Wallo, is now spreading through the south. According to estimates made by provincial officials to representatives of international relief organizations, about 175,000 persons have already died in the south or are in danger of imminent death. Consistent with its approach to the famine in Tigre and Wallo last year, the regime in Addis Ababa has once again concealed the extent of devastation.

Writing in the March 20 *Washington Post*, correspondent David B. Ottaway quoted one United Nations relief official as saying: "We've only seen pieces of the picture [in the south], but we know enough from a variety of reports to say that a Wallo-Tigre type of famine could occur over an area that is three times the size of these provinces and with twice the population, about 8 million people."

Provinces hit by the spreading drought and famine are Harar, Kafa, Gemu Gofa, Bale, and Sidamo in the south, as well as the central province of Shoa. Between 2.5 million and 3.5 million people have already been directly affected by the drought.

The famine in the south is not a recent development. "The former government," Ottaway wrote, "had received at least three reports by mid-January telling of serious crop failures, drought conditions and widespread deaths in various districts of the south."

"One of these reports, obtained by The Washington Post, said that 'death from starvation has run into the hundreds' in just one district of Bale Province and estimated that 425,000 persons were in need of assistance in the three southern provinces of Bale, Sidamo and Harar.

"Written by the Ministry of Agriculture on the basis of a 10- to 15-day study in selected districts of these provinces, the report told in piecemeal fashion of the disaster that had befallen hundreds of thousands of people and animals over the past two years."

The March 20 *Le Monde* reported that 6,000 tons of grain destined for the famine victims in Ethiopia were rotting on the docks of Djibouti, in the French-ruled Territory of the Afars and Issas, owing to a "lack" of adequate transportation. The port director estimated that an equal amount of grain was sitting in the Ethiopian port of Assab. "Transportation (notably the Franco-Ethiopian railway) is not lacking, however, when it comes to moving certain Ethiopian agricultural export products such as coffee, meat, or dried vegetables," wrote *Le Monde*. "This merchandise—in spite of the famine—is an important part of the commercial traffic in Djibouti."

"The Ethiopian peasants," *Le Monde* continued, "and especially the Danakil nomads, are paradoxically condemned to starve to death a few hundred kilometers from such enormous stocks [of grain]"

Not only has the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie been slow to respond to the famine, but Selassie's feudal allies in the north have even profited from last year's famine in the province of Wallo. According to a report by David Ottaway in the March 19 *Washington Post*, thousands of peasants in Wallo sold their land last year at low prices to village chiefs and local noblemen because of the famine.

On December 1 Selassie issued a decree stating that "those of you who were forced to sell your lands . . . due to the drought at nominal prices and have lost the lands you were living on . . . should return to your lands now." The decree also ordered the buyers to vacate the land and it gave the peasants up to three years to pay back what they had received for the land—with interest, of course.

But like most other land-reform legislation in Ethiopia over the past years, the proclamation is being ignored by the landowners. "Not unexpectedly," wrote Ottaway, "in an empire as vast and loosely tied together as this one, the emperor's proclamation has fallen on deaf ears in this province of many high nobles, enor-

mous estates and powerless small landowners. In fact, the imperial proclamation, although widely distributed here, has so far seldom been applied."

Legesse Bezou, the new governor general of Wallo (his predecessor is under house arrest in Addis Ababa for covering up last year's famine), declared: "There is no problem at the moment" in enforcing the proclamation. Yet Demissie Adefrissew, vice-minister of national community development and head of the drought rehabilitation program in Wallo, said that he had not been able to verify a single case where land had been restored to its original owner, although he later changed his statement and claimed that 170 peasants had recovered their land.

Ottaway further noted: "Wallo is often cited by foreign scholars as the best example of what is wrong with the land-ownership system in Ethiopia: 375,000 landless peasants and 150,000 tenant farmers."

In the southern provinces the predominant system is tenant farming, in which the peasants have to pay from 50 to 75 percent of their crops to the landlord as rent. The peasants are discouraged from making improvements or increasing production, since they can be evicted at any time, and a larger crop simply means that most of the increase will go to the landlord. In some cases the landlords even raise the rent when a tenant's crop yield is higher than expected.

Government proclamations and half-hearted land "reform" bills are ineffective because the regime itself is intricately tied to the feudal landholding system. In an article in the July 1970 issue of *Challenge*, published by the Ethiopian Students Union of North America, Haile Menkerios pointed out: "Southern Ethiopia is characterized by individual ownership of land similar to the hacienda system of Latin America. A very small number of individuals—members of Haile Selassie's family, some members of the aristocratic class, and a few army officers and imperial favourites—own extensive tracts of land. Almost all such people acquired their ownings as favours from [Emperor] Menelik [II] and the present emperor, both of whom had expropriated the land from peasant Ethiopians. Such peasants (and their descendants) are now landless and are forced to be tenants on their own ancestral lands."

Another article in that issue of *Challenge*, pointing out the extent of land monopolization, quoted the February 21, 1970, London *Economist*: "90%

of the cultivable land is owned by the emperor, the feudal lords and the Coptic Church, in roughly equal proportions." □

First Such Actions in Ethiopian History

Women Stage Protests in Addis Ababa

The unrest that has swept Ethiopia in recent months has now touched off protests by one of the most oppressed layers in that society: women. Women industrial workers have demonstrated in Addis Ababa and thousands of prostitutes in the capital are demanding the right to organize.

On March 17, less than a week after the end of the four-day general strike in Addis Ababa, thousands of women workers marched on Haile Selassie's palace to demand equal pay and rights with men.

"5,000 Ethiopian women," the *Washington Post* reported the next day, "demonstrated . . . for equal pay and rights, the first time they have ever made organized public demands."

United Press International gave a smaller estimate of the crowd in a March 17 dispatch from the Ethiopian capital:

"About 3,000 women workers marched peacefully to Emperor Haile Selassie's Jubilee Palace today demanding equal pay and better working conditions.

"Riot policemen stopped the march

at the palace entrance, but a delegation was allowed in to present the women's case to the Emperor."

The Paris daily *Le Monde*, in its March 19 issue, also noted the unprecedented nature of the women's demonstration:

"For the first time in the history of Ethiopia, several thousand women demonstrated in Addis Ababa on Sunday, March 17. They were demanding better working conditions and equal wages with men. Dispersed by the police near the Jubilee Palace, they were able, however, to send a delegation to the emperor to present their grievances."

Selassie's response to the unexpected delegation was not reported.

Le Monde went on to report that prostitutes in Addis Ababa have begun to demand the right to organize:

"For their part, the 15,000 prostitutes of Addis Ababa are demanding the right to form a trade union. They distributed leaflets presenting their main demands: a fixed rate of payment and regular free medical examinations." □

Planes Reported Bombing Northern Iraq

Kurds Reject Baghdad's Autonomy Plan

By Michael Baumann

Leaders of the Kurdish national minority in northern Iraq have rejected the Baghdad regime's March 11 proposal for limited Kurdish autonomy. The Kurds charge that the proposal, presented in the form of a fifteen-day ultimatum, does not fulfill the Iraqi government's 1970 pledge of genuine Kurdish self-rule.

According to the March 18 issue of the Beirut daily *An Nahar*, Iraqi Vice-

President Saddam Hussein has responded by mobilizing 48,000 troops—more than half the Iraqi army—to force acceptance of the proposal. The paper quoted sources in Baghdad as saying that Hussein would launch a full-scale offensive against the Kurds after the March 26 deadline expired. A March 19 Agence France-Presse dispatch reported that Soviet-provided Iraqi planes had al-

ready begun to bomb areas held by the Kurds.

Thousands of Kurdish people have fled northward from areas controlled by the central government. "We have never seen anything like this exodus, even during the Kurdish revolts of 1961, 1965, or 1970," Dr. Mahmoud Osmane, a member of the Political Bureau of the Kurdish Democratic party (KDP), told a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent. "Two thousand Kurdish policemen and hundreds of civil servants have defected from their government posts and joined us."

The Kurds, a non-Arab Muslim people, make up about one-quarter of Iraq's population of more than ten million; several million more live in surrounding areas of Syria, Turkey, the Soviet Union, and Iran. The Iraqi Kurds, with the active help of their neighboring supporters, have carried out a long and bitter struggle for self-rule.

The current revolt stems from the Baghdad regime's refusal to carry out important clauses of the initial autonomy agreement negotiated with the Kurds in March 1970. That agreement, which established an armed truce after nearly a decade of open insurrection against the central government, appeared to offer a number of concessions to the Kurdish minority.

The central provision in the 1970 accord promised the Kurds "autonomy in the framework of the Iraqi Republic" within four years. A number of the Kurds' demands—especially those involving language rights and education—were to be implemented immediately. However, boundaries, finances, legislative powers, and other specific details of the autonomy plan were to be negotiated in the four-year interim.

The final proclamation, issued unilaterally by Baghdad on March 11 of this year, fell far short of the Kurds' demands.

It failed to demarcate the borders of the Kurdish region, merely stating that it applies to "all regions of the Iraqi Republic where the population is majority Kurd."

In addition, it permits the central government to retain vast authority over the Kurdish area, as well as exclusive control over the extensive oil income from the disputed Kirkuk region. The Kurds charge that Baghdad has already "Arabized" Kirkuk by deporting 50,000 Kurds and replacing



Washington Post map shows areas inhabited by Kurds.

them with 10,000 southern Arabs.

Baghdad's plan also gives the central government the right to select the head of the proposed Kurdish executive council, as well as the right to dissolve the proposed legislative council. Furthermore, it accords the legislative council an "advisory" role only, with the Iraqi Supreme Court to have the final say on all disputed questions. The Pesh Merga, the Kurdish guerrilla army, is to be disarmed and integrated into the national armed forces.

The Kurds charge that apart from these unacceptable features, the proposal simply ignores a number of their demands that are crucial to the suc-

cess of a genuine autonomy agreement. These include the following: 1) a democratically elected national parliament, 2) a Kurdish local assembly with real decision-making power, 3) veto power over the nomination of central government officials dealing with the Kurdish region, 4) a locally administered budget proportional to Kurdish representation in the population, and 5) a program of industrialization (only three of Iraq's 100 factories are located in the Kurdish region) and local planning bodies to develop oil and mineral resources.

The March 19 *Christian Science Monitor* reported that the Kurdish leadership appears to have very little hope that the Baghdad regime, a coalition of the Baath party and the Iraqi Communist party, will meet their demands.

"Justice for Kurdistan," an official of the KDP told the *Monitor*, "really means democracy in all Iraq, too. The present Baathist regime seems unlikely to grant either."

The Iraqi CP's role in relation to the Kurdish question has in effect been publicly endorsed by the Kremlin. In an editorial in the March 14 *Pravda*, the Soviet bureaucracy hailed the central government's proposal as a "major milestone on the path of the progressive development of Iraq." □

Governor Revives Controversy Over Superport in Puerto Rico

A March 12 announcement by Puerto Rican Governor Rafael Hernández Colón has revived a two-year-old controversy over a proposed superport and petroleum refinery complex in Puerto Rico.

Hernández announced that he was authorizing the transfer of U. S. naval target practice operations from Culebra—whose inhabitants have struggled for years to end the use of their land as a bombing range—to Mona Island and the neighboring uninhabited islets of Desecho and Monito. But just last September, Hernández announced Mona Island as the site for the superport.

The original selection of Mona for the superport came as a surprise to many observers from the very beginning, primarily because of the obvious limits on physical expansion, the potential ecological consequences, and

cost studies indicating that locating the port on Mona was economically unfeasible.

The obvious question posed by the choice of Mona for the superport was whether the navy or the colonial government were planning to break the Treaty of Culebra, which obligated the navy to transfer its war games elsewhere.

It appears that Hernández may be playing one unpopular issue against another in the hope of appeasing mass opposition and undercutting divisions in the legislature over the question of the superport. He may be hoping to use the navy as an excuse for constructing a superport on the mainland of Puerto Rico. There has been mass opposition, led by leftists and ecological groups, against a mainland site. □

How Should Workers Fight Rightist Offensive?

By Gerry Foley

"What happened in Córdoba leaves no room for doubt," the Argentine Trotskyist weekly *Avanzada Socialista* wrote in its March 6 issue. "A semi-fascist coup has occurred in this province. This is a very grave development and the workers must realize the full significance of this danger."

The putsch by mutinous police and labor gangsters who overthrew the provincial government of Córdoba on February 27 was not an isolated incident but the culmination of a whole campaign of intimidation against the workers and left organizations.

"In order to understand the threat the events in Córdoba represent," *Avanzada* continued, "the compañeros don't need to look very far beyond their factories and their own daily experience.

"At some time, for instance, every one of us has seen the trade-union bureaucracy and its goons in action. We have seen them arrive at the gates of factories where disputes were going on, not to join the picket line but to act as strikebreakers.

"We have seen how they deny the rank and file the right to elect the leaders they want by excluding all nonbureaucratic slates. We have seen them conniving with the bosses and the police in order to get at activists or shop stewards loyal to their compañeros.

"We saw them in action, for example, at Citroën, where, acting in coordination with the plant guards and with the blessing of the police, an armed bureaucratic gang hunted down the activists in order to break the last strike. We have just seen them at work in the Swift packing house in Rosario, where they roamed the various sections of the factory, beating up both male and female workers who were protesting against their starvation wages.

"And we have also seen these bureaucrats and their goons at work in Comodoro Rivadavia, where in a united front with the police they seized the headquarters of the oil workers, and when the ranks tried to protest they

shot them down."

Three workers and possibly more were gunned down by police February 21 in the southern port town of Comodoro Rivadavia as they tried to march on their union headquarters, which had been occupied by a goon squad sent in by the right-wing labor bosses.

Until the Córdoba coup, this was the most violent episode in the bureaucracy's campaign to impose a tight rein on the union movement. Only iron-fisted control, the bureaucrats apparently felt, could keep the workers from pushing for wage demands exceeding the narrow guidelines of the class-collaborationist Social Pact, on which Perón's second regime is based.

Violence and other types of reprisals against union militants had been escalating for months. Some of those attacked were workers selling *Avanzada Socialista* at plant gates. Also attacked were union activists belonging to the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers party, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International), which publishes the paper.

In late February, for example, three armed goons attacked a team of PST members selling *Avanzada* outside the gate of the Tensa factory in Buenos Aires. The team jumped in a bus and left, but the gunmen followed them. One of the thugs tried to grab a PSTer's papers. There was a scuffle. A .45-caliber bullet dug a long gouge across the back of the paper salesman, Juan Carlos Cecere. In its course, the bullet went through the hand of one of Cecere's companions.

Not long before this, in mid-February, members of the PST who were handing out a leaflet on the metalworkers union elections outside the COR-MASI-CORNI foundry in Buenos Aires were also chased by armed goons. One PSTer was shot in the back with a .32-caliber pistol.

Other PST activists were expelled from their unions by the bureaucratic repression, like Victor Giménez, a

leading activist in the building workers union in the western Argentine city of Neuquén.

"Giménez is an activist in the Socialist Building Workers Caucus," the March 6 *Avanzada* wrote. "He works at Cutral Co. . . . There the Techint workers have been holding mobilizations every two weeks demanding a 400-peso wage [approximately US \$40]. At the head of the struggle are the best compañeros, the ones identified with the Lista Gris [Gray Slate]. Giménez is one of these. The bureaucracy has just taken action against this comrade. Giménez has been expelled from the building workers union for leading the campaign for higher wages."

What the Córdoba coup demonstrated, *Avanzada* explained, was that "the same methods of gangsterism and terror that are being applied on a small scale in factories or unions . . . are now being applied on a grand scale in Córdoba, to rule a province. And the most sinister elements of the bureaucracy are doing this in the hope that they can extend this tomorrow to the entire country."

An Example of How to Fight the Bureaucracy

The Comodoro Rivadavia events should be studied closely, *Avanzada* said, not just because they were the prelude to the Córdoba coup but because the outcome in the southern oil center was quite different than in Córdoba.

As in Córdoba, the workers were stunned when an armed gang moved to deprive them of their rights. "What's happening? Why don't they come out to explain?' These questions were expressed in words and gestures by about a thousand persons who gathered outside the mayor's office on Friday, February 22. For a whole hour, there had been no answer. The ["left"] union leaders had not shown up to give one.

"It had been the same the day before [Thursday, February 21]. Ever since the morning [on Thursday], the oil workers had been leaving their jobs and gathering—dressed in their work clothes and helmets—ready to go to Viamonte Street, where the union headquarters had been occupied by a gang of bureaucratic leaders supported by no one. At 3:00 p.m., about 600 workers had gathered. Then they started asking 'What should we do?' and still there were no leaders to answer, or only a few, who said: 'Let's wait for Judge Monges's ruling.'

"The workers waited until 8:30 that evening. There was no ruling from the judge. He was said to be on a trip somewhere in the province with a relative."

The dwindling group of workers who were still left didn't want to wait any longer and forced some of the leaders present, including Osvaldo Rosales, the general secretary of the private-sector oil workers, to march with them to the union headquarters.

Then they ran into the police who were working with the goons. *Avanzada* quoted the report of the local daily *Crónica*:

"The workers immediately gathered together in front of the police barrier. For hours the security forces had been forming a barrier, parking various vehicles from the regional police forces across the street. Behind these they stationed members of the Brigada Anti-disturbios [riot squad] armed with tear-gas launchers. In the meantime, personnel armed with machine guns and heavy-caliber weapons stood further back. Other policemen were flaunting long clubs.

"Rosales made the announcement [that the time allotted for the judge to rule had passed] and advanced at the head of the workers, throwing himself against the police who were stationed between one of the vehicles and the wall of a house adjoining the union headquarters.

"The workers advanced behind him. Immediately the police began beating the first row with their clubs. In the meantime, from behind the barricade, the riot squad began to fire tear gas. The workers scattered and began to stone the police. Then the first shots sounded. Shortly later, Sotomayor [a worker] fell dead.

"The workers dispersed through the neighboring streets, lighting bonfires and throwing helmets at the police

cars. The police continued shooting at the workers. Volleys of shots came in succession in Viamonte Street and in other streets nearby. Confusion reigned."

For the next day the local CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo—General Confederation of Labor) called a general strike and rally at the city hall. They accused the police commissioners and the bureaucracy of the 62 Organizations, the right-wing Peronist union group, of an il-



VICTOR GIMENEZ

legal attack on the workers. In its protest, the CGT got the support of the mayor and the deputy governor. The governor sided with the rightists.

When the workers assembled for the rally the next day, the union leaders were more than an hour late. They had been negotiating the release of Rosales and other persons arrested. "During that time," *Avanzada's* correspondent wrote, "the compañeros were asking 'What is happening?' 'What should we do?'"

Finally, when the leaders did show up in the company of the mayor, they talked about demanding the resignation of the police officials involved in the slaughter. "And then the workers themselves started shouting, 'What about the union headquarters? We want it back.' This demand had been strangely forgotten by the leaders of the oil workers union and the CGT."

After the demonstration, the authorities agreed to return the headquarters temporarily, giving the union leaders thirty days to "normalize" their organization. *Avanzada* asked: "Doesn't calling on Compañero Rosales and the rest of the leadership to 'normalize' the union mean indirectly endorsing the action of the bureaucratic gang of

raiders? They seized the union precisely on the pretext of irregularities."

After the local authorities made their decision, the trade-union leaders went to Buenos Aires, as the deposed heads of the Córdoba government were to do a week later, to try to get the federal government to remove the officials implicated in the outrages.

"Once again," *Avanzada* wrote, "the workers of Comodoro—who stood up to gunfire, waited hours for a judge who never came, and by their heroism, combativity, and devotion defended their union and blocked the semifascist provocation—are asking 'What is happening?' 'What should we do now?'"

At the February 22 rally, which brought together the militant unionists and the left organizations, including the left Peronists, a PST speaker tried to offer an answer to those questions:

"We must fight for three things: the unconditional return of the union offices to the legitimate authorities, the immediate expulsion of the functionaries implicated in the attack and shooting, and an investigation and punishment of all those responsible. For this purpose, secret negotiations are no good. The only effective method is mobilization, the same method that blocked the bureaucratic provocation on Wednesday and Thursday.

"We call for a Commission of Inquiry headed by the oil workers union and for a Struggle Committee of the CGT—including representatives of all the workers and people's political organizations—to launch a plan of struggle designed to achieve these three immediate objectives."

When the Córdoba coup occurred, the PST raised similar demands. But they didn't have the opportunity to put them before the workers in the automotive center. The workers were too completely demobilized by the union leaderships, who alone, in a city the size of Córdoba, could have assembled the rank and file. Furthermore, in that center of left-wing Peronism and of the militant wing of the trade unions, the ranks relied heavily on the established left opportunist leaderships.

Obregon Cano—A Cordoban Allende

Avanzada compared the Córdoba coup to the fall of Allende in Chile.

Despite the smaller scale and the far less grave consequences, the political lessons were the same.

"A few days ago," the Trotskyist weekly wrote, "we published an account by the Chilean Socialist leader Jaime Flores, who is imprisoned in Corrientes. This comrade related the odyssey of the Chilean workers on the day of the coup. 'What should we do?' 'What is happening?' 'How can we resist?' were the questions that all our Chilean brothers were asking as the 'gorilla' offensive raged. These questions were not answered. There was no leadership, no party, no union, no union federation able to organize and respond. As a result, the reactionary offensive was able to roll on as easily as a knife cutting butter.

"Leaving aside the difference of scale, the same thing happened in Córdoba. 'What should we do?' and 'What is happening?' were unanswered questions in the mouths of the Córdoba workers. For it should be said that the coup did not have the slightest popular support. But no one went out to fight against the fascists because they did not know how or where to do it.

"How is it possible that the people went out to fight against Onganía [the military dictator who ruled from 1966 to 1970] when it was a lot harder, and did not do so in this case? Today, when there should have been a Córdoba two or three times as big as the previous ones [the insurrectionary general strikes of 1969 and 1971], nothing, or almost nothing happened. How can this be explained?"

The difference was that the old centrist leaderships that led the opposition to the dictatorship were politically confused or co-opted by the Peronist regime.

"Something has changed in the leaderships, in the trade-union and political leaderships—which are virtually the same as in 1969—that explains the absence of a working-class and popular mobilization.

"And what has changed is the role played today by the CP, the JP [Juventud Peronista—Peronist Youth], the Tosco group [the non-Peronist militant wing of the unions], and the guerrillaist currents. Unlike what happened under the dictatorship, all of these leaderships functioned in Córdoba like a set of interlocking gears revolving around the Obregón Cano/

Atilio López government, which in turn revolved around Perón's government.

"In complementary ways, both the guerrillaists, with their complete lack of a political line to put up against the government, and their inherent incapacity to mobilize the masses; and the trade-union and political leaderships mentioned, with their capitulation to Obregón and López, showed that they could not lead a Córdoba.

"In reality, what these leaderships set in motion was a tragicomedy of intrigue, which was opened by the governor and deputy governor themselves. Their inglorious fall transpired behind closed doors, where the masses were shut out. When they were released from prison, they did not call for the support of the workers but of the federal police. When this was refused, they left for parts unknown.

"The same thing happened with the leaderships that relied on them. On the day of the coup, they were nowhere to be seen; the only thing that appeared was communiqués signed by these leaders with vague 'instructions' that no one could carry out. The fact was that for months they had dampened down their powder. They had constantly discouraged mobilizations because, they said, these 'would play into the hands of the right.'

"All of the political and trade-union leaderships in Córdoba shared responsibility only two months ago for the ignominious sellout of the IME workers who were fired under the 'reduction-in-the-work-force law.' At that time, no leadership called for mobilizing effectively to fight the layoffs and denounce the miserable role played by the provincial government. As in Chile, the leaders chorused, 'We must not play into the hands of the right,' while the IME workers were being hit with a flood of dismissals and the right was attacking and preparing the way for the coup.

"The defeat in Córdoba marks the failure of the political line of all those who thought they could defend the workers and civil liberties and could still place their confidence in the government and refrain from attacking it. This represents either an error or a capitulation, because if the semifascist bureaucrats are not the same thing as the government, they are part of it and at present an indispensable part."

In particular, the PST paper called on the youth who followed Perón in the belief that he intends to carry out a socialist transformation to draw the lessons of the Córdoba coup and the Peronist government's suppression of those who tried to protest in the name of Perón against the forcible ouster of an elected Peronist administration.

"The young people who were beaten up and jailed in Buenos Aires last Friday because they relied on a semiofficial promise that the Juventudes Políticas Argentinas [JPA—Argentine Political Youth Groups, the umbrella of the left Peronist youth organizations] would not be repressed, should now reflect deeply on the events in Córdoba. It was the policy of their cothinkers there that allowed a semifascist coup to triumph without a struggle."

Avanzada stressed the danger represented by the Córdoba coup and the repressive campaign:

"The events that have occurred in Córdoba are a dangerous defeat for the Argentine workers. When Obregón Cano and Atilio López fell, the semifascist gangs and the putschist police hierarchy—who have been confirmed in their posts—won their principal demand.

"Even if they do not get everything they ask, even if the interventor named is neither Osinde [the organizer of the Ezeiza massacre] nor Navarro [the putschist police chief], as they demand, and even if in the coming days a popular response begins to develop, for the moment the rightists . . . have won a victory."

The Trotskyist paper warned that this threat could not be met effectively without a realistic assessment of the strength of the rightists and the aims of the Argentine bourgeoisie:

"The semifascist body—as we have already pointed out—still lacks feet and a head. That is, on the one hand it lacks mass support; and on the other, the Argentine bourgeoisie as a whole, although it uses the fascists, is not interested in pushing semifascism as such, but in advancing the 'great national accord.' That means maintaining a bourgeois parliamentary regime.

"This semifascist body is trying to win a base through the Peronist movement.

But that is hard to do, because while millions of Argentines still place their

confidence in Perón, they also have a growing hatred of the Peronist trade-union bureaucrats and politicians. An index of this is the incapacity of these sectors to mobilize large masses in their public rallies, despite having the colossal union apparatus (and now, partially, the state apparatus) at their disposal.

"We have said that the only sector that could provide a head for this semifascist body is the Argentine bourgeoisie, and it does not yet have an interest in doing so."

Avanzada explained: "Fascism or semifascism implies a bourgeoisie attacking the workers movement by the methods of civil war. That is very dangerous and involves a high social cost. The bourgeoisie in any country resorts to fascism in the same way an individual goes to a surgeon to have a gangrenous leg amputated—that is, only in case of extreme need, when it is the only way left to survive."

The Argentine bourgeoisie, the Trotskyist weekly said, knows too well the price it would have to pay for fascism: "The capitalists still bear the scars of the last two experiences with authoritarian regimes, which in the beginning they supported almost unanimously. We are referring to the 1955-58 'gorilla' regime and the Onganía dictatorship. In both cases, because of the reaction they provoked in the workers movement, these experiences ended badly. In particular, the 'Onganiato' provoked working-class and popular explosions that endangered the whole capitalist system.

"The bourgeoisie's fear of a semifascist or authoritarian adventure, which has been reflected in the 'serious' press in recent days, is simply the fear of the future reactions of the workers movement."

Avanzada called the semifascist goons and police the "watchdogs" of the capitalists: "It's one thing to have a dog in the garden to guard your property but another to let him come into the living room and establish himself as 'head of the household' and start to bark orders. The bourgeoisie has no 'problems of conscience' in backing a bureaucrat or a goon who breaks a strike or murders a class-struggle leader. But the distance between that and entrusting the leadership of the state to a goon or a declassed adventurer is

a long one."

At the same time, the Trotskyist weekly warned against the opposite error. "Nonetheless, from this fear of a semifascist adventure shown by the majority of the bourgeoisie we should not draw the conclusion that is drawn by those who hope to be able to block the fascists by collaborating with, or supporting, the 'good bosses' . . . or the ones that they think are good. . . .

"In Córdoba the watchdogs showed the unmistakable signs of rabies. The bosses, their politicians, and Perón himself watched them in action not



Juan Carlos Cecere was wounded by rightist goon squad.

without a certain fear. But it was hard for them to put muzzles on these rabid dogs, because they cannot do without them.

"Because they don't understand this, both the JP and the CP, as well as other tendencies, have been making the mistake of trying to block the ultraright offensive by relying on and supporting the present capitalist government. The consequences are obvious. The 'anti-Cordobazo' was the result of this capitulatory and suicidal policy."

The PST paper also criticized those who put the blame for the coup on the CIA and the imperialists alone:

"We should clear up the confusion that is shared by the Communist party, the JP, and the FAS [Frente Antiimperialista y por el Socialismo—Front Against Imperialism and for Socialism, supported by some guerrilla groups and left nationalists]. For them, the brains behind this is the CIA; that is, Yankee imperialism. Let us leave aside the fact that, especially for the CP and the JP, this is an ele-

gant and dandy way of absolving the government and the Argentine capitalists of responsibility.

"We don't say that the CIA doesn't have excellent relations with the semifascist groups or hold them as a reserve card. Nor that the Yankees were saddened by Obregón's fall. But it seems to us that the fundamental line of the foreign monopolies still passes through the 'great accord' and not through promoting civil war by means of the semifascist groups."

What Must Be Done

For its part, the PST paper raised the slogan "No confidence in the government. Unite and mobilize independently against the semifascist gangs."

"Only with our hands free of any tie to, or compromise with, the government, only with an independent policy uniting all the political and social sectors determined to defend democratic freedoms can we halt the semifascist onslaught."

Concretely, *Avanzada* proposed a united front of the left and workers organizations for action against the rightist offensive. It supported the JPA decision to call a rally to protest the rightist outrages and called on the left Peronists to broaden their action to include all left groups:

"We think that it is only by mobilizing that we can halt the offensive of the right. But we are also sure that we can strike much harder if we coordinate our actions in a united way, that is, if the JPA invites all youth groups to participate and withdraws its confidence in the 'half promises' of officials like General Inñiquez [the federal police chief]. . . .

"We think that regardless of our different policies, the attacks of the fascist gangs and the rightist groups are hitting all our organizations in common, and we must respond in common.

"We recognize the representativeness of the JPA, and although we are not part of it we think that the PST as well as the JSA, which mobilized 5,000 compañeros for the Chile rally . . . and other tendencies of recognized weight in the student movement should participate in all the broad actions called.

"This cannot involve imposing conditions on the organizations participating—on the contrary. The slogans and

the organization of every action should be discussed by all the groups taking part, each one of which should be able to take part under its own banners.

"So, we call on the Juventud Peronista, the Federación Juvenil Comunista, and the Juventud Radical to organize a united demonstration, raising as the main slogan the immediate reinstatement of the authorities elected by the people of Córdoba."

The JSA issued a similar appeal in the youth supplement of *Avanzada*: "When actions like the Córdoba coup were committed by the Onganía military dictatorship, the student movement was the first to rise up. By its mobilization, which began [in the protests against higher food prices] in the University of Corrientes cafeteria, it lit the spark that touched off the Córdoba and the subsequent workers and popular mobilizations. It had many martyrs. . . ."

"Today the student movement that was able to strike back against the Onganía dictatorship in 1969 must take the lead in the defense of Córdoba, where the reactionary forces and fascist bands want to wipe out with blood and fire, by killing workers in the street and attacking trade-union and political headquarters, the rights that it took so many struggles to win.

"The Juventud Socialista de Avanzada appeals to all students, in every department and school, to discuss how to defend Córdoba. We must organize assemblies in every school, condemn these events in public statements and press conferences, and combat them by other measures democratically decided there.

"Likewise we must begin to plan a big united mobilization in defense of Córdoba, which today is also the defense of the democratic freedoms of the working class and the gains of the student movement itself."

In its own appeal for action, the PST paper said: "Obregón and López do not represent us. But the people of Córdoba elected them, and they are the only ones who can remove them—not fascist gangs or the central government."

An accompanying article called for a united front of struggle around three immediate demands: "1) reinstatement of the Córdoba government and its legal heads, Obregón Cano and López; 2) defense of the democratic and

class-struggle unions in Córdoba threatened by the bureaucratic escalation; 3) release of all political prisoners."

"However, to be effective," the statement continued, "such a front must actually mobilize the workers and the popular sectors. It cannot stick to paper statements. It must organize cen-

tral public rallies now and take militant actions. All the threatened unions, along with the Juventudes Políticas Argentinas, and all parties and student organizations, unions, and professional groups that agree with these objectives must begin immediately to organize a great national mobilization." □

Argentina

Opening Days of Cordoba Coup

[The following article is reprinted from the March 6 issue of the Argentine weekly *Avanzada Socialista*, published by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Friction occurred between the government of Córdoba and the forces supporting it, on the one hand, and the bureaucracy and the right in general, on the other, mainly in three areas. First there was a conflict with the bus companies, who were unwilling to pay the wage increase granted to the UTA [Unión Tranviarios Automotor—Bus Drivers Union]. There was trouble inside the 62 Organizations [the Peronist trade-union group], where the Ortodoxos [right-wing Peronists] failed to come to a definitive agreement with the Legalistas [left-wing Peronists] on uniting in the CGT [Confederación General del Trabajo—General Confederation of Labor]. (This situation was settled by the Plenario de Alta Gracia.) Third, there was conflict with the provincial police hierarchy, which operated as the spearhead of the opposition.

In connection with the dispute with the police, the magazine *El Descamisado* claimed that the police murdered the five farmers in Córdoba [who were allegedly mistaken for guerrillas in January of this year] as a provocation to force federal intervention. The fact is that the government removed and retired Lieutenant Colonel Navarro, who then declared himself in rebellion and shut himself up in the barracks with the troops. From that point on, the pace of events quickened. That brings

us to Wednesday [February 27, the date of the coup].

* * *

Shortly before this, Agustín Tosco wrote an article, which was published in the daily *El Mundo* on March 2. It contained a number of curious points. As we know, Tosco, Salamanca [leaders of the class-struggle tendency], and other militant trade unionists had been pushing for several weeks for a meeting of representatives of the militant tendency throughout the province. A meeting was scheduled for March 2. In the article, without any further explanation, Tosco wrote that the date was the 9th instead of the 2nd. The important thing was that in the middle of the Córdoba crisis the leaders of the class-struggle tendency chose to postpone holding a meeting that was the only feeble hope of developing a centralized leadership to take on the right. A possible explanation for this suicidal attitude is that at this point Tosco and Salamanca had managed to renew their arrangements with the Legalistas, who were once again in conflict with the Ortodoxos.

* * *

On Wednesday, February 27, the coup was launched. The Ignacio Rucci Comandos seized the radio stations, which they still control. Groups of armed civilians appeared on the street claiming to be under the orders of the "62 Ortodoxas" organizations and the Juventud Sindical Peronista [JSP—Peronist Trade-Union Youth].

The police, who had remained shut up in their barracks, went at midnight to the government offices and arrested

the governor and deputy governor, along with about seventy officials, who were taken to the Comando Radio-eléctrico and held there incommunicado. Navarro, the chief of police, justified his position by saying that arms were being distributed at the government offices, a claim that has been refuted by the reporters sent there by almost all the dailies.

* * *

The police and armed groups of the JSP seized the streets. All day Thursday work in the factories as well as commercial and banking activities slowly ground to a halt. The workers, sent away by the bosses, dispersed to their homes. The "62 Ortodoxas" called for a strike in support of the police. Tosco, along with Tapia, a Legalista and a member of the old CGT secretariat, also called for a strike.

Thus, the police, the bosses, the fascist commandos, and the two rival trade-union leaderships, for different reasons, all converged on one point, closing down Córdoba. The working class was completely dispersed. This situation was definitely solidified on the next day. From Friday on, it can be said that there was no possibility of a Cordobazo [insurrectionary general strike], since the factories were all shut down.

On Friday also an important event occurred. With the blessing of [Luis Longhi] the interventor delegate of the Movimiento Nacional Justicialista [National Social Justice Movement, the main Peronist organization], Dr. Mario D. Agodino moved into the governor's chair. It was a maneuver similar to the one with Lastiri [who took over as provisional president after Perón forced out Cámpora until the caudillo could get himself elected in a special election]. Agodino had the support, direct or indirect, of the national government and Balbín [head of the Unión Cívica Radical, Radical Civic Union]. (The minister of the interior came out for nonintervention in Córdoba, and Balbín publicly backed him.)

Dr. Agodino was going to play a centrist and vacillating role that reflected the mixed feelings and cautious attitude of the national government. The daily *La Nación* noted two legal errors, obviously intentional ones, that reveal the character of Agodino's takeover. He was sworn in by the pre-

siding judge of the Superior Tribunal de Justicia [State Supreme Court], which implied recognition that he was a provisional governor. At the same time, the federal district judge declared himself competent to try Colonel Navarro for the crime of sedition. All this, together with Agodino's statements indicating that he was willing to restore power to Obregón Cano and that his first official act would be to order the imprisoned governor set free, indicates that his accepting this post may have been a maneuver carried out at the top levels to turn back the coup.

However, other facts indicate the contrary. Colonel Navarro has not been fired; he was present at Agodino's swearing in, and it is the police under his command, along with the civilian goons wearing yellow armbands, who exercise the real power in Córdoba. At the same time, the national government indirectly endorsed the coup by sending its minister of labor, Otero, to the Plenario de Alta Gracia, where only the putschist "62" were present. Thursday night and the morning and afternoon of Friday were a time of uncertainty, when no one knew which way Agodino would turn or who was pulling the strings.

By Friday night, things had already become clearer, when no Cordobazo had occurred and the workers remained dispersed and confined to their homes, with resistance limited to a few barricades and isolated sniping. The right gained confidence and redoubled its attack.

* * *

On Friday night there were three new developments. In the absence of the main trade unions, and with Otero's blessing, a new leadership of the CGT was elected. The putschist "62 Ortodoxas" were left in control of the union federation. At the same time, with the scheduling of new elections for September 1, a blow was struck at Obregón Cano's chances of regaining his office. These were the two news items most widely circulated over the Buenos Aires radio stations, where news about Córdoba was under the eye of the censors.

The third item of news was that Obregón and the other officials had been released, and that after asserting their authority — and fruitlessly demanding the support of Minister of the Interior Llabí and the Policía

Federal — they had gone into hiding, where they remain until this moment.

* * *

The ground given up by the masses (who did not carry out a new Cordobazo) was entirely occupied by the right and the fascists. Criticism began to develop of the "62 Ortodoxas" (or tendencies they represented), of Dr. Longhi, and of the deal that resulted in the choice of Dr. Agodino. They wanted more.

Over Saturday and Sunday, the police and parapolic gangs raided the headquarters of the oppositionist unions. On these and preceding days there were dynamite attacks against figures in the deposed government. On Saturday, the headquarters of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores was raided, and twenty-eight compañeros were arrested, to be released the next day.

Their control over the city and all movements, as well as the paralysis of the political and trade-union forces, enabled the police and their "collaborators" to take a "benign" attitude. At night there was shooting. But aside from a few cases in which snipers or small resistance groups were involved, all the reporters have agreed that the shots were fired by the police themselves to heighten the climate of insecurity and provoke the step the government took on Sunday, March 3, in decreeing federal intervention, which had already come under discussion in the congress.

* * *

Monday dawned on a paralyzed Córdoba, where no one thought of going to work. The "62" (in full control of the CGT), most of the bosses, and the police all agreed that no one should go to work. They demanded rapid installation of the federal interventor, who they thought would help them consolidate their victory and continue their attack. With the government overthrow, their target was the class-struggle and oppositionist unions. These unions have issued a call for the workers to return to their workplaces and organize the resistance from there. But today, Monday, March 4, as we close this disjointed chronicle of the semi-fascist coup in Córdoba, the workers have been unable to heed this appeal. □

Pinochet Admits Planning Coup in 1972

General Augusto Pinochet, leader of the September 11, 1973, military coup in Chile, has openly admitted that the junta's previous account of the coup was a complete fabrication.

In a recent interview with journalists from the Chilean weekly *Ercilla*, Pinochet revealed that the coup—far from being a spontaneous "preemptive" action as previously claimed—had in reality been planned in detail since April 1972, seventeen months before the actual take-over.

This admission, reported in the March 15 *Le Monde*, completely contradicts the trumped-up account the junta circulated in the first six months following the coup.

"Up until the present," *Le Monde* observed, "the junta's official version was the following: The September 11 overthrow was an action that was decided upon hastily, aimed at quickly rounding up the leaders of the Popular Unity coalition, whose 'Plan Z' laid the basis for liquidating the civilian and military opponents of the Allende regime before September 18."

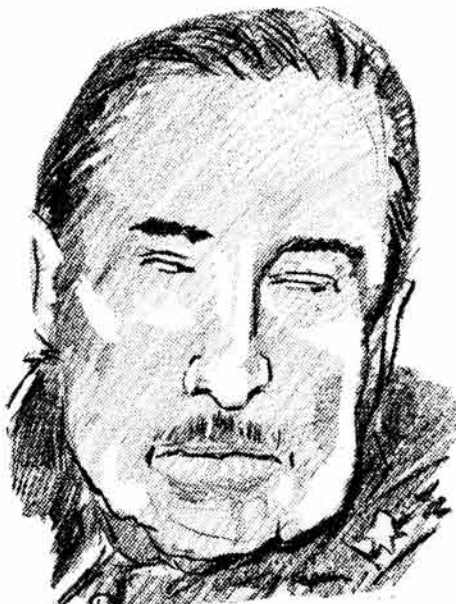
Pinochet's new version sounds much closer to the truth. "In the army high command," he told *Ercilla*, "we analyzed the possibilities on April 13, 1972. And on that day we arrived at the conclusion that there was no constitutional solution to the conflict between the executive and legislative branches."

The real crisis, however, stemmed from the conflict between the demands of the capitalists and the efforts of the Chilean working class to secure the gains expected from Allende's election. As an article by Gerry Foley in the September 11, 1972, *Intercontinental Press** pointed out:

"Under the fire of imperialist reprisals and capitalist economic pressures, the government of Salvador Allende

is facing a serious campaign of sabotage by the local business community as well as attempts to organize reactionary mass campaigns against the regime that could pave the way for a military coup or civil war."

Another article at that time in *Intercontinental Press* pointed to the fatal flaw in Allende's strategy. David Thorstad wrote in the October 30, 1972, issue:



PINOCHET: "Plan Z" was a fraud.

"Allende finds himself in a rather tight bind as a result of his dogged adherence to the norms of bourgeois law. Thus, while on the one hand his government issued an appeal to 'the people' to 'respond with organization, unity, and mobilization to the provocations of the seditious right,' on the other hand it stripped the working class of its right to mobilize by placing the country under a form of martial law. Meanwhile, the right continues to mobilize in open violation of the law, and the popular front government urges the working masses to trust not in their own strength, but in the generals who command the bourgeois armed forces."

Although it is more than likely that plans for a coup began as soon as

Allende's Popular Unity coalition seemed a possible victor in the September 4, 1970, election, Pinochet's new account at least has the merit of admitting that long and careful preparation preceded the take-over. It was simply a matter of biding time until public support for the class-collaborationist Popular Unity regime had been sufficiently eroded by capitalist sabotage of the economy.

Following the secret April 1972 meeting, Pinochet revealed, the army high command met for a second "analysis of possibilities." A third secret meeting was held immediately after the abortive military uprising of June 29, 1973.

From June 29 on, Pinochet said, "the clock of history began to move toward the inexorable moment, toward the morning of September 11, when the country was told that a military junta had been formed and that it was calling for the resignation of President Allende."

From that moment on, he continued, "plans prepared in minute detail became defensive-offensive . . . and they were carried out in an impeccable fashion."

Laying to rest forever the trumped-up "Plan Z," Pinochet told *Ercilla* that the junta's information about a supposed "leftist coup" consisted solely of a "few indications" that Allende's supporters "had arms, that they were getting ready for something. But we didn't know what or when."

While Allende was making speeches praising the military, plans for the coup were being discussed throughout the high command. "I circulated the plans as though they concerned matters of internal security," Pinochet said. "We reached the conclusion that this battle, this war, had to take place here in Santiago."

Pinochet then claimed that there had been no more than 1,600 deaths in the take-over, but he declined to back up this patently false figure by publishing an official list of the dead. Even though he now appears confident enough to lift a corner of the screen of lies covering the coup, he is not yet prepared to boast of the number of workers murdered in the bloody repression that followed. □

God Loses Another Battle

The California Board of Education has voted to replace a reference to the Bible in a science text with an explanation of Darwin's theory of evolution.

* A selection of articles from *Intercontinental Press* tracing the rise and fall of Allende's Popular Unity government has been published under the title *Disaster in Chile: Allende's Strategy and Why It Failed*. Copies may be ordered from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014. (\$2.95 in paperback, \$10.00 cloth.)

U.S. Companies Enthusiastic Over Junta

Last September's military coup in Chile may not have been very popular with Chileans, but U.S. business sees it as an unmixed blessing—and with good reason. The authoritative U.S. business weekly *Barron's* has been particularly enthusiastic.

The January 14 issue of the magazine carried an article by Robert M. Bleiberg entitled "The Junta Has Set Chile on the Road to Recovery"—an analysis so profound that it won the endorsement of Congressman Robert Huber of Michigan, who inserted it in the February 28 *Congressional Record*. Huber explained that the article would help to correct "a great deal of misinformation . . . circulated about recent events in Chile."

Bleiberg's article began with the happy citation of a *Wall Street Journal* report that at the end of December the Junta "bundled off \$19.5 million, mostly in small bills, aboard a commercial airliner to Miami, Fla., to pay the first installment of a U.S. debt."

"Again on January 7," Bleiberg continued, "the *Journal* carried the brief word that the Chilean government had returned to Dow Chemical Co. two polystyrene plants seized by its ousted Marxist predecessor."

Chile under the junta, in Bleiberg's view, is little short of an economic heaven:

"On the economic front . . . there's progress to report up and down the line. As the case of Dow Chemical indicates, much of the property illegally seized [sic; laws passed by the Chilean congress are not valid until ratified by *Barron's*] from Chileans and foreign nationals alike has been returned; tentative overtures, aimed at reaching agreement with Anaconda, Cerro and Kennecott on compensation, are afoot. The new Chilean government has assumed full responsibility for Santiago's staggering foreign debt, and, as the episode of the small bills cited above suggests, has taken the first steps toward restoring its international credit."

The reality has turned out in some cases to be even rosier than Bleiberg

had hoped. On March 13, for example, the *New York Times* reported that the junta and Cerro Corporation had agreed that the company would be paid \$41.8 million in compensation for its property nationalized in 1971. Cerro itself had listed the value of the property as \$35.9 million.

And in the March 16 issue of the liberal weekly *Nation*, Copley News Service correspondent Penny Lernoux noted:

"Some 300 companies taken over by the Allende government are to be returned to their owners, forty of which are U.S. corporations. Dow Chemical Co. has regained control of its \$34 million Petrodow plant, although the junta says it eventually will reduce Dow's participation from 70 to 40 percent. Kennecott and Anaconda were virtually assured of some kind of compensation for their expropriated copper mines during talks in New York with Chile's foreign minister, Admiral Ismael Huerta. Huerta

also held out the possibility of a joint venture to exploit the promising Abra copper deposits near the Chuquicamata mine. Abra contains one of the world's largest copper reserves, capable of producing nearly half of Chile's current output."

Lernoux also noted a fact that helps to explain the junta's ability to make payments on the debt to the United States:

"The prospect of compensation had an almost magical effect on the long-locked vaults of U.S. banks, which promptly agreed to provide a \$100 million credit line to the new government. Such haste may appear unseemly in view of the three-year freeze on any credits to Chile" before Allende was overthrown. Because of Congressional opposition, Lernoux continued, the U.S. government "so far has been able to extend only a \$24 million credit" to the junta.

These sums, of course, will further increase Chile's foreign debt, which was already at a level of \$3,500 million. But for U.S. business and its government, a junta willing to give away the national wealth and to shoot anyone who objects is always one of the best "credit risks" imaginable. □

3,000 March in Toha Funeral

General, Ex-Minister Die in Junta's Prisons

Three thousand people marched in Santiago, Chile, March 17 in the funeral cortege for José Toha, former minister of the interior and minister of defense under the Allende regime.

Toha had been held prisoner by the junta since the September 11 coup; he allegedly committed suicide in his hospital room March 15. The announcement of his death came four days after a report that another imprisoned Allende supporter, General Alberto Bachelet Martínez, had died of a heart attack.

According to the March 19 *Le Monde*, the participants in the Toha funeral march "sang the 'International' and chanted a slogan that had been a rallying cry during the Popular Unity regime: 'The united people will never be conquered.'" The police refused to let the cortege march until

the singing and chanting halted.

Carlos Altamirano, former secretary general of the Chilean Socialist party, has charged that both Toha and Bachelet were murdered by the junta. In a statement printed in the March 20 *Le Monde*, Altamirano declared:

"José Toha is dead—murdered. . . . The criminal junta, which is today trampling Chile under its feet, and which subjected Toha to six months of extreme physical and psychological torture, is now trying to pretend that he committed suicide. . . . They camouflaged the murder of Salvador Allende as a suicide, the murder of the loyal General Bachelet as a heart attack, and the murders of an unknown number of resistance fighters as 'shot while attempting to escape.'"

Bachelet was arrested the day of the

coup and charged with "failure to carry out military duties." According to the March 12 issue of the Mexican daily *Excelsior*, he had been scheduled to stand trial along with some twenty other officers and soldiers charged with the same offense. *Excelsior* reported that his health had greatly de-

teriorated under the harsh conditions of confinement.

Toha had been held for five months at the junta's Dawson Island prison camp and weighed no more than 110 pounds at the time of his death. He had weighed 160 pounds at the time of his arrest. □

India

Food Protests Spread to Bihar State

Protests, demonstrations, and clashes with police similar to those that shook the Indian state of Gujarat for two months, leaving more than eighty persons dead, have also erupted in Bihar, India's poorest state.

Protests began on March 16 with student actions in the northern town of Bettiah and then spread to Patna, the state capital, and other cities throughout Bihar. The students protested against food shortages, high prices, government corruption, unemployment, and a lack of vocational education.

As in Gujarat, the protesters also lashed out at the food hoarders and black marketeers. An editorial in the March 20 *Bombay Times of India* said: "Everyone knows that corruption is rampant in almost every department of the government, that the ministry's [food] procurement has been miserably poor and that unscrupulous elements have been freely exploiting the [food] shortages to make windfall gains."

Federal troops moved into the state and a curfew was imposed on several cities. On March 18 the troops dispersed a student-led demonstration of about 10,000 in Patna, killing some of the participants. After four days of clashes throughout Bihar some estimates put the number of dead at twenty-eight, while student sources put it much higher.

Abdul Ghafoor, the chief minister of Bihar, said on March 20 that he had given the army, the police, and the paramilitary Border Security Force orders to shoot "looters and arsonists" on sight, "because we are trying to save democracy in Bihar." In addition, the federal government in New Delhi sent Home Minister Uma Shankar Dikshit and Defense Minister Jag-

jivan Ram to Patna to head up the efforts to quell the protests.

In response to the brutal attacks on the demonstrators, the students' Joint Action Committee called for a general strike on March 23 to protest the repression. They also called for demonstrations March 21 throughout the state in memory of those killed by the police. But on March 21, troops confined about 2,000 students to their university dormitories in an effort to

prevent further protests.

Besides arresting more than 600 students and other protest leaders, the Bihar government also arrested six right-wing and center opposition members of the state legislature for "conspiring to overthrow the state government and for abetting the spread of violence throughout Bihar."

The unrest in Bihar carried undertones of a struggle between the castes. A report by Lewis M. Simons in the March 22 *Washington Post* noted that Chief Minister Ghafoor is "merely a front" for Gandhi's railway minister, Lalit Narayan Mishra, the nominal head of the Brahmins in Bihar. "In attempting to topple the Ghafoor government," Simons wrote, "the disgruntled middle-level castes are seeking to cut Mishra from his power base."

"What is happening in Uttar Pradesh, in Bihar and in other parts of the country," Simons added, "is that bitter, dissatisfied, hungry, unemployed, frustrated Indians are beginning to realize that they might be able to win in the streets what they cannot gain at the polls." □

Cuba to Buy Locomotives From Canada

Further pressure is being exerted on Washington to end its twelve-year economic blockade of Cuba. MLW-Worthington Ltd. of Montréal announced March 18 that its representative in Havana had signed a long-delayed \$15 million contract to supply the Cuban government with railway locomotives.

The company is more than half owned by Studebaker-Worthington of New Jersey, and the sale had previously been held up by pressure from Washington. U.S. legislation prohibits U.S. companies or their subsidiaries from trading with Cuba, but protests in Canada's Parliament have apparently persuaded the Nixon administration to ignore the sale.

Further trade agreements between Cuba and Canada may be in the offing. A March 18 Canadian Press dispatch reported that Canadian Deputy Trade Minister James Grady and a team of other government of-

ficials arrived in Havana the day the locomotive sale was announced to discuss additional trade. Trade between the two countries totaled \$99 million in 1973, up \$30 million from the year before.

In the United States, Leonard Woodcock, president of the 1.5-million-member United Auto Workers Union, on March 15 called for "amending" the embargo. Commenting on the proposed sale of 44,000 cars and trucks to Havana by the Argentine plants of Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler, Woodcock asked: "If American model cars are going to Cuba anyway, isn't it about time for our Government to amend the embargo so that Cuba can buy motor vehicles produced in this country?"

In addition, the March 18 *New York Times* reported that U.S. companies with large inventories of spare parts for machinery sold to Cuba before the embargo are also seeking to be considered as "exceptions." □

Wilson Trying to Enforce Tory Rent Rise

London

The minority Labour government's March 8 announcement of a nine-month freeze on rents contained one notable exemption. That was the north Derbyshire urban district of Clay Cross.

Clay Cross is the rebel Labour-controlled council that under the Tories flatly refused to collect council rent increases due under the 1972 Housing Finance Act. Despite the rent freeze, the Clay Cross council is being told by the new Labour government to pay the back rents due under the Tory act.

On March 18, a deputation from Clay Cross met with Richard Crosland, the new minister for the environment, to see if they could have his earlier decision reversed. Crosland refused.

"The deputation must have been deeply disappointed," commented the London *Times* local government correspondent, "for it had high hopes that the Labour Government would look more favourably on their position."

Before the election, the former government had attempted to isolate and demoralise the "law-breakers" at Clay Cross, who were engaged in the last of the rent rebellions by Labour-controlled councils, only to find support for Clay Cross growing throughout the labour movement. This was reflected at the annual conference of the Labour party in November, where the leadership were pinned down to a commitment to repeal the Housing Finance Act and to support the Clay Cross council's actions. The new government's decision to force Clay Cross to pay back rents under a Tory act it is pledged to repeal will undoubtedly be seen as an attack on the entire labour movement.

The March 9 *Guardian* quoted David Skinner, a former Labour councillor at Clay Cross, as saying: "I was amazed. Is [Patrick] Skillington [the housing commissioner appointed by the Tories] part of the Labour Government? They haven't heard the last of this.

"We have conference resolutions

backing the stand we took, yet as soon as they get inside the Environment Ministry these people become different animals. We have no alternative but to mobilise support among Labour MPs and the Labour movement generally, because we are not different animals, nor are the new councillors."

The Clay Cross community, 90 per cent working-class, share the experience of a mining past, massive redundancies during the 1960s, and an



WILSON: Wants back rents.

uncertain future. Bad housing and low incomes are what the popular defiance of the housing act is all about.

Labour's attempt to collect the back rents will be made more difficult by the results of two recent local elections in Clay Cross.

One, which took place two days after the general election and before its outcome was known, was to elect a new council for Clay Cross itself. In a 71-per cent poll in which all of the successful Labour candidates pushed

their votes up higher than any candidate in Clay Cross history, the previous eleven councillors were replaced by ten like-minded councillors determined to carry on their policies.

Another election took place on March 16 and brought similar record results for the radical policies. Six of the newly elected councillors were elected to represent Clay Cross on the districtwide council, although the policies of the Clay Cross councillors are supported by a minority on the district council, which is a Labour-controlled body.

Both elections were forced by the Tory government. In January an appeals court disqualified the initial eleven rebel Labour councillors from holding office because of their refusal to collect rent increases. This necessitated new elections, which it was hoped would put an end to the rebellion.

But the opposite occurred. "The election has proved a full vindication of our actions and it has been a smashing victory," said Charles Bunting, one of the disqualified eleven and former chairman of the housing committee. "The people of Clay Cross have spoken yet again, their representatives are back and they are still determined to continue with our policy of fighting rent increases. They are equally prepared to take the consequences of their actions."

The low-rents policy and the refusal to implement the Housing Finance Act is not the only act of defiance by the Clay Cross council.

"Clay Cross council," noted Paul Harrison in the February 14 *New Society*, "has always been a special kind of employer, granting every wage demand in full."

The rebel Labour councillors have always allowed strikers to use council meeting rooms. In the 1972 miners' strike, the council loaned its cooking pots for an emergency canteen for the miners and went around collecting food from local shops, and it used council transport and labour to cut up and distribute logs for firewood.

The Clay Cross council has been very adept at finding loopholes in anti-working-class laws. "It managed to go on giving its 600 primary schoolchildren free milk by paying for it through the council chairman's personal allowance," noted Harrison. "It pays for TV licences for its old

people under an obscure clause of the National Assistance Act, 1948. And it may just have skirted round the Phase Three regulations by disguising the dustmen's pay rise as 'standby' payments, and re-grading all its drivers as 'foremen.' In the case of the Housing Finance Act, it could not find a loophole and so had to defy it outright."

It was all these policies and not just the council's refusal to implement the rent act that led the Tories to seek a showdown in January. And it is the determination of the community to resist anti-working-class policies that the Labour leadership fears most from Clay Cross.

One thing the Labour government has going for it is the fact that the Clay Cross council will last only a

month. It is due to be dissolved as a housing authority under the local-government reorganisation scheme. Responsibility for rent collection will then rest with a new North-East Derbyshire council on which Clay Cross will have only six representatives.

In the meantime, the new council has lost no time acting on its mandate. On March 4, the ten councillors intervened to block the collection of rent books to mark up rent increases. The following day they sent a telegram to Wilson asking that the Tory-appointed housing commissioner be dismissed. They are also pressing forward with many new improvements, including starting a number of new council homes.

What will happen once the reorgani-

sation comes into effect will be complicated by the right-wing policy of the new Labour government. Its insistence that back rents must be collected is matched by its refusal to reverse the ban and lift the heavy surcharge imposed on the eleven rebel councillors. But there is widespread feeling within the labour movement that the main reason the new government was obliged to freeze rents in the first place was the actions at Clay Cross.

The events at Clay Cross stand out in marked contrast to the timid policies of the Labour party national leadership. The Clay Cross council has provided an example for the whole of the labour movement that will not easily be erased by the Labour government. □

But Can He Deliver?

What British Ruling Class Expects From Wilson

London

"Britain faces the most precarious crisis in its peacetime history with the most precarious government it has had for nearly half a century," wrote the March 9 London *Economist*, following the overwhelming rejection of the former Tory government's wage control programme in the February 28 election and the formation, March 4, of a minority Labour government headed by Harold Wilson.

The collapse of public support for the Tories left them with only 38 percent of the vote and five seats less than Labour in the new Parliament. The new Labour government, however, does not have an absolute majority in Parliament, the balance of power being held by 37 representatives of smaller parties.

Wilson's first act as prime minister was to give the go-ahead for a settlement of the four-week-old miners' strike outside the previous government's Phase III wage controls. On March 6 the National Union of Mine-workers (NUM) and the National Coal Board approved wage increases between £6.71 and £8.71, three times as large as the increases of £2.30 to £2.57 allowed by the Tories under Phase III, though still falling short

of the NUM's original demands for wage rises between £8.21 and £12.71.

Why Tories Lost

Tory leader Edward Heath called the election to seek a new mandate for continued confrontation with the unions and backing for his wage control programme, which outlawed pay increases above 7 percent a year. Heath sought an increased parliamentary majority to give his government the authority required for this confrontationist course. He believed he could get it by whipping up anti-union sentiments and appealing to the "silent majority" to stand up against "reds" and "extremists" in the unions, who were allegedly holding the nation to ransom.

The Tories' McCarthyite strategy was spelled out in their election manifesto, published February 11. "The choice before the nation today, as never before," it concluded, "is a clear choice between moderation and extremism. We therefore appeal, at this critical time in our country's affairs, for the support of the great moderate majority of the British people, men and women of all parties and no party, who reject extremism in any

shape or form."

Heath's gamble seriously misfired. George Hutchinson, a columnist for the London *Times*, wrote on March 2 that this failure by Heath to judge correctly the public mood was fatal for the Tories. "We have been told incessantly," Hutchinson complained, "that we are falling into the hands of extremists. . . . It is untrue. The great body of our fellow-countrymen know it to be untrue and find this language offensive. That, perhaps as much as anything, is why the Tory gamble has failed."

Skyrocketing prices, not union militancy, became the object of the electorate's ire. When the election was held, the vast majority went out to vote—in one of the highest votes recorded in recent history—against a government that had eroded their living standards. According to the February 3 London *Observer*, food prices rose by 48.7 percent between June and December 1973. The retail price index shows an annual rate of price inflation of around 15 percent. "For most people their living standards declined by an average 2.8 percent in 1973," charged Labour Member of Parliament Michael Meacher in the January 21 *Times*.

The following facts attest the steady deterioration in the quality of life for the majority of workers in Britain under the Tories: The average person in Britain now eats less meat than in 1953 (the last full year of post-war meat rationing); the British people eat 20 percent more potatoes than the Common Market average; the average family now spends for food less than the current cost of the minimal nutritional needs set by the British Medical Association over 20 years ago.

Declining living standards for the majority of the British people have been sharply contrasted with the profit bonanza of the giant corporations. Six days before the election Imperial Chemical Industries reported their profits before taxes were up by 120 percent to £311 million.

The February 23 *Economist* wrote: "At times this week it almost seemed that Labour might be coasting back to power down a Conservative-erected bankers' ramp. The big banks' big profits have been big election fodder." Lloyds Bank's profits were up 75 percent, National Westminster's were up 56 percent, and Barclays's were up 46 percent.

The biggest rise of all came on polling day when Shell, the Anglo-Dutch oil monopoly, reporting that "prices in many markets responded to the changed supply and demand situation," announced the largest rise in profits ever recorded by a single company in Britain. Shell's annual profits had risen by £449 million to £730 million!

While the Tories' red-scare demagoguery fell on deaf ears, the sharp contrast of government control of wages with the runaway boom in profits and prices lost Heath the election.

Goals of the Ruling Class

Heath's election defeat opens a new period in the class struggle in Britain. It brings to an end the three-and-a-half years of sustained offensive against the rights and living standards of the working class mounted by the Heath government.

The Tories' objective from the moment of their election victory in June 1970 had been to try to reupholster British capitalism in its struggle for markets against its North American, European, and Japanese rivals in a period of mounting interimperialist

competition. The Tories' aim was to modernise Britain's backward economy and make it more competitive.

This bid to reverse British capitalism's historical decline required a frontal assault on the power of the trade unions in order to hold down real wages and boost profits.

At first, Heath hoped to win the cooperation of the trade-union bureaucracy in imposing a "voluntary" programme of wage restraint on the working class. This tactic failed when the top brass of the unions failed to police their rank and file. In 1972 Heath's policy collapsed after the miners went on their first nationwide strike since the general strike of 1926 and won wage increases way outside the government's pay norms.

Heath was forced to turn to statutory wage controls, introducing a complete freeze on wage increases in Phase I of the Tories' so-called "counterinflation" programme in late 1972. This was followed in the early months of 1973 by Phase II, which allowed wage rises of £1 plus 4 percent a year while prices rose much faster.

Phase III became law in November and limited pay increases to seven percent a year, way below current price inflation rates of 15 percent a year.

While interfering directly with the right to free collective bargaining by stipulating legal limits to wage increases, the Tory government also set out to destroy many of the democratic rights won by trade unionists in Britain through years of struggle. In 1972, the Industrial Relations Act became law, placing legal constraints on the unions' right to strike. It set up a National Industrial Relations Court with the power to fine or imprison trade unionists who broke the new stringent antiunion laws.

In an attempt to crack down on the right to picket, the Tories went on to resurrect the long-forgotten Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, which had been lying unused on the statute book since its enactment in 1875, to break a tin miners' strike. Particularly incensed by the success of the militant mass "flying pickets" of the 1972 miners' and building workers' strikes, the Tories arrested twenty-four building workers, the "Shrewsbury 24," under the act and between last December and February imprisoned six of them for "illegal picketing".

All of these moves were designed

to shift the balance of class forces in favour of the ruling class as it prepared to face its rivals on the world capitalist market.

Another component of this strategy was British entry into the Common Market, a step dictated by the fears of British big business that it would be excluded from its increasingly important markets in continental Europe. The price the British working class paid was a further fueling of inflation from the application of the Common Market Common Agricultural Policy.

Despite all these blows against the rights and standard of living of the working class, the Tories were unable to make any headway in ending British capitalism's economic difficulties. Though profits soared, the Tories failed to spur investment and the modernisation of British industry. British capitalists continued to meet still rougher competition in the world market, a fact reflected by steadily worsening balance-of-trade deficits.

In fact, the average monthly trade deficit rose throughout 1973, from £126 million in the first quarter, to £142 million in the second, to £192 million in the third and £321 million in the fourth. Three days before the election a January trade deficit of £383 million was announced, the largest monthly deficit ever recorded, and one that points toward an annual deficit of over £4,000 millions.

Efforts Toward a Coalition

These economic reverses made the Tories still more determined to pursue their offensive against the workers and led to speculation that after a Tory victory in the election Heath would scrap Phase III in favour of a total wage freeze in Phase IV. This is what made the miners' challenge to Phase III such a threat to Heath's strategy. A victory by the miners could open the floodgates to a broader working-class assault on the pay laws and leave his strategy in ruins. Heath aimed to stop the miners as a warning to the working class that there could be no exceptions to the "law."

The Tories' hard-nosed line took shape November 12, one day after the NUM's 270,000 members began a ban on overtime working. Heath declared a state of emergency. After failing to convince the miners to call off their overtime ban, the Tories declared on December 13 that they

would place two-thirds of British industry on a three-day week, effectively forcing a national lockout on the 16 million workers who suffered part-time working and wage cuts. Heath hoped that the three-day week, combined with a big patriotic slander campaign against the miners, would isolate the miners and force them to settle within Phase III.

But the miners' mood hardened, and on February 4 the national executive of the NUM called an all-out strike after a nationwide ballot of miners had revealed an overwhelming majority of 81 percent in favour of striking. Heath then had no choice but to call an election. As Nora Beloff put it in the March 3 *Observer*: "until the very last moment, Mr Heath had hoped he could settle the dispute, but once he realised the miners were determined to settle only outside the terms of Stage Three, he and his colleagues agreed he had no alternative but to go back to the country."

Heath gambled that with a much increased parliamentary majority his government would have the authority to plow ahead with his antiunion strategy. But he lost the gamble.

The ruling class has now been forced to rethink its entire strategy. Its hopes are now that the Labour government, trading on its ties to the trade-union movement, will be able to sweet-talk the unions into accepting wage controls and so succeed where Heath failed. But the path ahead is strewn with dangers for the capitalist class, which remembers well how Wilson's previous government in 1964-1970 was forced by union pressures to withdraw its antiunion "In Place of Strife" programme, a forerunner of the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. The February 23 *Economist* reported that "there is now a major suspension of belief about Mr Wilson's capability to take any line that is unpopular with his left-wing paymasters."

Skepticism as to the ability of a Labour government to sell wage controls to the unions underlay Heath's desperate attempt to hang on to office for three days after his failure to win a new mandate. The Tory leader turned to Jeremy Thorpe's Liberal party, Britain's second major capitalist party, which won fourteen seats in the election. Heath hoped that a coalition government with the Liberals, though it would still be eight seats short of an absolute majority,

would be able to survive with backing from other minority parties.

Heath reasoned that the 18 million votes cast for the two capitalist parties against Labour's 12 million provided a clear mandate for an "antisocialist" government. "In two major respects," he wrote to Thorpe in a letter released March 4, "the policies of our two parties are both alike, and both different from those of the Labour Party.

"Both of us are committed, in present circumstances, to policies for countering inflation which deal with pay as well as with prices, with statutory backing.

"And both of us are committed to British membership of the European Community."

But the deal was impossible to patch together. The six million votes cast for the Liberals were anti-Tory votes and big electoral dangers would face the Liberal party if it were seen to be keeping the discredited Heath government in power. "It will be the kiss of death," a Liberal official told James Margach in the March 3 *Sunday Times*. "We'll be tarred as the Tories' tame poodles at the next election, which may come very shortly."

The Liberal party, while favouring statutory wage controls, disapproved of the Tories' confrontationalist style, which they felt was only poisoning industrial relations and contributing to the radicalisation. In particular they called for the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act. This approach had already been voiced before the election by Campbell Adamson, the director-general of the Confederation of British Industry. Addressing the Industrial Society on February 26, he called on the government to repeal the Industrial Relations Act, which, he said, had sullied every relationship between unions and employers.

Ruling-class divisions were also evident in the decision of Tory ex-minister Enoch Powell to break ranks and vote Labour in opposition to the Common Market and in the defeat of all pro-Tory candidates in Ulster, where eleven out of twelve seats were won by the United Ulster Unionists, an extreme right-wing bloc headed by William Craig and Ian Paisley on a programme of opposition to the Tories' Sunningdale agreement establishing a Council of Ireland.

Heath's attempt to cling to power after February 28 was doomed to failure. The bulk of the ruling class

knew that his government now lacked the authority or credibility to impose its antiunion policies with any success. The Liberals refused Heath's offer of a coalition government and proposed a "government of national unity" comprising the Labour, Conservative and Liberal parties.

Opposition within the Labour party to participation in a coalition government with the two capitalist parties, however, ruled out any possibility of such a "grand alliance" being formed. On March 4 Heath had no option but to quit and allow Wilson to form a minority Labour government.

The ruling class felt that this was the only course now open to them. On March 2 the *Economist* wrote: "Britain should be better governed by a minority Labour cabinet that would be told by centre-seeking Liberals to curb its own natural predilections. . . . A minority Wilson administration could also have on its side a trade-union movement which felt some obligation to try to keep a weak government in office, instead of to make a last heave to get a weak Tory government out."

And so the Labour party came to form a government without an overall parliamentary majority, depending for survival on the votes of four small parties—the Liberals, the Scottish National party (SNP), the United Ulster Unionists and the Welsh Nationalists of Plaid Cymru—and the acquiescence of the Tories.

Labour's Failures

The Labour party should have been able to win a landslide victory in the election if it had been armed with a fighting socialist programme. With the bankruptcy of the Tories' government fully exposed and the widespread anger at Heath's attacks on the standard of living of the mass of workers, the Labour party could have swept the board. But Labour's total vote was the smallest recorded by the party since the general election of 1935 and its share of the poll was the smallest since 1931.

In the big industrial areas the majority of class-conscious workers voted Labour but with deep cynicism about the leadership and programme of the party and with memories of the abject failure of Wilson's previous government. The lack of a serious alternative programme from the Labour leader-

ship induced over 19 percent of the electorate, particularly sections of the working class with a weaker tradition of class loyalty to the Labour party, to vote Liberal as an alternative to the Tories.

The failure of the Labour leaders to offer a clear socialist alternative was particularly shown in Scotland, where the strength of nationalist feeling, fueled by recent discoveries of rich oil deposits in the Scottish North Sea that indicate Scotland's economic potential, was indicated by a 22 percent vote for the SNP. Neal Ascherson noted in the February 24 *Observer* that "the SNP is a party led for 40 years by middle class professional people, but it is now acquiring rapidly growing working class support."

The Labour leadership offered no solutions to the problems facing working people. Only days before the election, Denis Healey, now Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, offered the working class a regime of economic austerity under Labour to put British industry back into business in the world market.

This unattractive prospect was coupled with a commitment to a "voluntary" incomes policy — with statutory powers lying in reserve if needed — based on an acceptance of the Tory argument that workers' wage rises are the cause of inflation.

On February 17 Wilson unveiled a "new social contract" between the Labour party leadership and the top union bosses on the general council of the Trades Union Congress. The agreement pledged the union leaders to enforce wage restraints on their rank and file. Wilson argued that the Labour party, with its old links to the unions, would be better at controlling wages than the Tories: "We know the trade unions, at national level, in the individual districts and workshops. We can talk with them and work with them. We can get their cooperation."

The Labour leadership made no effort during their campaign to support the striking miners. To the contrary, they tried — unsuccessfully — to persuade the miners to call off their strike. Worst of all, they joined the Tories' red-baiting attacks on the miners, accusing communists of fomenting industrial disorder.

In a similar vein, Wilson refused to defend the jailed Shrewsbury pickets or to call for the repeal of the Con-

spiracy and Protection of Property Act under which they had been sentenced. The February 23 *Times* reported a rally addressed by Wilson in Bristol, where "the Labour leader was repeatedly heckled by a section of the 1,500 strong audience" with "demands 'to talk more like a socialist' and for the 'freedom of the Shrewsbury three.'"

The Labour leaders also stood by their old line of backing the Tories' military occupation of Northern Ire-



POWELL: Tory racist breaks ranks over question of Common Market.

land. They refused to recognise the right of the Irish people to determine their own future without the interference of British troops and to call for an end to internment.

The Communist party, too, failed to launch a vigorous socialist election campaign, receiving less than 0.1 percent of the vote despite the rise of the radicalisation in the unions since 1970. The CP was unable to advance a clear socialist alternative because of its alliance with the Labour party and trade-union bureaucracy "left wing." This alliance was strikingly revealed at a forty-fourth birthday rally for the Communist party's daily *Morning Star* on March 3, where the keynote speakers, besides CP General Secretary John Gollan, were top union "left winger" Hugh Scanlon, president of

the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and a strong supporter of the "social contract"; and Judith Hart, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour party and now minister for overseas development in Wilson's government.

'Coats Off' for Capitalism

"Mr Wilson's government will not be hell-bent on socialism or anything of the kind," wrote Peter Jankins in the March 6 *Guardian*. To win ruling-class backing for his government, Wilson has agreed to drop the few pieces of radical window-dressing that adorned Labour's preelection programme: the nationalisation of North Sea Oil and the renegotiation of the terms of British entry into the Common Market. With these compromises in mind, the March 9 *Economist* considered that "Mr Wilson does not need to mind how left wing his government looks provided the left-wingers in it acquiesce in dropping most of Labour's left-wing policies."

The ruling class will now give Wilson all possible help in making the "social contract" a reality. "Labour has no mandate, but let it get on with the job," editorialised the *Guardian* on March 5. "Mr Wilson's cabinet must be given a fair chance," wrote George Hutchinson in the March 9 *Times*. He continued: "It would be a narrow, unworthy spirit—a dangerous one, too—that withheld good will from Mr Wilson in the extremity that has called him to office."

Wilson's job was spelled out by an editorial in the March 8 *Guardian*: "The nation's living standards are likely to be lower next winter than they have been in this one. This is the prospect the Government will have to make acceptable if it wants to survive."

Will the social contract work? The March 7 headline of the *Guardian* reported "TUC doves pledge a curb on pay claims." The TUC had just issued a statement of support for the new government indicating that it would be "possible to influence the size of claims and settlements achieved."

Wilson himself struck an appropriate patriotic note after visiting the queen on March 4 to be appointed prime minister. "We have a job to do. We can only do that as one people, and I am going right in to start that job

now." On March 8 he coined the phrase "Coats off for Britain" in a speech in which he said that "as a united people, there is nothing we cannot do." Union "left-winger" Jack Jones, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, not to be outdone, coined a slogan of his own: "Cooperation in moderation."

To sell wage restraint to the unions Wilson has agreed to repeal the Industrial Relations Act, raise pensions to £10 a week for single persons and £16 for married couples, and control food prices.

Wilson also hopes to trade off the weakness of his minority government and appeal to trade unionists not to rock the boat. As Ronald Butt put it in the March 10 *Sunday Times*: "The precariousness of the new prime minister's position in parliament is a great help to him in keeping his own extremists at bay."

A masterstroke in Wilson's bid to sell the social contract to the unions was his appointment on March 5 of Michael Foot, leader of the *Tribune* "left" in the party, as secretary of state for employment. "Mr Wilson's clear intention," wrote the *Times* on March 6, "is to give him scope to influence the left-wing leaders of some of the largest trade unions. . . . Mr Foot will carry the responsibility for making Labour's 'social contract' a substantial reality."

The March 9 *Economist* also approved the appointment. "Mr Wilson's hope must be that Mr Foot, as a good socialist fundamentalist, will be able to persuade the unions to pretend there is a binding social contract with the Labour government."

This is not the first time that Wilson has used Foot's left-wing image to sell right-wing policies to the Labour movement. At the party conference in Blackpool last October, Foot was given the job of defending the leadership's opposition to a radical motion calling for outright rejection of the Common Market, and he argued vehemently in defence of the right of the parliamentary leadership of the party to flout party conference decisions.

Will the 'Contract' Work?

It will be no easy task for Foot to make the social contract stick. The March 9 *Economist* considers that the honeymoon between the Labour government and the unions may be seri-

ously threatened by next autumn. "By that time, the value of real wages could have begun to fall. The likely rate of price inflation is still running at around 15 percent, and the government will be doing well if, by subsidies and other sleight of hand, it keeps the apparent rate of increase to 10 percent." The paper warns: "The unions may not be as conciliatory to Mr Wilson as they are now."

The refusal of the miners to call off their strike during the election period, following appeals by Wilson, is a danger signal to the ruling class that the Labour government may be unable to discipline the working-class movement.

The defeat of the Tories and their statutory incomes policy has also rekindled the confidence and expectations of the working class, making it harder for the new government to satisfy its supporters. The ability of the miners to win wage increases outside Phase III after a militant campaign in defiance of the government's pay laws must, according to Paul Routledge in the March 8 *Times*, "inevitably arouse higher expectations among other groups of workers."

Wilson's biggest immediate test will come from Britain's 2 million engineers, who have been negotiating with the Engineering Employers Federation for an increase in basic rates of £10 a week. The maximum offered under Phase III was £2.00 to £2.50. Prior to the election, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions decided to launch an overtime ban in

pursuit of their claim after the end of the three-day week. It remains to be seen whether engineering workers will force their union leaders to break with the social contract and begin their campaign of industrial action now that the three-day week has been lifted.

Wilson is also faced with unresolved pay negotiations involving 250,000 railway workers, 1 million building workers, 300,000 local government workers, as well as Ford workers, seamen, shipbuilders, government scientists, and garage workers.

Perhaps Wilson's biggest headache will come, ironically, from the miners. Though the miners voted overwhelmingly to accept the settlement decided by the NUM leaders and the National Coal Board on March 6, they are not satisfied.

"What everybody should remember," explained Arthur Scargill, president of the Yorkshire NUM, after the settlement, "is that this claim was first formulated fifteen months ago. It was one that we considered the miners needed at the time. Since then prices have rocketed, so if anything, what we now have is well out of date."

Less than a week after the settlement of the strike, the Scottish and Yorkshire areas of the NUM adopted resolutions, which will go before the union's annual conference this summer, that demanded further wage increases of up to £20 on miners' basic rates from November 1. By late summer the Labour leaders' ability to impose wage restraint on the working class should put to a severe test. □

Interview With a Scottish Miner

British Workers and the Labour Party

[The following interview was obtained by Frank Lovell at the end of February, shortly before the British elections and while the miners' strike was still in progress. The person interviewed is a young radical miner who works in the Comrie Colliery in Fife, Scotland. The Scottish miners have been known as one of the most militant sectors of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).]

* * *

Question. Miners I have talked with say the present strike is a direct outgrowth of

the 1972 strike. In your opinion, is this the case?

Answer. Yes. There was a reasonable pay rise in 1972, but it did not reach a level required to maintain a decent standard of living. The chief gain of the miners was the confidence instilled in them by being the only union to have taken on the government and scored a victory. So the present miners strike is an outcome primarily of the confidence gained in the 1972 strike in a situation of a further deterioration in their standard of living.

Q. What are the central issues at stake in the election?

A. The state of the national economy is important for the capitalist class. If they cannot maintain a reasonable rate of profit, then they have to clamp down on the working class. The Tories recognized in a situation of a real decline of profitability in British capitalism that the miners would have spearheaded a drive by the whole working-class movement in an offensive against the Tory pay laws.

Q. Why have NUM officials concentrated their demands upon "pay relativities"?

A. The officials saw the "relativity agreements" as an argument for higher wages.

The miners deserve satisfaction in their wage demands, not because their employment is dangerous—the same could be said for many other occupations—but because they, like all other sections of the working class, need a real rise in their wages to maintain a decent standard of living.

The union leaders, in an effort to avoid taking on the Tory government, realise the acceptability of relativity agreements which do not challenge Phase III.

Q. Why did the railroad workers accept a settlement within the Phase III formula?

A. The rail unions have never had the traditional militancy of the miners. Because of this traditional militancy, stretching back over a long period of working-class struggle and which is reflected in the influence of the Communist party, the miners' leadership would have found it very much more difficult to restrain unofficial action by the rank-and-file miners.

Q. What is likely to come from arbitration of disputed issues in the rail industry?

A. It is not going to get the rail workers anywhere. In 1971 a postmen's strike was settled by an arbitration agreement which was acceptable to both the trade-union bureaucracy and the Tory government, but it was to the disadvantage of the postmen.

Q. What is Wilson's scheme to eliminate strikes? Do you think a no-strike policy will be imposed by the government if Wilson wins the election?

A. His scheme is set out in a new "social contract" which is supposed to bring about a reconciliation between the workers and the bosses in the form of a voluntary incomes policy.

There will not be a direct no-strike policy

because a Wilson government would lose credibility by imposing such drastic legislation in a period when the working class were looking for a reversal of their fortunes through a Labour government. He would come into conflict with the leadership of the Trades Union Congress, who have been forced by the struggle of the working class to give no guarantees about [concessions in regard to] trade unionists' right to strike.

Q. Can the union movement influence Labour party policy?

A. Yes. Because the Labour party was won through the struggle of, and is based on, the trade unions the struggle of workers in trade unions for their interests has an impact on the policies of the Labour party.

However, Labour party conference decisions are not binding on Labour party members of Parliament or Labour party governments. Also, because both the Labour party and the trade unions have reformist leaderships who exercise bureaucratic control, the influence that most workers have on Labour party policy is kept within narrowly defined limits.

Q. How can a union go about changing the policy of the party?

A. Labour party policy is decided by national conferences. The resolutions that are discussed at conference come directly from union conferences, Trades Union Congress conferences, and local constituency Labour parties.

Q. What kind of political actions can the unions engage in through the Labour party?

A. As part of the Tory attack on working-class living standards, they brought in the Housing Finance Act, which has increased greatly the rents of public and privately-owned housing. If we are to defeat this attack, the unity of trade unionists with all sections of the community who are prepared to fight the rent rises—such as tenants associations, students, local Labour party committees, and old-age pensioners—is necessary.

The Labour party's policy on the act was one of verbal opposition. Labour control over 300 local council authorities, which is over half the total number in Britain. Had the Labour party refused to implement the act, it would have been inoperative. However, with only a few exceptions the local Labour party councillors gave in to the Tories. A major part of the fight against the Tories will be the exposure and replacement of the sellout leaders of the Labour party.

Q. Do you think the Labour party will—

or should—select working men and women as its candidates?

A. It does select workers as candidates. However, they are usually trade-union functionaries. For a trade unionist to become eligible for selection, the person has to be a card-carrying member of the Labour party. Members of some left-wing organizations, such as the Communist party, are proscribed and therefore, in order to enhance the democratic election of working-class candidates, there should be a ban on all proscriptions.

Q. What can the unions do to fight unemployment?

A. As soon as Heath brought in the three-day week, the union leaders should have made it known to Heath that the trade-union movement was not going to accept this cut in wages. There was a need for a fight around the demand for "five days pay for three days work," and where redundancy or layoffs are threatened, we should fight for a reduction in hours to keep all in employment and, of course, with no cut in pay.

Q. Can the unions do anything to bring prices down?

A. Yes, but the Labour party's policy of food-price subsidies is not the answer. The working class ends up footing the bill for these subsidies through increased taxes. This is equal to the workers paying increased prices, while the capitalists benefit because production costs are reduced. I would favor setting up price committees incorporating trade unionists, housewives, students, old-age pensioners, and other sectors of the population who are willing to campaign for holding down prices.

There exist all over Britain Co-operative Societies, which are very large stores dealing with every type of commodity that is necessary for the working class. These stores were formed through a struggle of the labour movement, and are tied very closely to the Labour party; in fact, they are run by Labour party functionaries. They are supposed to be run as a cheaper alternative than an ordinary capitalist chain store. The plain fact of the matter is that they are not. The workers who are members are paid a small dividend but are never given any real degree of control over the running of the Co-op. The unions should advocate a campaign against the present running of the Societies, a campaign which would include the use of boycott, in order to bring down prices to a level which the working class could afford, gradually broadening the campaign to demand the nationalisation of the basic food industry under workers control. □

Hundreds of Arrests Kept Secret in Greece

[The following article is from the March 9 issue of the liberal Amsterdam weekly *Vrij Nederland*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

"I know that you don't want us. But we don't care what you think. Anyone who dares try something against us is going to disappear. If need be, I'll have you all rounded up by merchant-marine cadets." That is a literal translation of what Brigadier General Ioannidis told the officers of Greece's most important naval unit, the Aegean Sea Fleet.

Ioannidis made the same sort of speech in other places on his tour of nearly all the important military units in southern Greece. (In northern Greece, which was also included in his tour plans, the military governor would not give him permission to speak. Ioannidis apparently does not belong to the clique that has taken over that region.)

The series of speeches that Ioannidis is giving now is one of the junta's most important activities. Social and economic chaos is being allowed to run its course. The regime is unable to do anything about it. To quote Ioannidis: "I know the present regime is incompetent. But the army can send one or any number of governments packing. The problem is to find a good one."

So far, besides exposing a few scandals that happened under Papadopoulos, the junta has done nothing to maintain itself but make the kind of threatening speeches described above and try to whip up a new wave of anti-Communism. By this method, it has been trying to win some sort of rear guard of society to support it.

In his time, Papadopoulos started off with a story that the patriotic colonels had thwarted a Communist revolution by their staunch and forceful action. Truckloads of documents and weapons were supposed to have been found. The Greek people were never able to see this convincing evidence. The only thing that was put on the

table was a pathetic little bundle of papers.

How could anyone have the nerve to try to repeat an episode that fell so flat? For Gizikis, it was not so much a matter of nerve as necessity. He had to do this. It was his only recourse. So, according to D. Karakostas, the minister of education, he discovered a Communist "espionage network" that had been "operating among students and young workers."

Although 280 members of various resistance organizations were arrested in Athens, 100 in Salonika, 40 in Patras, and 60 in Crete, the regime has announced only thirty-five arrests. These thirty-five, on whom all the spotlights have been focused, were supposed to have formed the espionage network. They all belong to the pro-Moscow Communist party. The group includes members of the Politbureau, such as A. Ambatielos (sixty years of age), N. Kaludis (fifty-seven), and M. Yanu (fifty-eight). As evidence of their espionage activity, an illegal printshop has been mentioned, as well as a notebook on which the organization's expenses were listed.

Karakostas translated these sums into dollars (\$37,000) and not rubles, as has been customary since the civil war in referring to the funds of arrested Communists. Dollars, it seems, are now more suspect in Greece.

This ferreting out of a Communist resistance organization has been given a great play in the press—on the government's orders, naturally. The papers are not being censored; they are being written by the government line by line.

There has not been a word about the other persons arrested. And these include important figures, such as T. Dimu, the secretary of the Patriotiko Antidictatoriko Metopo [PAM—Patriotic Antidictatorial Front]; the leader of the Rigas Ferraios student resistance organization, M. Yeraldi; and Takis Benas, a former member of parliament and a cadre of the other, independent Communist party (Bureau of the Interior).

The model comes straight out of the well-known fascist factory. The aim

is to set up a scapegoat that, in this case, will have to take the blame for the more than 120 deaths that occurred during the November uprising. That some of those who died were members of the Greek Communist party (Exterior) has been sloughed over.

It remains for the regime to show what there is to spy on among the students and young workers. Gizikis's courts may be able to fabricate a case, which can mean death for those involved. But the effect on most Greeks will be the opposite of what the government wants. They are getting very sick of fairy tales. One of the latest pearls they have been offered was the government statement that the discovery of oil near the island of Thassos in the northern Aegean Sea promised a rosy future for Greece. And for this the government was to be thanked. That is, if there had been no coup, the oil wouldn't have been in the ground.

So, now the oil has been found, but whether the Greek people get much benefit from it under the present government is, to say the least, quite doubtful. As the director of the Oceanic Oil Company, the American Bradley, said: "We have spent \$22 million so far in drilling and we have to get this operation in the black as soon as possible." The contract that Oceanic has signed with the Greek government provides all the conditions for this. Greece gets 15 percent of the royalties but has to buy 50 percent of the oil that Oceanic produces at the price it sets. Behind Oceanic stands American and West German capital. The American share, reportedly, is dominated by Tom Papas, who, like Agnew, is a Greek-American and whose donation of \$500,000 made him the unchallenged No. 1 contributor to Nixon's campaign.

Is it any wonder that the February 15 *Washington Post* concluded that it was thanks to the seven-year military dictatorship that 80% of the roughly 100,000 Greek students are strongly left-oriented? Moreover, the American congressman [Donald] Fraser, who visited Greece not long ago on a junket, wrote in his official report: "After having a great many conversations, I cannot imagine any way in which the present government can find its way out of the grave economic and political crisis. And I think they don't know any way either." □

Report Arrests in Piraeus, Salonika

The Gizikis military dictatorship announced March 13 that it had arrested forty-two persons belonging to "Communist networks" in Piraeus and Salonika.

According to the March 15 *Le Monde*, the fifteen arrested in Piraeus "were allegedly linked to a Trotskyist group." The March 15 issue of *Workers Press*, newspaper of the Workers Revolutionary party in Britain, re-

ported that the regime claimed that five of the fifteen were leading members of the Workers International League, Greek followers of the Healyite "International Committee."

The twenty-seven arrested in Salonika were reported to be members of the Communist Youth of Greece and the Antidictatorial Union of Greek Students. □

During Protests Against Execution of Puig

Provocateurs Disrupt March in Paris

Demonstrators took to the streets in cities throughout France on March 9 to protest the brutal murder of Salvador Puig Antich by the Franco dictatorship. The young Catalan anarchist militant, convicted by a military tribunal on charges of killing a policeman, was executed by garroting on March 2, despite widespread appeals for clemency and demonstrations in his support throughout Europe.

The largest protest demonstration was in Paris, where several thousand persons, responding to a call from about a dozen far-left organizations, marched through the streets chanting slogans denouncing the assassination and calling for an end to the Pompidou government's complicity with the dictatorship in Spain.

The demonstrators also called for solidarity with two other militants of the Iberian Liberation Movement, to which Puig Antich belonged. José Luis Pons Llobet and Oriol Sole Sugranyes are awaiting trial and similarly risk the death penalty.

The demonstration was marked by several incidents that point to the presence of provocateurs. As the march was forming up at the Place d'Estienne-d'Orves, the March 12 issue of *Le Monde* reported, "the first clashes broke out between the demonstration's marshaling squad and a group of young persons who wrote on the walls a slogan against 'leftist melodramatizing' and saluted the march Hitler-style. On Lafayette Street the window

of a gun shop was broken, and two rifles taken. Following a quick scuffle, the demonstrators' marshals were able to retrieve one of the arms and dismantle it before throwing it in the gutter.

"At the Place de Stalingrad, the leaders of the participating organizations ordered the demonstration to disperse. However, about two hundred young persons, most of whom had not been part of the march, continued marching along the Avenue Jean-Jaurès, the only street left open by the police deployment.

"A little later, the explosion of a Molotov cocktail started a fire in a branch of the Banque Nationale de Paris at 83 Avenue Jean-Jaurès, and the window of a branch of the Société Générale, on Avenue Laumière, was broken. The Pyrénées subway station was damaged, and 1,000 francs were stolen from the cash drawer of a pharmacy on Avenue Simon-Bolivar. The demonstrators then attacked the municipal offices of the nineteenth arrondissement, in Place Armand-Carrel, but were dispersed by a police charge."

Later, in the Latin Quarter, a group of about thirty youths was reported to have thrown paving stones through the windows of several banks, and a police car was attacked near the Montparnasse railway station.

Three persons were arrested and charged with carrying arms or explosive materials.

In a press release published in the March 12 *Le Monde*, the French

Trotskyist weekly *Rouge* attributed these incidents to "several dozen provocateurs, some of them from the ranks of the far right and the troubled waters of the regime," who were trying to "bring about the intervention of the police who were massively concentrated in the area." *Rouge* noted that the provocateurs had been seen "stepping out of the ranks of the CRS [Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité—the elite anti-riot police] who were calmly accompanying them. . . ."

"The regime's game is obvious. After the all-too-crude Saturday night provocations in the Latin Quarter, it is trying systematically to bring into play varied auxiliary methods (parallel bands, even plainclothesmen), in accordance with the strategy of tension perfected by the Italian bourgeoisie. These several dozen provocateurs would be well advised to know that the revolutionary militants won't let them do their business freely, any more than we did in the demonstration of March 9. . . ."

Despite the fact that the violent incidents on March 9 clearly had nothing to do with the organizations sponsoring the demonstration—on the contrary, their marshals had tried to prevent such provocations—they were grist for the mill of the French capitalist press, which has mounted a steadily escalating campaign aimed at blaming the far-left organizations for street violence. The recent recurrence of mass demonstrations by high-school youths protesting the government's "educational reform" has provoked uneasy memories of May 1968 among the French bourgeoisie. Some elements apparently hope that a few broken windows can be utilized to stir up support for increased repression of left-wing organizations and popular protest movements.

Noting that this was the third successive Saturday in Paris when the cops had been involved in clashes with youthful demonstrators, the Gaullist daily *La Nation* cynically placed responsibility on the youths: "There will be other 'hot Saturdays,' probably. We are already promised 'hot Thursdays.' But those are reserved for the high-schoolers. . . ."

"The main thing is to know if the organizers of these Thursdays and Saturdays—they're the same people—will succeed in catching on with public opinion. They are looking for the right occasion. They are playing

with matches. They're hoping they can start a fire . . ."

Another right-wing daily, *Le Parisien Libéré*, complained of "the unlimited indulgence of the public officials, of university authorities who tolerate the organization of violence in places of higher learning under the protection of the police, of magistrates who are making criminals out to be 'victims of society.'"

Even the liberal daily *Libération* chimed in: "A demonstration called by far-left organizations: at the end it is outflanked by several hundred persons who refuse to disperse; bank windows are broken, an arms shop and a pharmacy are looted.

"Since May '68 this scenario has been enacted dozens of times. Usually it was the CGT [General Confederation of Labor, the Stalinist-led trade-union federation] and the PCF [French Communist party] that were outflanked. Today it is the turn of the leftist organizations.

"What is it? A radicalization on the far left? Fascist or police provocation? . . .

"Things are not so simple."

Libération called for an investigation into the events surrounding the March 9 demonstration; but, without awaiting its results, it published several "letters" in its columns attacking the organizers of the demonstration from different standpoints. One, signed "an uncontrollable element," defended the actions against banks and stores, and violently attacked "the little leftist cops and marshals of *Rouge* who took it on themselves—by what divine right no one knows—to police the 'demo,' then went after individuals who had escaped their control."

Four of the organizations that had sponsored the demonstration against the legal murder of Puig Antich issued a joint statement on March 11 replying to these attacks. "The events that occurred Saturday . . . are the work of provocateurs manipulated by the regime, which is trying to use such incidents as a smokescreen to cover up the present struggles of workers and youth," stated the Parti Socialiste Unifié (Unified Socialist Party), *Rouge*, Révolution!, and the OCI/AJS (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste/Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme).

"The increase in this kind of incident,

practiced regularly for a month, and particularly every Saturday night in the Latin Quarter, is in keeping with a general policy already tried out by the Italian bourgeoisie and now known by the name 'strategy of tension.'

"These provocations must not be allowed to obscure the fact of the assassination of Puig Antich and the complicity of Pompidou with Franco's hangmen, or the threat of death that hangs over Llobet and Sugranyes."

For its part, the Anarchist Federation issued a statement denying charges in newspapers like *Le Monde* that those who had broken windows and looted stores were "anarchists." The statement likewise denounced "provocateurs and manipulated elements who are remote-controlled by the police, by neofascists, or by their own weaknesses."

The March 15 issue of *Rouge* noted that the police, "who normally have

the reflexes of a bull when they see red," had failed to intervene against the looting and window-smashing of these supposed "leftists."

Referring to the escalating campaign of press attacks against the far left, in which the leftists are blamed for the attacks the police have made on them, the Trotskyist newspaper commented:

"Some weeks ago, *Rouge* evoked the possibility of a strategy of tension in France. A section of the bourgeoisie is using the SACs [Service d'Action Civique, a far-right semiofficial "parallel police" organization] and the fascists in order to drown the rise of workers' struggles and demonstrations in support of Chile and Spain in window-breaking and looting, with the aid of crude and sensational news coverage in which facts are distorted at will. . . .

"With the incidents on Saturday (March 9), this antileftist campaign jumped another notch." □

Protesting Repression by French Government

Basque Refugees End Hunger Strike

Two groups of Basque political refugees from Spain ended their hunger strike in Bayonne, France, on March 15. Up to sixty persons had participated in the hunger strike, forty-three of them since early January. Refusing all food and medical care, they were protesting the French government's recent measures prohibiting prominent members of the Basque liberation movement from residing in areas of the country bordering Spain.

The residence bans were part of an increasing campaign of repression against Basques by the Pompidou regime since the December 20 assassination of Spanish Premier Carrero Blanco. On December 30, two days after the Basque nationalist organization ETA-V (Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna—Basque Nation and Freedom [Fifth Congress]) held a clandestine press conference in the south of France and claimed responsibility for the assassination, the French government ordered a series of expulsions and house arrests of leading Basque refugees in France. According to the

March 17-18 *Le Monde*, they were charged with having violated requirements of political neutrality toward their country of origin while on French territory.

When other Basque refugees in France began a hunger strike to protest these restrictions, they too were banned from living in the Pyrénées-Atlantique department, which borders on the Spanish Basque country.

Fifteen of the hunger strikers were hospitalized in early March. Although in serious condition, they refused all medical care as well as food.

Their protest received widespread support from organizations representing national minorities in France, and from local students and elected officials in the region. A delegation of mayors from towns throughout Labourd, one of the three French Basque provinces, urged the French government to rescind the residence bans.

In mid-March the government finally responded by lifting the residence restrictions on those who had

staged the hunger strike in solidarity with the original victims of the December 30 measures. When informed of this retreat, all the hunger strikers ended their protest. But the restrictions remain on leading Basque personalities living in France. Their appeal against the restrictions is presently before the Conseil d'Etat.

Moreover, the Pompidou government continues to collaborate with the Spanish dictatorship in rounding up Basque exiles and turning them over to Franco's jailers and executioners. And Enbata, an organization that demands national independence for citizens of the three Basque provinces in

France, was among the four autonomist movements banned by the French government on January 30.

"After many ups and downs, particularly the banning of the Enbata autonomist movement, calm has returned to Bayonne, for the first time since last December 20," wrote *Le Monde* correspondent Christian Bombédiac, in the March 17-18 issue of the Paris daily, reporting the end of the Basque refugees' hunger strike. "But it would be wrong to conclude from this that the status of the Basque refugees has been definitively resolved." □

Marcellin Submits His Brief

Urge Speedy Hearing of Appeal Against Ban on Ligue Communiste

[The following statement on the struggle against the ban on the Ligue Communiste was published in the March 9 issue of *Rouge*, the French Trotskyist newsweekly.

[The Ligue, former French section of the Fourth International, was banned by the Pompidou government June 28, 1973, on the recommendation of then Minister of the Interior Raymond Marcellin. The butt of increasing criticism for his zealotry in his job as France's chief cop, Marcellin became minister of agriculture in the recent reshuffle of Prime Minister Pierre Messmer's cabinet.

[The ban on the Ligue followed an antifascist demonstration on June 21, 1973, in which clashes between antifascists and police, who were acting as a defense guard for the fascists, resulted in seventy-three cops being injured, including sixteen who were hospitalized.

[Alain Krivine and Michel Récanati, leaders of the ex-Ligue Communiste, were arrested for violation of the "anti-wrecker law," which enables the government to charge any leader of any organization that sponsors a demonstration at which violence occurs with responsibility for the violence.]

* * *

For almost five months now, the leaders of the former Ligue Commu-

niste have called on the Conseil d'Etat [State Council] to revoke the scandalous cabinet edict dissolving the Ligue. But for five months Mr. Marcellin, the former minister of the interior, has refused to send the council his brief replying to that of the ex-Ligue, thereby obstructing the work of that institution, which according to the law is supposed to pronounce judgment "in the shortest possible time."

We have just learned that shortly before his ouster Marcellin finally condescended to send his document. Now there are no further obstacles to opening the procedure, and an immediate opening is to be hoped for. As soon

as the date is known, the antifascists will demonstrate in the tens of thousands their desire to see the dissolution decree rescinded.

This same absenteeism on the part of the regime is evident in the preparation of the trial of our comrades Krivine and Récanati. Judge Bernard has closed the dossier, which has now been bound over to the public prosecutor for examination. There are two theories as to what may happen; the case may be dismissed, or it may be sent to the court of summary jurisdiction.

We can understand that the government hesitates to proceed with a trial in which numerous representatives of the workers movement would come to testify, and that would demonstrate in detail Mr. Marcellin's use of the police for tasks that are totally illegal even from the standpoint of bourgeois legality. Several dozen police agents have brought civil actions and are already demanding a minimum of three million francs compensation. While waiting for their cases to be disposed of, Krivine and Récanati remain out on bail and subject to probation. Récanati no longer has identification papers, except a probation card. He still has to appear before the judge every week. Our comrades cannot go abroad.

Two battles—one centering on the Conseil d'Etat, the other on the trial—are beginning to be prepared as one; and now along with that goes an additional achievement: Since January 9, the trade unions and left-wing parties are calling systematically for the prevention of any fascist meeting, in the same terms the revolutionaries did on June 21. □

Conditions Similar to Those of Nazi Camps

Thieu Holds 200,000 Political Prisoners

The jails of the Thieu regime hold a minimum of 200,000 political prisoners—more than one half of the total estimated political prisoners in the world, according to a recent study reported in the March 17-18 *Le Monde*.

This figure was given at a March 15 news conference by Father Tullio Vinay, a member of the International

Committee for the Liberation of South Vietnamese Political Prisoners. It is based on a September 1973 fact-finding inquiry made in South Vietnam by Vinay and Father Enrico Chiavacci of Florence.

Le Monde summarized the inquiry's findings as follows:

"There are currently at least 200,000 civilian political prisoners in South



THIEU: World's busiest jailer.

Vietnam out of a population of eighteen million. (According to the United Nations, there are a total of 385,000 political prisoners in the world.)

"The prisoners' living conditions are appalling. Every form of torture has been used: electric shocks, flogging, immersion of the head in filthy water, tear gas, leg-irons, tiger cages, etc. The pastor saw skeletonlike prisoners that bring to mind those that came out of the German camps, as well as cases of total paralysis and tuberculosis stemming from harsh treatment and a tragic lack of nourishment. The prisoners are sometimes packed together, seven to even fourteen at a time, in American-made cages measuring two meters by three meters."

Additional information on South Vietnamese political prisoners has been made available in a book recently published in Saigon by Ho Ngoc Nhuan, a member of the South Vietnamese parliament.

Excerpts from the book—entitled *Political Prisoners? Nguyen Van Thieu Says: "They Don't Exist." The Vietnamese People Say: "They Do."*—were made available in the December 1973 *Vietnam Courier*, published in Hanoi.

Nhuan reported that according to the estimate of the Committee for the Improvement of the Prison System in

South Vietnam, more than 100,000 political prisoners are being kept in "official" jails. "If those detained in secret prisons or captured during various mopping-up operations and raids are counted," he added, "there may be as many as 200,000 detainees."

The figure of 100,000, he wrote, "includes prisoners kept in the following official prisons:

"10,000 in Chi Hoa (Saigon);
"40,000 in Phu Quoc (Phu Quoc island);

"8,000 women prisoners in Thu Duc (Gia Dinh province);

"10,000 in Tan Hiep (Bien Hoa province);

"11,000 in Con Son (Con Dao);

"15,000 in Go Vap (Quan Lao, Gia Dinh).

"Besides, there are about 50 official jails at the provincial level, each detaining from 500 to 1,000 and as many as 4,000 people in some places."

In addition, Nhuan continued, "on December 9, 1972, Hoang Duc Nha, Mr. Thieu's special adviser, boasted to foreign reporters that his govern-

ment had captured 40,000 'Communist cadres' in the space of a few weeks. So the figure of 200,000 mentioned by the press everywhere is no fiction.

"Lawyer Goran Franck, President of the Swedish branch of Amnesty International, recently confirmed that there were about 200,000 political prisoners kept by the Thieu government."

This, of course, is the government for which the Nixon administration has just requested an emergency military-aid increase of \$474 million.

"The Defense Department," the March 20 *New York Times* reported, "has warned that it was running out of military aid funds for the Saigon government, saying that by mid-April the South Vietnamese forces would have to curtail severely their military operations.

"As a stopgap, the Administration has asked Congress to raise the spending ceiling on military aid to South Vietnam this fiscal year to \$1.6-billion [milliard] from the \$1.126-billion set by Congress last year." □

Force Tanaka to Hike Oil Prices

How Oil Giants Tightened Screws on Tokyo

The Japanese government announced on March 16 that the price of refined oil would be allowed to rise an average of 62 percent, which would bring the cost of a barrel of refined petroleum in Japan to \$12.75. Tokyo had frozen the price of refined oil in January.

In making the announcement for the government, Susumu Nikaido, chief cabinet secretary, indicated that Tokyo had little choice since, as the March 17 *New York Times* wrote, the continuance of the price controls would have led to a danger of "cuts in crude oil supplies coming into the country."

The multinational oil trusts, operating through their Japanese subsidiaries, had warned Tokyo in early March that if the price controls were not lifted, they might cut off oil supplies to Japan. Eiji Yamagata, director general of the Japanese Oil Agency, said in a press conference on March 5 that Exxon had threatened

to reduce its crude oil deliveries by 15 percent beginning in March if the freeze on refined oil products were not lifted. The March 5 *Tokyo Daily Yomiuri* indicated that the average cut threatened by all the oil majors was about 25 percent.

The next day William W. Richardson, president of Mobil Sekiyu, the Mobil-owned subsidiary, said, according to the March 7 *New York Times*, "that Mobil and other oil companies here [Tokyo] were 'studying' whether they would have to cut back on their shipments to Japan if the government did not permit a large price increase soon." Although Richardson denied that his remarks were a threat, the March 7 *Daily Yomiuri* reported: "Richardson warned that the longer the government froze oil prices, the more difficult it would be to continue supplying Japan."

Richardson later outlined three courses of action that Mobil might take if the freeze continued. "As alter-

natives," wrote *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Elizabeth Pond in the March 14 issue, "he [Richardson] allowed the possibilities of cutting supplies, of raising oil-product prices unilaterally in defiance of the government price freeze, or—in an unlikely case—even of pulling out of Japan altogether."

To justify his demands for higher oil prices, Richardson claimed that Mobil had been losing "something under \$1 million a day" since the beginning of February. He demanded that the average price of \$7.87 a barrel of refined petroleum be increased to \$13.33 to permit the oil companies "just to break even." According to Pond, Richardson also said that the oil companies would later want another price increase "to resume making a profit." Richardson tersely summed up the views of the oil giants: "The big question is: How long can the oil industry continue to subsidize Japan?"

The multinational oil giants, particularly the U.S. companies, have dominated the Japanese market since the U.S. occupation following the second world war. The sales of crude oil to the small Japanese-owned oil companies, and of refined oil through U.S.-owned Japanese subsidiaries, provide an important part of the profits of the U.S. oil monopolies. As Pond noted in her report: "The reason for the majors' interest in the price freeze on refined-oil products inside Japan is that a considerable portion of their profits comes from the sales of these products through their Japanese affiliates. The Exxon spokesman said that he could not give a breakdown on the profits as between crude-oil sales to refineries and the sales of oil products, but said the latter was 'substantial.'"

A partial slowdown of oil deliveries to Japan apparently began even before the oil company threats. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) announced on March 4 that Japan's crude oil imports had decreased by 8 percent in February from the previous month. If all the majors had withheld their crude and refined oil in amounts equaling the cutbacks they are threatening for March, Japan's oil supply would have been reduced by a full 15 percent.

In response to this threat, some Japanese government officials coun-

seled giving in to the demands of the oil giants immediately. MITI Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, whose views were finally accepted by the government, proposed an increase to \$12.86 a barrel of refined oil.

Premier Kakuei Tanaka, however, suggested that the price rises be kept to a "minimum" and not take effect until sometime in April. He also indicated that he preferred any further increases to be postponed until after the summer elections to the upper house of the Diet (parliament). Reporting on Tanaka's views, the February 25 *Daily Yomiuri* said: "The sizes of the price increases will be kept to the minimum and the government will take steps to help oil companies cover losses resulting from the postponement of the price markup and reduction in the size of the markup." But the oil giants were not interested in such "steps." They simply wanted higher prices—and as soon as possible.

For political reasons, Tanaka wanted to avoid the appearance of giving in to the oil companies. Widespread anger over skyrocketing inflation (wholesale prices in February were up 36.7 percent over a year ago and consumer prices up 24 percent) was further aggravated by revelations that the oil companies conspired to rake in an "extra" \$204 million in profits last fall by raising prices higher than officials in Tokyo thought were warranted.

Japan

Government Workers Defy Strike Ban

"Japanese businessmen are jittery these days, and with good reason," wrote the March 9 *Business Week*. "This year's *shunto*—the annual spring campaign for higher wages by labor unions—is developing into the most shattering collision between labor and management in Japan's post-World War II history."

The first massive action of the *shunto* took place on March 1, when 527,000 government, transportation, and private industry workers staged a nationwide strike in defiance of pleas by the government not to walk out.

On February 21, Japanese Premier

On February 19 Japan's Fair Trade Commission (FTC) filed charges of illegal price fixing and production restrictions against twelve oil companies and the Petroleum Federation of Japan. A report by Elizabeth Pond in the February 27 *Christian Science Monitor* said: "According to the FTC charges, oil refining executives met secretly five times between November, 1972, and November, 1973, and agreed to raise wholesale prices of oil products and to restrict fair competition."

"The last price hike, implemented on December 1, 1973, was based on an estimate that Japan's total crude oil imports would drop 20 percent. When the actual reduction turned out to be only 6 or 7 percent, the FTC charged, the companies still did not lower their prices."

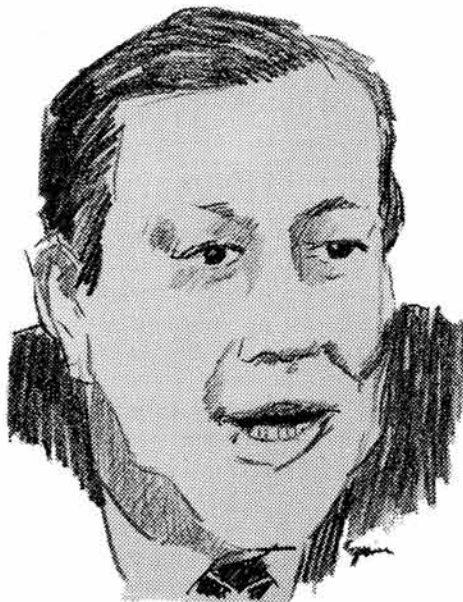
The oil companies' response to the FTC charges was to say that they had set prices under instructions from MITI. According to one Japanese newspaper, the vice-president, director general, secretary general, and four of the seven department chiefs of the Petroleum Federation of Japan are retired MITI bureaucrats.

The skepticism aroused by such revelations caused Tanaka and his ruling Liberal Democratic party to hesitate a while before giving in to the demands of the petroleum trusts. But the prospect of a partial cutoff of oil supplies quickly brought Tokyo to heel. □

Daily Yomiuri, "warned that such 'excesses' in the labor movement could lead to the demise of parliamentary democracy in Japan."

On February 28 Chief Cabinet Secretary Susumu Nikaido said: "The strike is politically motivated and would, therefore, be illegal even if carried out by a labor union in the private sector." He then warned that action might be taken against government employees if they walked off their jobs.

But the government and employer threats failed to intimidate the unions. On February 26 Korokyo (Federation of Public Corporation and Government Enterprise Workers Unions) announced that it intended to continue with the March 1 strike and laid out its demands: a 30,000-yen (about US-\$106) inflation allowance for each household receiving government financial assistance; the adoption of a sliding scale for old-age pensions; and the restoration of the right to strike for civil servants. The government had previously offered an inflation allowance of 2,000 to 2,500 yen. Strikes by government employees were originally banned in 1948, during the U.S. occupation. The ban was later made a law by the Diet.



TANAKA: Strikes are illegal.

On March 1 the workers of Kokuro (National Railway Workers Union), Doro (National Railway Motive Power Union), and Zentei (Postal Workers Union) went out along with members of fourteen other unions. More than 80 percent of the trains in Japan stopped running.

Although the government had attempted to set Japan's 13 million commuters against the strikers, it failed to whip up any significant antiunion sentiment. In fact, the March 2 *Daily Yomiuri* reported: "Observers said that the commuters sympathized with the striking Japan National Railway (JNR) workers, presumably because they resented the fact that the government failed to check increases in commodity prices resulting from the oil crisis."

Two days after the strike, anti-inflation rallies, sponsored by the People's Joint Struggle Committee for the Prevention of Inflation, a united-front formation composed of seventy unions, organizations, and parties, took place throughout the country. According to a March 7 dispatch from the Tokyo New Asia News service, about 1 million persons participated in twenty-nine prefectures throughout Japan. The March 4 *Daily Yomiuri* reported that more than 230,000 attended one rally in Tokyo alone.

Another one-day strike of public and private transportation workers was scheduled for March 24. If the demands of the four labor federations are not met by April 10, they plan to stage a general strike on that day. □

Fertilizer Production Drops

Oil Shortage Threatens Famine in Asia, Africa

"The 'food crisis' and the 'oil crisis' are fast becoming joined into one total energy problem," wrote Richard Critchfield in the March 7 *Christian Science Monitor*.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), at a conference in Rome at the beginning of March, arrived at the same conclusion. The shortage of fertilizers, aggravated by the world energy crisis, seriously threatens food production in the underdeveloped countries, the FAO concluded.

Since the end of 1972, the cost of fertilizers has doubled and in some cases tripled. The Overseas Development Council in Washington predicted that underdeveloped countries would have to pay an additional \$5,000 million for food and fertilizer im-

ports in 1974. Fertilizer production requires large amounts of energy, and petroleum fractions such as naphtha are an ingredient of many fertilizers.

In a situation where droughts and famines have already cost hundreds of thousands of lives in Africa and have reached near-crisis proportions in Asia, smaller harvests can have catastrophic consequences for the majority of the world's population in the next decade. The real victims of the energy crisis are the masses of the underdeveloped countries.

In a telephone interview with the *New York Times* Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, who won the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for the development of high-yield strains of wheat and rice, gave his estimates of the possible effects of the fertilizer cutbacks.

According to Borlaug, the January 26 *Times* wrote, "as many as 20 million people may die because of crop shortages in the next year. He attributed this in part to the climate changes, but primarily to the fertilizer cutbacks."

A report in the February 21 *New York Times* noted that because of fertilizer shortages, Asian harvests of rice alone might drop by as much as seven metric tons. In countries like India, a reduction in usage of 1 million tons of fertilizer could mean up to a 10-million-ton cut in grain production. A report in the January 14 *Far Eastern Economic Review* observed that domestic fertilizer production in India for the fiscal year 1973-74, ending in March, could be 500,000

metric tons short of the projections drafted prior to the energy crisis. Fertilizer imports might drop by an additional 250,000 metric tons.

"The shortage has led to inevitable blackmarket trading," the *Review* wrote. "The distribution system, part official and part unofficial, never worked well and has deteriorated further under the present pressure. Because of high prices, fertilizer is now beyond the means of all but wealthy farmers."

The January 7 *Review*, in an article discussing the general effects of the energy crisis on Asia, said: "The rising cost of naphtha alone will have drastic effects on agriculture, let alone industry. Fertilizer costs will continue to rise. Less will be used when more should. If people don't freeze this winter [because of the increase in the price of kerosene, extensively used for heating in India], they will inevitably starve [the] next."

"India is not alone, of course. Thailand, for example, will have an oil bill for 1974 about equivalent to its total foreign exchange reserves. But even prior to the most recent price hike, petroleum-based fertilizer prices (imported primarily from Japan) had doubled. Farmers, already deeply in debt, had cut fertilizer use. Agricultural productivity was stagnant or falling."

But even if the underdeveloped countries had the funds to purchase the more expensive fertilizers, there is simply not that much available on the market. Japan, for instance, cut back production of fertilizer by 50 percent as part of Premier Kakuei Tanaka's "austerity" measures.

In the United States, the producers of fertilizer also cut back production, but not in response to any fuel "conservation" schemes. In December 1971 the Fertilizer Institute warned Washington that if price controls on fertilizer were not lifted there would be a shortage. If the capitalists could not be guaranteed high profits in fertilizer production, then they would simply invest in other areas.

By the time the Cost of Living Council decontrolled fertilizers last October, wrote the March 5 *Wall Street Journal*, "not only had U.S. producers not added to [fertilizer production] capacity as demand picked up, they also closed out older plants rather than pull them up to Environmental Pro-

tection Agency specifications."

The possible repercussions of the threatened food shortages have begun to create some unease even in capitalist circles. As Critchfield pointed out: "When one adds everything together—more floods, more drought at a time of

low world food reserves, bankrupt countries unable to import enough food to feed their growing cities nor enough fertilizer to grow in the countryside . . . it is hard to see anything immediately ahead save one violent political explosion after another." □

DOCUMENTS

Dissidents, Bukovsky's Mother Ask Aid

[The two letters reprinted below were received in New York March 18 by the International League for the Rights of Man. The first, signed by eight Soviet dissidents, was addressed to the League. The second, signed by the mother of Vladimir Bukovsky, was addressed to Amnesty International.]

[Now 31 years old, Vladimir Bukovsky has spent more than eight years in prisons and psychiatric hospitals as punishment for his political activities. His most recent arrest occurred in 1971, after he had obtained and sent to the West copies of the psychiatric "diagnoses" of six dissidents being held in mental hospitals. He was at first held for "psychiatric examination," but widespread publicity about the case apparently forced the Kremlin to reconsider its intentions.]

[Instead of being confined in a mental hospital, Bukovsky was tried in Moscow on January 5, 1972, and sentenced to two years in prison, five years in a labor camp, and five years in exile.]

* * *

We are shaken by the sad news which has reached us:

Vladimir Bukovsky is a man of exceptional moral strength and worth, who—even in circumstances where he lacks *physical* liberty—is continuing to defend with courage his own and his comrades' honor, dignity and spiritual freedom. Now he is again threatened with the medieval cells of Vladimir Prison.

We know only too well what Vladimir Prison is like. There, healthy individuals are turned into victims of malnutrition, ulcers, tuberculosis and other ailments.

We share the grief and alarm of Bukovsky's mother, and we turn to you once more with a request for assistance. Please read her letter and use every available means in order to avert the injustice which is threatened.

Vladimir Bukovsky openly and courageously spoke out against illegality in

our country—he is being punished now for doing so. He informed the whole world that in our country people suffer indeterminate confinement in psychiatric hospitals for their beliefs. And he did so knowing that he would lose his freedom for this or might even end up in such a hospital.

Only the intervention of international public opinion saved him at that time from becoming a patient in a psychiatric hospital, a fate which had already been prepared for him.

Not long ago the life of Andrei Amalrik, who became ill while in prison, was saved through the helpful assistance of the finest people in the West.

Just a year and a half ago Yury Galanskov, a brave man and a bright spirit, perished in a camp.

Now they want to destroy Vladimir Bukovsky.

Help us! Do not allow them to commit a terrible new crime in the present "Archipelago" of suffering and degradation!

Moscow, February 27, 1974

Andrei Sakharov, Tatyana Khodorovich, Tatyana Velikanova, Anatoly Levitin (Krasnov), Sergei Kovalev, Pavel Litvinov, Father Sergei Zheludkov, Grigory Podyapolsky

* * *

OPEN LETTER TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Dear Friends!

More than once you have done all you could to help me ease the undeservedly difficult fate of my son, Vladimir Bukovsky. Now, once more, I turn to you for help.

As you know, in January 1972 the Moscow City Court passed an unjust and extraordinarily severe sentence on Vladimir; he was sentenced to two years prison and five years confinement in a strict regime corrective labor camp to be fol-

lowed by five years exile.

The trial of my son, as you probably remember, was an act of flagrant illegality. Despite this, the sentence of the Moscow City Court was confirmed on appeal by the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Court.

Nearly three years have passed since Vladimir's arrest.

After almost starving him to death in Vladimir Prison, the authorities sent my son to a strict regime camp for political prisoners in the region of Perm. Here a new ordeal has begun. My son became ill. He contracted a liver ailment in addition to the rheumatism and heart condition which are associated with his chronic tonsillitis. (I still do not know the exact nature of his liver ailment.)

Vladimir's "greeting" to the camp by the KGB [political police] representative there was highly symptomatic. At their first meeting, a certain Karpavikas, the senior KGB representative in the camp, insulted my son by saying (in these exact words): "You (political prisoners) are worse than dogs. I will put you in your place."

Vladimir, finding himself in a position where it was necessary to defend his human dignity, ended the conversation and left the room. Punishment was not long in following. Instead of the two- or three-day visit which is usually allowed once a year to the wives and mothers of those who are in a camp, I was allowed only a twenty-four-hour visit with my son. KGB agent Karpavikas informed me officially of this punishment at the time.

Since the end of last September, the camp administration has stopped delivering to my son the letters which his relatives and friends have sent and are continuing to send him, even though these letters contain nothing violating the internal camp censorship. It has even reached the point where they have not delivered many of my own letters to my son, thereby depriving him of the chance to read his mother's affectionate and consoling words, a right which belongs to everyone.

In September I learned that they pick on my son in the camp, they bait him, they persecute him, and they punish him for no reason. Under pressure from Western public opinion, they gave him a special diet because of his liver ailment. But at the same time—without any grounds—he was forbidden to buy in the camp store the five rubles of foodstuff stipulated by law. In this way almost all the additional food which he gained from his special diet, he lost in store privileges. Not very humane treatment of a sick man!

This January Vladimir was told that he had been deprived of his next visit (a short, two-hour visit) with me which had been scheduled for late February. And the

camp administration confiscated two consecutive letters of my son in which he tried to inform me about this. I am firmly convinced that he was deprived of this visit so that I should not find out from him about the persecutions and illegalities which he is suffering.

In this fashion Vladimir found himself literally cut off from the external world, from his family, from his mother. Taking advantage of this fact, the camp administration placed my son in a punishment cell for two weeks, subjecting a sick rheumatic to hunger and cold. His condition on leaving this punishment cell is unknown. Vladimir did not take the



VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY

chance of writing me about this in his last letter for fear that the administration might confiscate it and then I would not even know whether he was alive.

I have written to all supervisory authorities, including USSR Procurator General Rudenko, about the facts concerning my son's illegal deprivation of letters and visits. But all my complaints invariably are "referred down the line" of procurators and every time I receive answers written only for form and without substance.

Now a new crime is being prepared with respect to my son. They are getting ready to put him back very soon in Vladimir Prison, apparently for the

balance of his term so that more than six years of his seven-year term of deprivation of freedom would be spent in a prison cell. This is a serious attack on his health. According to the existing regime, for the first month he will be on so-called starvation rations, which means that the quantity of food stipulated for dinner only will be divided into parts for the whole day including breakfast and supper. For the next several months he will receive so-called reduced rations (on strict regime) with a reduced allowance of sugar and fats, already sufficiently scarce in Vladimir Prison. For all these months the prisoner does not have the right to even one gram of foodstuffs from the prison canteen. Is it necessary to add that in view of the inhuman starvation practiced in this harsh prison, such curtailment of the most essential foods is simply a catastrophe? Fully healthy individuals very rarely survive this trial without disastrous consequences. For my son with his heart condition and rheumatism, with a liver ailment, the absence of fresh air and exercise combined with prolonged hunger means there is a real danger that his health will be lost for good and that he will become an invalid.

They are obviously counting on his physical destruction.

Over the past two years I have appealed five times to the Soviet government and to L. I. Brezhnev personally to desist from further punishment of my son and to let him accept the invitation of Leiden University to go to Holland. Five times I have received refusals.

The authorities of his country do not like my son. They consider him a misfit. Then why not let him go to another country?

Is it really necessary to torture him to death in prisons and camps because he dared openly to express his opinions and beliefs?

I turn to you with this plea: Do not allow my son to be transferred to Vladimir Prison—to his physical destruction! I also request you to form, as quickly as possible, a competent international commission and to send it to the camp for political prisoners located at Vsevyatskaya station, Chusovskoi raion, Perm oblast (establishment VS389/35), where my son is imprisoned, so that the commission may investigate whether they comply with the law in this camp and also may ascertain the facts concerning the persecution of my son.

I ask you to appeal once again to the Soviet government and to L. I. Brezhnev personally for humaneness and justice. Perhaps you and other people of good will may finally succeed where I have failed.

Moscow, February 27, 1974
Nina Ivanovna Bukovskaya,
mother of Vladimir Bukovsky