

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

ORGAN OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN

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"CHANGING THE GUARD"

ON MARCH 4TH., 1974, FOUR DAYS AFTER ITS DEFEAT IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF FEBRUARY 28TH THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT HEADED BY EDWARD HEATH RESIGNED AND GAVE WAY TO A LABOUR GOVERNMENT HEADED BY HAROLD WILSON.

THE ELECTION RESULT

The result of the February 1974 general election may be summarised as far as voting is concerned, as follows:

	<u>February 1974</u>	<u>1970</u>
Conservative Party:	11.9 m. (38.1%)	13.1 m. (46.4%)
Labour Party:	11.7 m. (37.2%)	12.1 m. (43.0%)
Others:	7.7 m. (24.7%)	3.0 m. (10.6%)
	<hr/> 31.3 m.	<hr/> 28.2 m.

In comparison with the last general election in 1970, it will be seen (cont. overleaf)

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that the Conservative vote declined by 8.3% of the poll, while the Labour vote declined by 5.8% of the poll - representing, so far as the two main parties are concerned, a swing to Labour of 2.5%; on the other hand, the votes for "others" increased by 14.1% of the poll.

In terms of parliamentary seats, the result of the election may be summarised as follows:

	<u>Feb 1974</u>	<u>Feb 1970</u>
Conservative Party:	297	330
Labour Party:	301	288
Others:	37	12
	<u>635</u>	<u>630</u>

In comparison with the last general election, it will be seen that the number of Conservative seats declined by 33, the number of Labour seats increased by 13, and the number of seats held by "others" increased by 25. This gave the Labour Party 4 more seats in the House than the Conservative Party, but not an absolute majority.

This was the first general election since 1929 which gave neither of the two major parties an absolute majority of seats in the House.

The "Others"

The Liberal Party, headed by Jeremy Thorpe, increased its vote by 2.1 million votes (7.4% of the poll) in 1970 to 6.1 million votes (19.3% of the poll).

In the 19th Century the Liberal Party was the political instrument of the industrial capitalists, while the Tory Party was the political instrument of the big landowners. With the fusion of these two classes into a single monopoly capitalist ruling class, the Conservative Party became the main open political instrument of the class, and the Liberal Party sank into decline. Today the Liberal Party, like all the other existing political parties represents the interests of monopoly capital; it directs its appeal principally to small capitalists and petty-bourgeois, claiming to be a "middle of the road" party which will "protect" these elements both from monopoly capital (which it presents as being represented by the Conservative Party) and from nationalisation and "trade union dictatorship" (which it presents as symbolised by the programme of the Labour Party). Thus, in a situation in which there is great disillusionment among electors with both the major parties and where there is no influential Marxist-Leninist party of the working class, the small "hard core" of Liberal voters may be temporarily joined by a considerable number of voters whose attitude to both the major parties has become negative. As "The Observer" pointed out:

"All the evidence supports the view that the Liberal vote is indeed a negative vote. . .

The Liberal vote is extraordinarily volatile, it can surge, as it did during the last campaign; but it can also decline, as it did several times between 1957 and 1970. The rate of turnover among Liberal voters is high. There is only a tiny 'hard core' Liberal vote. At a guess, at least half - probably two-thirds -- of last Thursdays Liberal voters, having floated to the Liberals, could easily be induced to float away again". (The Observer, March 3rd., 1974:p.12).

This view was confirmed in a study carried out by Hilde Himmelweit, Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics:

"There are far more of these temporary Liberals than hard-core ones voting Liberal at any given election. Professor Himmelweit found that they tend to do so because they are reacting against their former party on a few issues". ("The Observer", March 3rd., 1974; p.13).

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As will be discussed later, this swing to the Liberal Party was, in the February 1974 election, deliberately encouraged by the media controlled by the monopoly capitalist majority. This resulted in the increase of Liberal MP's from 6 in the old parliament to 14 in the new.

Among the "other parties" which made gains in the February 1974 general election were the "nationalist" parties in Scotland and Wales. The national question in Britain - that is, in England, Scotland and Wales - has long been resolved, and Britain forms a single nation. "Nationalism" in Scotland and Wales has therefore no objective basis; it merely serves the interest of monopoly capital in these regions by seeking to divide the British working class, by seeking to persuade workers in Scotland and Wales that they have different interests from those of workers in England, but interests in common with the capitalists of their own region. In the field of party politics the "nationalist" parties play a similar role to that of the Liberal Party in England; basing themselves on pre-national survivals in their respective regions, they present the problems of the working class and petty-bourgeoisie in these regions as due to "government from England", as due to the two major parties being "English" parties, and they present the solution to these problems as simply the establishment of regional "parliaments" with limited powers.

Thus, in a situation where there is great disillusionment among electors in Scotland and Wales with both the major parties, and where there is no influential Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class in Britain, the small "hard core" of "nationalist" party voters in Scotland and Wales may be temporarily joined by a considerable number of voters whose attitude to both the major parties has become negative.

The discovery since 1970 of major oil fields off the coast of Scotland was used by the Scottish National Party as the basis for the demand that the revenue accruing from this oil should be used "for Scotland" and this parochial demand won the party a certain number of votes.

As a result of all these factors, the S.N.P. increased its average vote from 4,723 in 1970 to 9,028 in February 1974 and the party won 4 seats from the Conservatives and 2 from Labour, holding one seat and losing one to Labour. The party thus increased its representation from 2 seats in the old parliament to 7 in the new.

The Welsh "nationalist" party, Plaid Cymru, without as yet the assurance of the presence of oil off the coast of Wales, was less successful. Its average vote fell from 4,862 in 1970 to 4,760 in February 1974, but it managed to win two rural seats from Labour - increasing its representation from 0 seats in the old parliament to 2 in the new.

In Northern Ireland the main election issue was the future status of the colony. The vote in support of the "power sharing" Assembly and the Sunningdale agreement to set up a Council of Ireland - that is, in support of the policy of working gradually towards a united neo-colonial Ireland favoured by British Imperialism was split among a number of different parties, with the result that anti-Assembly, anti-Sunningdale candidates were elected in 11 of the 12 Northern Ireland constituencies - 1 Democratic Unionist (Ian Paisley) and 10 United Ulster Unionists. The twelfth constituency, Belfast West, returned Gerry Fitt of the Social-Democratic and Labour Party - pro-Assembly and pro-Sunningdale.

Two independent pro-Labour candidates were returned: Eddie Milne, the sitting Member for Blyth, expelled from the Labour Party for demanding an investigation into the corruption within the party brought to light in the Poulson case; and Dick Taverne, the sitting Member for Lincoln and leader of the minuscule "Democratic Labour Party", who resigned from the Labour Party by reason of his support for Britain's continued membership of the E.E.C. on the terms negotiated by the Conservative government.

Most of the "Independent" Conservative candidates were Powellites, opposed to the official Conservative policy of remaining in the E.E.C. on the terms already negotiated. They gained an average of 765 votes and none was successful in gaining a seat.

The revisionist Communist Party contested 44 seats and gained an average of 745 votes -- compared with an average of 662 at the 1970 general election. The highest vote was that of James Reid in Dunbartonshire Central -- 5,928 or 14.6% of the poll. None was successful in gaining a seat.

Two Trotskyite parties contested the election. The "Workers Revolutionary Party" contested 9 seats; its average vote was 466, the highest vote (991) being in Pontefract. The "International Marxist Group" contested two seats: its average vote was 313, the highest vote (424) being gained by Tariq Ali in Sheffield Attercliffe. No Trotskyite was successful in winning a seat.

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The only party calling itself "Marxist-Leninist" to stand candidates was the "Communist Party of England (Marxist Leninist)", which stood on a platform

"..that Britain should be ruled by the working class, not by the monopoly capitalist class."

Basically, however, the party is a maoist, black racist party which makes its appeal primarily to militant black immigrants (its candidate for Lambeth Central was Elkins Brome, publicised as representing the "Black Revolutionary Workers' Movement". The C.P.E. (M-L) stood in 6 constituencies with a high proportion of black immigrants, and polled an average of 236 votes ; none of its candidates was elected.

Two fascist parties contested the election. The National Front put up 54 candidates, who gained an average vote of 1,422, the highest vote being 3,662 in Leicester East. The British Movement contested one seat, Wolverhampton North-East, where Colin Jordon gained 711 votes. No fascist candidate was elected.

There were also, among the "other candidates", a number who might fairly be called "cranks" and who gained an average of 100 votes. Our favourite is the candidate of the "Royalist Republican Party", who polled 93 votes in Ealing North. None of these candidates was elected.

BIG BUSINESS MOVES TO SECURE A LABOUR GOVERNMENT

In the special edition of CLASS AGAINST CLASS which analysed during the election campaign the real issues of the February 1974 general election, we said :

"In 1974..a significant difference of policy has arisen between two sections of the monopoly capitalist ruling class, and this difference is at the moment reflected in a genuine antagonism between the Conservative and Labour Parties. ..

A majority of monopoly capitalists represented now by the present leadership of the Labour Party , want to abandon the present rigid system of wage restrictions. They are now convinced that these restrictions cannot be made effective until further steps have been taken to build a corporate state in which the trade unions are incorporated in the machinery of the capitalist state under such slogans as "Workers' Participation in Industry". This section of monopoly capitalists feels, rightly, that the Labour Party is best equipped to make use of these demagogic slogans in laying the foundations of a corporate state...

A minority of monopoly capitalists, represented by the present leadership of the Conservative Party , while recognising the necessity of building a corporate state in the future , want to continue the present system of wage restraints "as a matter of principle"..

The monopoly capitalist majority desire the victory of the Labour Party in 1974. (A Socialist Election Policy ,in: "CLASS AGAINST CLASS ", Special Election Issue, No.4,1974;p.2,7).

"The Observer"made the same point after the election:

"One of the strangest features of the campaign was the lack of confidence shown in Mr Heath's government by the City and industry". (The Observer", March 3rd,1974; p.12).

We went on to point out:

"Normally, as in 1970, the majority of monopoly capitalists are able to manipulate an election sufficiently to secure the result they desire". (Ibid.:p.7).

In fact, as soon as the election campaign began, the media controlled by the monopoly capitalist majority began to assist the Labour Party leaders to divert the minds of electors

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from the issue on which the Heath government had wished to fight the election, ("give us a mandate to stand firm against the miners' inflationary wage claim") towards issues on which the Conservative governments record was more easily exposed to wider sections of the electorate such as prices:

" During the first week of the campaign, just after the start of the miners' strike, Labour's polls showed the Tory issues were 'on top' in the voters' minds. Then, at the end of the first week,.. it began to slide down ". ("Sunday Times", February 24.,1974;p.18).

The large advertising agency which advised the Conservative Party Central Office on its propoganda had arranged that attacks on the Labour Party as "Communist dominated" should be a key feature of the party's campaign -- despite the fact that all recent political experience in Britain and elsewhere has demonstrated clearly that, under present conditions, such attacks are counter-productive;

"The Conservative Party today launches its election programme with the most blistering attack on Labour as the party of Left-wing extremism since Churchill's famous 'gestapo' campaign in 1945". ("The Guardian ", February 11th.,1974; p.1.).

This campaign reached its height of distortion -- for which Conservative Party Chairman Lord Carrington was compelled to apologise -- in the Party's T.V. election broadcast of February 19th; after a "commercial" in which it was alleged that a Labour government would "take over your house, even your pay packet" -- Chancellor of the Exchequer Anthony Barber stated that a Labour government would be "putty in the hands of Communist militants".

Meanwhile, on February 15th, official figures were published showing that under the Conservative government's "Counter-Inflation" programme, food prices had risen by 20% in 1973, and by 53% since the Conservative government took office in 1970. This was followed by announcements of record profits by large companies and banks -- on February 20th, for example, Imperial Chemical Industries announced profits for the current year of £311 million, more than double those of the previous year.

During Heath's "walkabouts" and campaign meetings, it was noticeable that the T.V. cameras devoted unusual attention to those shouting such slogans as "Heath Out!" At his meeting in Colston Hall, Birmingham, Heath publicly attacked the I.T.N. crew for this practice saying:

"I think the country will recognise that it is the media, by using their lights on part of the audience which causes this sort of disturbance ". (Sunday Times", March 3rd ,1974;p.13).

On February 21st, seven days before the election, the Pay Board set up by the Conservative government pulled the rug out from under the Conservative Party by revealing that the government's figures on miners' pay had been falsified and that miners' were, in fact, 8.1% below the average weekly earnings in manufacturing.

On February 24th Enoch Powell -- who had savagely dissociated himself both from Heath and the election -- made the first of two eloquent speeches in which he urged the electors to vote Labour. The quantitative effect of his appeal was in direct proportion to the distance of constituencies from Wolverhampton-des-deux-Eglises: compared with an average swing to Labour throughout the country of about 2.5%. The swing in Wolverhampton South-West (Powell's old seat) was 17%, and in the three neighbouring seats of Wolverhampton South-East, Wolverhampton North-East and Staffordshire South-West it averaged more than 10%. Assessing the effect of Powell's move on the election, "The Observer" declared:

"In Powell country this effect can be measured at about 100,000 votes (and six or more seats) by the Wolverhampton-West Midlands variation from the rest of the country. We cannot know whether the same effect may have counted a little everywhere and

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contributed much more to Mr. Heath's defeat". ("The Observer", March 3rd 1974;p.4).

The effect on the Conservative vote of Powell's appeal to vote Labour was reinforced by the challenge of a number of Powellites standing under the name of "Independent Conservatives" or other title (and who polled an average of 765 votes) and by the activities of another Powellite organisation -- the Council of Associated Conservative Groups, headed by Essex "Monday Clubber" Leonard Lambert -- which organised the distribution of "Don't Vote!" leaflets in a number of constituencies.

On February 25th., three days before the election, the trade figures for January were published, revealing a record deficit for the month of £383 million -- 1,000% up on the corresponding trade deficit which Heath declared during the 1970 election campaign was a damning indictment of the Labour government.

The final blow to the Heath government was delivered on the eve of the election by Campbell Adamson, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, in his attack on the Conservative governments' Industrial Relations Act and his demand for its repeal.

A significant role in the manipulation of the election was played -- as it was in 1970 -- by "opinion polls" conducted by firms which normally serve monopoly capital in the field of "market research". Commenting on the role of these "opinion polls" in the 1970 general election, the MLOB said :

"For that not insignificant sector of the electorate who were too disillusioned in the record of Labour to support it actively, but who might turn out to vote for it merely in order to 'keep out the Tories', the firms that serve monopoly capital in the field of 'market research' brought out a whole series of 'opinion polls' which assured them that there was really no need to tear themselves away from the televised World Cup, since Labour was sure to win the election with a substantial majority. Since the statistical sampling methods used by these firms have now reached a high standard of accuracy, their excuses of 'gross mistakes' on this occasion cannot be accepted as valid - particularly since the 'opinion polls' conducted by the Conservative Party for its private consumption proved strikingly accurate. Clearly such 'opinion polls' must be regarded, not as objective in character, but as part of the apparatus of political deception of monopoly capital; their effect on this occasion was not only upon apathetic but basically anti-Tory electors, but also on the electoral workers within the Labour Party machine, in whom the polls induced a complacency which assisted the Conservative Party." (RED FRONT, September/October 1970;p.10).

In February 1974 the situation was fundamentally the opposite to that of 1970: the majority of monopoly capitalists wished to secure the election of a Labour government. The polls were, therefore, rigged in the opposite direction to that of 1970, and were further distorted by the media controlled by the monopoly capitalist majority, in order to deceive the lukewarm supporters of the Conservative Party, and that party's election workers, into believing that a victory for "their" party was virtually certain.

ALL THESE FACTORS COMBINED TO PRODUCE A SMALL SWING FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO THE LABOUR PARTY ON FEBRUARY 28th. -- JUST SUFFICIENT TO BRING ABOUT THE DEFEAT OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND THE VICTORY OF THE LABOUR PARTY. IN THIS RESPECT THE AIM OF THE MAJORITY OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISTS WAS ACHIEVED.

THE AIM OF A MINORITY LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The MLOB pointed out at the time of the 1970 general election that one of the reasons why the majority of monopoly capitalists then wished to "dismiss" the Labour government was that they wished to join the European Economic Community, while the leadership of the Labour Party was still tied to the interests of a minority of monopoly capitalists who wished to maintain Britain's "special relationship" of dependence upon US imperialism:

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"Because of its unwillingness to break its special dependence upon that (now minority) section of British monopoly capital which favours continued collaboration with, and subordination to, US imperialism, the Labour Party had ceased to be, at least for the time being, effective in serving the foreign policy desired by the dominant section of the British imperialists". ("RED FRONT", August/September, 1970; p.7).

This situation had not been fundamentally altered by February 1974. True, the discovery since the 1970 general election of 15 major oilfields in North Sea areas allocated to Britain had significantly improved the economic prospects of British imperialism; this had led to a number of monopoly capitalists favouring an attempt to try to use the increased bargaining power resulting from this to renegotiate new terms of entry to the EEC more favourable to British imperialism than those accepted in 1970-71.

(This is analysed in more detail in the article in the current issue of CLASS AGAINST CLASS ; "The "World Energy Crisis " and; the "New Situation of British Imperialism").

Nevertheless, the majority of British monopoly capitalists still favoured continued membership of the EEC and so regarded the Labour Party as a dubious political vehicle to carry out this foreign policy. Thus, the February 1974 general election was complicated, as we pointed out in the special election issue of CLASS AGAINST CLASS,

". . . by the fact that the Labour Party represents the interests of the majority of monopoly capitalists in the matter of immediate domestic policy, but has not abandoned its representation of the interests of another, different, minority section of monopoly capitalists in relation to foreign policy". ("CLASS AGAINST CLASS", Special Election Issue, 1974, No. 4; p.7).

This dilemma was not solved by the adoption by the Labour Party leaders of a foreign policy designed to serve the immediate interests of both that section of monopoly capitalists who wished to try to renegotiate the terms of entry and that section who wished to withdraw from the EEC on any terms in order to bring Britain once more into relations of subordination to US imperialism. A majority of British monopoly capitalists in 1974 -- even many of those who wished to attempt to renegotiate better terms -- still wished to continue membership of the developing West European imperialist alliance and did not, therefore, trust the Labour Party to pursue this foreign policy wholeheartedly.

The monopoly capitalist majority, therefore, sought to solve this dilemma by attempting to limit the swing from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party and, at the same time, to boost the vote of the Liberal Party -- the overall aim being to secure the election of a Labour government without an absolute majority of seats in the House and so dependent on the support of the Liberal Party for its continuance in office. Since the Liberal Party could be expected to support the domestic policy of a Labour government (the programme desired by the monopoly capitalist majority) but to oppose implacably any attempt by such a Labour government to withdraw Britain from the EEC, they aimed to secure the election of a minority Labour government along these lines.

In pursuance of this aim, the media controlled by the monopoly capitalist majority gave unprecedented publicity to the Liberal Party and its leading figures: day after day we saw cheery Uncle Jeremy apparently able to greet every old age pensioner in his constituency by name, and jolly Uncle Cyril, the 27-stone "rebel" from Rochdale telling the police to "get stuffed!". How different, we were encouraged to think, from the stilted sternness of Heath, with his perpetual synthetic horse-laugh!

And day by day the "opinion polls" gave an ever-increasing proportion of the vote to the Liberal Party, appearing to give real substance to Thorpe's prediction that 1974 would see the election of a Liberal government.

As "The Observer" noted after the election:

"By-election victories and public opinion polls, feeding off one another, gave the public the idea that support for third parties

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was no longer, as it had always been assumed, a wasted vote". ("The Observer", March 3rd., 1974; p.12).

THE MONOPOLY CAPITALIST MAJORITY PROVED EXTRAORDINARILY SUCCESSFUL IN MANIPULATING THE FEBRUARY 1974 GENERAL ELECTION ALONG THE LINES THEY DESIRED. THE NEW PARLIAMENT WAS, AS WE HAVE SAID, COMPOSED AS FOLLOWS:

Labour Party:	301 seats
Conservative Party:	297 seats
Others:	37 seats
	<u>635 seats</u>

HEATH ATTEMPTS TO HANG ON

There is, of course, no written British constitution: constitutional law here is built upon precedent. And the constitutional precedent for the course of action that Heath ought to have taken in the light of the February 1974 election result was crystal clear.

In 1929, in the midst of a severe economic crisis, Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin dissolved Parliament and called a general election. Although the Conservatives received slightly more votes than Labour, the seats in the new Parliament were as follows:

Conservative Party:	261
Labour Party:	287
Liberal Party:	59

Baldwin at once resigned as Prime Minister, and the King invited the leader of the Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald, to form a minority government.

In our special election issue we compared normal parliamentary politics in Britain to

"... a gentlemenly cricket match at Lords" (CLASS AGAINST CLASS, Special Election Issue, 1974 No.4; p.2),

but declared that this election was different, in that

"... a significant difference of policy has arisen between two sections of the monopoly capitalist ruling class, and this difference is at the moment reflected in a genuine antagonism between the Conservative and Labour Parties". (Ibid.; p.2).

The events which followed the February 1974 general election demonstrated this clearly: Heath, having been run out, refused to leave the wicket!

On March 2nd., two days after the election, he invited to meet him at Downing Street the leader of the Liberal Party, Jeremy Thorpe and offered him a responsible Cabinet post if the Liberal Party would agree to form a coalition government with the Conservative Party.

This was clearly unacceptable to the majority of monopoly capitalists, as the media controlled by this majority made clear on the following day:

"In not tendering his resignation to the Queen, Mr. Heath is acting unconstitutionally. . . He no longer commands majority support in the Commons.

His immediate constitutional duty, therefore, is to tender his resignation. . .

This principle is implicitly derived from our largely unwritten constitution and the understanding on which it is based. . .

Mr. Harold Wilson and his Party have emerged as victors in the only terms that are recognised constitutionally". ("The Observer", March 3rd., 1974; p.12).

"Any politicians who try to tell the 'nation' that it does not know what it wants are both impertinent and self-damaging.

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The meaning of the verdict is unambiguous. The nation has rejected the specific policies for which Mr. Heath appealed, and has cast a vote of no confidence in his advice that these policies were vital. . .

The people have voted by the overwhelming majority of 62% to 38% against this policy (i.e., of wage restraint in existing circumstances -- Ed.). It is also plainly a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister personally, whose appeal was couched in highly presidential terms. The Prime Minister's ultimate electoral weapon has, in the event, exploded Mr. Heath. . .

A minority Labour Government tolerated by Mr. Thorpe's Liberals would have to avoid specifically socialist policies -- and it would have no time for them anyway as it wrestled with the immediate emergency. . .

The logic of this clear-cut election is that Mr. Heath should make way for Mr. Wilson to preside over a minority non-socialist government that Mr. Thorpe can countenance. . .

What it (i.e., the Conservative Party -- Ed). needs . . is to find a new leader through whom it can speak as the national party that it ought to be. . . What is at stake is the future of the Conservative Party". ("Sunday Times", March 3rd., 1974; p. 16).

The same media warned the Liberal Party sternly of the dire consequences for them if they allowed themselves to be "bribed" into a coalition with the Conservative Party:

"Coalitions and party deals have always proved fatal for the Liberals" (Sunday Times", March 3rd., 1974; p. 1.).

and a deluge of protest telegrams flooded into the Liberal headquarters protesting at even the consideration of such a coalition:

"Key Liberals across the country issued stern and stringent warnings to the party leadership yesterday not to accept any pact or coalition with the Conservatives. . .

In a rash of weekend statements there were warnings of mass resignations from the party if a deal was agreed". ("The Guardian", March 4th., 1974; p. 20).

And businessmen who might be inclined to support the formation of a Conservative-Liberal coalition government were warned that this would be likely to preclude a settlement of the miners' strike and so bring about economic disaster for them:

"There is now a strong possibility that Mr. McGahey and Mr. Lawrence Daly, the Union's general secretary, formerly a communist, will persuade the executive which meets on Tuesday, to reject the Pay Board report on its wage claim whatever it offers. . .

Such action would reduce industrial output to practically zero within weeks". (Sunday Telegraph", March 3rd., 1974; p.1.)

"Moderate members of the miners' executive yesterday started to join in with the Left-wing argument on the NUM that no further dealings with Mr. Heath are possible. This would seem to make Mr. Heath's position almost impossible if he intends going through with his plan to remain as Prime Minister. The point was put by Mr. Len Clarke, moderate leader of the Nottinghamshire miners, last night, when he said: 'There will be no settlement for the miners if I had to negotiate with Heath or Whitelaw'. Mr. Clarke went on to say that Mr. Heath's was a 'totally' discredited Government which was simply 'trying to squat at Number 10'". ("The Guardian", March 4th., 1974; p.20).

The result of all this was, of course, that on the evening of March 4th. the Parliamentary Liberal Party formally rejected Heath's proposal for a coalition (only "elder statesman" Jo Grimond was reported to be seriously in favour of accepting), Heath tendered his resignation and THE QUEEN CALLED UPON WILSON TO FORM A MINORITY LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

The monopoly capitalist class had succeeded in manipulating the election almost exactly as they wished :

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"Share prices rose sharply and the pound gained against other currencies as the City recieved news of the new Labour Government". ("The Guardian", March 6th., 1974; p.1).

" A deep sigh of relief was understandable . The City, and business, and industry have been desperate to see the miners back at work at almost any price. Nothing would have been worse than an indefinite extension of three-day working, and that might have been the price of a Conservative Government. . .

And you don't have to walk far in the City to find hard-headed Tory businessmen blaming Mr. Heath for having chosen to fight it out with the wrong union on the wrong issue at the wrong time. From the most true-blue point of view the Conservative Government stands condemned for crass misjudgment". ("The Guardian", March 6th., 1974; p.13).

In our special election issue we expressed the view that

". . . the defeat of the Conservative Party in 1974 would make a change of leadership inevitable". (CLASS AGAINST CLASS, Special Election Issue, 1974, No.4; p.7).

Already, in fact, the Conservatives not directly associated with the debacle of the Heath government are sharpening their knives. An article in "The Spectator" of March 6th, describes Heath as "a ludicrous and broken figure" and as " a squalid nuisance", demanding his resignation from the leadership of the Conservative Party " before he can do any more damage":

"One need glance only at the terrible spectacle of his leading another campaign against Mr. Wilson later this year -- and there must surely be another election this year -- to see the necessity of that".

CONCLUSION

The working class was not directly represented in the general election of February 1974 -- all the political parties contesting the election represented the interests of one section or another of monopoly capital -- and its result was manipulated by the monopoly capitalist majority.

Nevertheless, IT WAS THE WORKING CLASS WHICH PLAYED THE DECISIVE ROLE IN THE ELECTION, For it was the solid unity of the miners in rejecting the attempts of the Heath government to impose Stage Three wage restraints on them, together with the refusal of the rest of the working class to blame the miners for the hardship caused by the totally unnecessary three-day working week, which brought about a split in the monopoly capitalist ruling class on this issue and forced a majority of the monopoly capitalists to organise the "dismissal" of that government.

The first action of the new Labour Government was to instruct the National Coal Board to reach a settlement with the National Union of Mineworkers. The extent of the miners' victory -- which was also a victory for the whole working class - may be seen from a comparison of the wage settlement negotiated on March 6th. with the maximum terms which the former Conservative Government was prepared to allow:

	<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Weekly Increase</u> <u>Stage Three Maximum Offer</u>
Surface Workers:	£6.71	£2.30
Face workers:	£8.21	£2.57
Other underground workers:	£8.71	£2.57

The NCB also agreed to increase the payment for work during "unsocial hours" by 19p. an hour on top of the basic rates; to give an extra week's holiday commencing in 1975; to make a special payment of £30 to all miners as compensation for the Conservative governments blocking under Phase Two of the third week's holiday already negotiated for 1974; to increase the lump retirement sum by £300-£500; to give a 40p. threshold agreement; to give a 50p. shift allowance to craftsmen; and to give greatly improved holiday pay,

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The NUM Executive agreed by 25 votes to 2 to accept the settlement and to call off the strike from March 11th.

The second action of the new Labour government, on March 7th., was to order the end of three-day working from midnight on March 8th.

THE PRINCIPAL LESSON TO BE DRAWN FROM THE GENERAL ELECTION OF FEBRUARY 1974 IS THAT, IF THE WORKING CLASS COULD ATTAIN SUCH A VICTORY SPONTANEOUSLY -- THAT IS, WITHOUT BEING LED BY A MARXIST-LENINIST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY -- ITS ABILITY TO SWEEP AWAY THE WHOLE ROTTEN, CORRUPT SYSTEM OF CAPITALISM UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SUCH A PARTY IS BEYOND THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT.

THE NEED TO BUILD SUCH A PARTY REMAINS THE MOST URGENT TASK FACING THE WORKING CLASS.

SELF FRONT

THE MINERS' FRONT

The development and ultimate victory of the miners' strike against the Conservative government's "Stage Three" wage restraints has been analysed in the pamphlet "National Lockout and Shrewsbury Lock-in" (published by the RED FRONT MOVEMENT in January 1974), in the special election issue of CLASS AGAINST CLASS of February 1974, and in the article "Changing the Guard" in the current issue.

THE RAILWAYS FRONT

In pursuance of a claim for a pay increase of £9.25 a week, plus alterations in the bonus system, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen called a series of one-day stoppages during February and March 1973, together with a ban on overtime and a withdrawal of cooperation.

On March 16th, ASLEF suspended the industrial action in order to take part in further negotiations with the British Railways Board, and on April 18th, the three railway unions -- ASLEF, the National Union of Railwaymen and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association -- agreed to accept an offer by the Board within the government's guidelines of £1 plus 4% (£1.80 to £2.40 a week) payable from May 1st.

On December 3rd., 1973 the executive of ASLEF called a ban on Sunday, rest-day and overtime working, together with a ban on cooperation with the management, in support of a claim for the restructuring of railway pay additional to the normal annual round of pay negotiations. The NUR and the TSSA had accepted in principle a board offer of a two and a half year package deal for all BR employees which would involve increases to £36.95 (from £33) as the basic rate for drivers, with average earnings progressing to £51 over the two and a half year period; increases to £28.65 (from £24.85) for guards; increases to £23.50 (from £21.80) for railmen; together with "unsocial hours" payments.

ASLEF, however, demanded improved "unsocial hours" payments (10% instead of 6%), a "special responsibility" allowance for drivers greater than the £1.50 offered, and payment of a "mileage allowance" after 140 miles instead of 199.

Industrial action commenced on December 11th and was augmented in January by selective one day strikes in the various BR regions. The action was suspended by the ASLEF executive at the commencement of the general election campaign in February at the request of Labour party leader Harold Wilson.

THE CAR FRONT

After a layoff because of a stoppage at the Linwood plant of the US' owned Chrysler car factory, on May 23rd., 1973 the management at the Ryton plant -- instead of waiting for new parts to arrive from Linwood -- supplied the workers on the assembly line with rejected parts. The line became clogged with defective cars and, after being stopped five times during the day, it was halted for good at 2.15 p.m., and the workers sent home.

Next day the workers demanded an assurance that they would be paid for their lost 1½ hours, but the management alleged that they had produced "shoddy work" and refused to give the assurance demanded. An official strike was then called by the Electrical Electronic and Plumbing Union.

Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and Hugh Scanlon, of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering workers, instructed their members to cross the picket lines.

Meanwhile, the workers at Chrysler's Stoke plant continued to produce engines but, as a result of picketing by Ryton workers, the engines did not leave the plant.

At 2 a.m. on the night of June 22-23rd, a number of haulage contractors engaged by the Chrysler management used chains, bottles and bricks to force their way out of the Stoke works through the picket line. The indignation aroused by this action was so great that, faced with the threat of an all-out strike, the Chrysler management agreed to talks with the workers' representatives next day and granted all their demands, plus a £16 holiday bonus.

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NEWS FROM THE "LEFT"

It appears that the revisionist Communist Party is likely to fall victim to property speculators. Within a few weeks the Greater London Council is expected to give final planning permission to Rodell Properties Ltd., landlords of the Communist Party headquarters in King Street, Covent Garden (present book value; £31,000) for its conversion into five-storey buildings (value ££1,250,000) which will include offices, shops, showrooms and a restaurant.

But things are not so gloomy for the CPGB as they appear. The five directors of Rodell Properties Ltd. include: Tony Chater (editor-elect of the "Morning Star"); Denis Ellwand (the Party's treasurer); Gladys Easton (former chairman of the London District Committee of the party and a Communist candidate in Wandsworth in 1970); Gladys Brooks (a leading figure in the party's trade union activities); and Judith Todd (the secretary of the company, which has its offices above the party's Central Books shop in Grays Inn Road).

.....

The maoist "Finsbury Communist Association" seeking a "theoretical" basis for their support of pseudo-nationalism in Scotland, Wales and even Cornwall, in its pamphlet "Stalin's 'Definition' of a Nation" (December 1972) rejects this definition -- which forms the foundation of Marxist-Leninist analysis of the national question -- as a "hotchpotch" of "Great-National Chauvinism".

.....

The maoist "Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)" published an article in the Summer 1973 issue of its journal which endorses the view put forward by the right-wing extremists of the United Ulster Unionists that:

"...Northern Ireland is not a colony but is essentially a part of the British nation state".
("Marxist Leninist Quarterly", No.5, Summer 1973; p. 29).

.....

The maoist "British and Irish Communist Organisation" has now endorsed, though in far less subtle terms, the illusory concept of "peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism" put forward by the revisionist Communist Party;

"The working class must adopt definite political aims capable of being achieved through the use of political force reflected in Parliament and legal enactment which have the effect of taking political power away from the capitalist class. ...An example of a definite political aim capable of being achieved through the use of political force being reflected in Parliament which has the effect of taking political power away from the capitalist class is workers' control.

I would be careful to see in a Tory Govt. after the enactment of socialist measures, not necessarily counter-revolution or even an attempt at it. A more likely explanation is that no society can move forward without stint or pause for consolidation of change. After a big reform or radical change, a period when even the working class must absorb and come to grips with the meaning in practice of the change is vital. If this respite is not found, then fatigue and loss of determination to move forward may result. There is no reason why a Tory govt. should not preside over such a period of consolidation if the working class keeps its habitual watch over Governmental activity. Thus, the ability to take a view of

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change and political aims that spans more than 5 years is a condition of likelihood of a peaceful transition. ...

The third condition of likelihood is that the bourgeoisie should continue behaving as they have done since 1688 in England -- i.e., with a habitual and reflexive distrust of a standing army and state machine, ..

The classes of Britain today fulfil the conditions defined above for a possible and likely transition to socialism. ...To deny that this is the case is to seriously impair the working class's ability to combat the capitalist class. .. If the working class in Britian organises on the assumption that a state machine and standing army exist which the capitalist class are in the habit of using, then it is hard to see how it will take political power."

("A Peaceful Transition to Socialism in Britain is Both Possible and Likely", in: "Problems of Communism", No.1, Spring 1974; p.5,6,7)

Lest readers might think that the article expressed only the individual aberration of its author, N. Stead, the Editor of the journal states:

"The first article in this issue on the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in Britain can be taken as reflecting the attitude of the organisation to this question at the present time".
(Ibid.; p. 1)

.....

In June the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party recommended that the proscription of 42 organisations alleged to be linked to the revisionist Communist Party or trotskyite organisations should be ended. The organisations declared "respectable" included the Marx Memorial Library, the British Peace Committee, the National Association of Women, the League for Democracy in Greece, the British-Soviet Friendship Society, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students. The proscription will continue against parties and organisations which put up candidates against the Labour Party at elections.

.....

In 1973, the trotskyite "Socialist Labour League" changed its name to the "Revolutionary Workers' Party"

.....

In September Len Murray succeeded Vic Feather at General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress. Murray belongs to a new type of trade union bureaucrat who has hardly seen a factory except from his car. After studies at London, Cambridge and Oxford Universities, he obtained on graduation a post as research assistant at the TUC, and in 1969 became Deputy to Feather.

In January 1974 Feather was raised to the peerage for his services to British capital.

.....

At the Labour Party conference in October, a motion calling for the withdrawal of Britain from the European Economic Community was defeated in favour of one calling for the submission of the question of British membership to the electorate -- this being carried by 5.2 million votes to 0.9 million.

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A resolution calling for the closing down of all nuclear bases, British and US, within British territory was carried against the opposition of the platform by 3.2. million votes to 2.5 million votes; an amendment calling for British withdrawal from NATO was lost by 3.9. million votes to 1.4 million.

The opposition to the National Executive Committee's proposal to nationalise 25 leading companies was successfully led by Wilson and Jack Jones (of the Transport and General Workers' Union), but Wilson promised that a Labour government would nationalise building land, minerals (including oil), ports, shipbuilding, aircraft production and drug manufacture,

A resolution criticising the National Executive Committee for its failure to support the Clay Cross council in its fight against the Housing Finance Act was carried.

"Left-wing" Michael Foot led the opposition to a motion demanding that conference policy should be binding on the Parliamentary Labour Party.

.....

At the congress of the revisionist Communist Party of Great Britain in November, an amendment to the motion on Ireland calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland received

"....only about a dozen votes".
("Morning Star", November 13th., 1973; p.3)

A resolution calling for a Labour government "committed to left policies" was described as

"... the central action call of the Congress"
("Morning Star", November 12th., 1973; p. 1)

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM

Until the passing of the 1971 Immigration Act, a person who had entered Britain illegally after 1968 and had remained undetected for six months or more, was immune from prosecution or deportation. When the new legislation came into force on January 1st., 1973, however, the police began to arrest such persons known to them and to demand that black people with whom they came into contact should produce their passports.

In June 1973 the House of Lords, in dismissing the appeals of a number of black immigrants against their deportation, ruled that the 1971 Act was indeed to be interpreted retrospectively.

The leaders of the Pakistani community in Britain claimed that the police had begun a witch-hunt for illegal immigrants, and the Secretary of the Pakistani Action Committee asked:

"Are we now supposed to carry our passports around with us all the time? That is not so very different from South Africa, where you have to carry an identity card".

Martin Loney, the General Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties,

described the legislation as

"...an invitation to every thug in the National Front to go out and find an illegal immigrant and report him to the police".

Protests against the Act were also made by Sir Geoffrey Wilson, Chairman of the Race Relations Board, and Mark Bonham-Carter, Chairman of the Community Relations Council.

The retrospective operation of the Act gave a new lease of life to blackmailers -- often those who had brought on the immigrants illegally in the first place.

In July 1973 more than 6,000 West Indians, Pakistanis and Indians marched through London in a demonstration of protest against the government's immigration policies -- and particularly against the 1971 Act. A petition presented to Heath declared:

'You must remember Nazi Germany and other fascist movements of the 'thirties and how they fooled the unsuspecting working people on the bandwagon of prejudice against one minority group or the other!'

In protest against the operation of the legislation, the Indian Workers' Association withdrew from the Community Relations Councils.

In November 130 delegates representing thousands of Midlands trade unionists held a conference to discuss ways in which the trade union movement could "combat racial discrimination".

THE UGLY FACE OF CAPITALISM

The still continuing saga of "Watergate" in the United States was the most notable example of the corruption inherent in capitalist society to be uncovered in 1973 -- the corruption which former Prime Minister Edward Heath called in July

"...the unacceptable face of capitalism".

But even a half dozen of the many scandals exposed in Britain in the last year demonstrate that the British monopoly capitalists and their servants do not lag far behind their US counterparts in this respect.

In May 1973, during a High Court action on the board room squabble among the directors of Lonrho, it was revealed that former Conservative Minister Duncan Sandys, on his appointment as Chairman of the company at a salary of £38,000 a year, had been allotted - without the knowledge of the board -- the sum of £132,000 for "loss of office" as consultant to the company, to be paid through a Lonrho subsidiary in the tax haven of the Cayman Islands.

It was also revealed that the £351,000 of company funds had been used to buy a house for managing director Roland ("Tiny") Rowland; Rowland had promised the board he would repay this money by September 1972, but had not done so.

Lonrho had been built up in the early 1960s with the help of Angus Ogilvie -- the husband of Princess Alexandra -- and his City finance house, Drayton Securities. Another prominent director was Edward Lu Cann, former Chairman of the Conservative Party. The company had acquired a wide variety of dubious interests in Africa, as well as the rights to the Wankel rotary engine; one of its most profitable activities was

THE "WORLD ENERGY CRISIS" AND THE NEW SITUATION OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

WITH MOST OF BRITISH INDUSTRY WORKING A THREE-DAY WEEK, AND WITH CONSTANT GOVERNMENT APPEALS TO "SWITCH OFF SOMETHING" IN ORDER TO "PREVENT THE COUNTRY GRINDING TO A STANDSTILL", WITH "MILLIONS FREEZING TO DEATH" AND "SEWAGE FLOWING THROUGH THE STREETS" (as the Lord Privy Seal has appropriately warned), IT WOULD SEEM THAT 1974 HAD INDEED BROUGHT TO OUR SHORES THE "WORLD ENERGY CRISIS" WHICH OUR PRESS AND POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN GLOOMILY FORECASTING FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

IS THERE REALLY A WORLD SHORTAGE OF ENERGY?

The Distorted Pattern of Energy Consumption

Since the end of World War II, the pattern of energy consumption in the older developed capitalist countries has changed very considerably. The main features of this changed pattern have been:

- 1) a decline in the use of coal, formerly the primary source of energy in these countries, leading in most of them to an absolute fall in coal production;
- 2) a great rise in the use of oil, the proportion of which in the energy pattern of these countries now exceeds that of coal;
- 3) a beginning to the harnessing of nuclear energy.

With regard to the first two of these features, the United States figures are typical:

	Percentage of total energy supply		
	1940	1950	1960
Coal:	52%	38%	23%
Oil:	31%	37%	41%

In Britain, successive governments have pursued a policy of closing down coal mines and making miners redundant, of closing down railways and encouraging the transport of goods by road with the consumption of vastly greater quantities of oil fuel, and of encouraging generally the use of oil in place of coal. As a result, the number of pits has been reduced from 908 in 1947-8 to 285 in 1972-73 (a drop of 68%) and coal output in the same period from 195 million tons a year to 118 million tons a year (a drop of 40%). Even in the shorter period from 1956 to 1970, the number of mineworkers was reduced from 697,000 to 295,000 (a drop of 58%).

The deliberate replacement of coal by oil in many fields has not been caused by any shortage of coal (world coal reserves are adequate for many hundreds of years at current rates of energy consumption and productivity in the coal industry has risen at a high rate in recent years). Nor has it been brought about because oil has been, in general, cheaper than coal -- in the United States, for example, public utilities were paying in 1964 an average of 24.6 cents per million BTU produced from coal against 32.6 cents per million BTU produced from oil.

The basic cause of the replacement of coal by oil in many fields has been THE EXISTENCE OF HUGE CAPITALIST OIL MONOPOLIES CLOSELY TIED TO THE STATE MACHINES OF SEVERAL OF THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES. THESE OIL MONOPOLIES HAVE USED THEIR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER TO BRING ABOUT A DISTORTION OF THE ENERGY PATTERN OF THE OLDER DEVELOPED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO SECURE MAXIMUM PROFITS FOR THEMSELVES.

The relative slowness of the development of nuclear power, which at present contributes only 3% of Britain's energy, has been brought about by the same cause.

Nowhere is this distortion of rational energy patterns in the interests of the oil monopolies more obvious than in Japan, for many years after World War II a semi-colony of United States imperialism. Despite the fact that Japan needs to import 85% of its oil from sources outside its control, the proportion of oil in Japanese energy has risen from 7% in 1950 to almost 60% in 1970.

The "Oil Producing Countries"

There are fifteen industrially undeveloped countries in the world in which the production of oil is at least four times its consumption. The so-called "oil producing countries" have, in most cases, a colonial-type relationship to one or other of the big imperialist powers, and they consist of:

In South America:	Venezuela
In Africa:	Algeria Gabon Libya Nigeria
In south-western Asia:	Abu Dhabi Bahrein Dubai Iran Iraq Kuwait Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia
In south-eastern Asia:	Indonesia.

Excluding the United States and the Soviet Union, these countries produce 90% of the world's oil.

The "International Majors"

80% of the world's oil (other than that produced in North America and in the Soviet bloc of states) is controlled by seven huge monopolies which operate internationally and are known within the oil industry as the "international majors".

Five of these "international majors" are controlled by United States capital:

Exxon Corporation (formerly Standard Oil of New Jersey);
Standard Oil of New York;
Standard Oil of California;
Gulf Oil; and
Texaco.

One is controlled by British capital (and is state-owned to the extent of 49%):

British Petroleum.

And one is controlled jointly by British and Dutch capital:

Royal Dutch Shell.

The ability of the international majors to dominate the world's oil industry has slightly declined in recent years. One factor in this decline has been the formation in 1960 of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to increase the bargaining power of the bourgeoisies of these countries vis à vis the great oil monopolies. Another factor has been the growth of European oil companies, such as the Compagnie Française des Pétroles (CFP) in France and the Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI) in Italy, designed to increase the bargaining power of the Western European imperialists.

The Soviet Oil Industry

The oil industry in tsarist Russia, centred in the Caucasus, was developed rapidly, mainly by foreign capital, until on the eve of World War I Russian oil production was second only to that of the United States.

Following the October socialist revolution of 1917, the oil industry was nationalised and by the late 1920s its production was in excess of the pre-revolutionary level. Soviet energy requirements have long been met primarily from other fuels, and Soviet oil was exported at this time in large quantities as a source of foreign currency for the purchase of equipment required for the country's economic expansion -- mainly to Western Europe where, during the 1930s, Soviet oil had 15% of the market.

During the Second World War exploration revealed the existence of large oilfields in eastern European Russia and, despite intensive post-war reconstruction of the Caucasus installations, within a few years the new fields had become the dominant factor in Soviet oil production. By 1980 Soviet oil production is expected to reach and possibly exceed 400 million tons and to raise the USSR from second to first place in world oil production.

In the late 1950s, following the restoration of an essentially capitalist economy in the Soviet Union by the revisionist leaders of the Communist Party and the consequent transformation of the USSR into a neo-imperialist state, the Soviet government adopted a policy of selling its oil to the neo-capitalist countries of Eastern Europe which have a colonial-type relation with the Soviet Union at relatively high prices, using the super-profits so obtained to offer oil to the imperialist states of Western Europe at cut prices. In recent years all the imperialist states of Western Europe (except Britain and the Netherlands, whose oil economies are tied to Shell and BP), but especially Italy, have taken advantage of these cut prices. As a result Soviet oil exports to Western Europe have increased from 3 million tons a year in 1955 to more than 40 million tons in 1970.

The Soviet plans for the enlargement of the European Economic Community to include the Soviet Union and its dependencies (the "European collective security scheme") are associated with the use of the Soviet oil as a bargaining counter, including proposals to extend the Eastern European pipeline system directly into Western Europe (as has already been done with Soviet natural gas).

The discovery of large submarine oilfields in Western Europe since 1969 has, of course, reduced the long-term bargaining value of Soviet oil in relation to the EEC.

The US Oil Monopolies and the White House

United States imperialism remains the world's largest producer, refiner and consumer of oil -- although it is anticipated that by 1980 this position will have been taken over by the Soviet Union.

In addition to the large oil installations within the United States itself, US oil companies have some \$15,000 million invested abroad (about two-thirds of total US foreign investment), while (as has been said) US capital controls five of the seven international majors.

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Since 1948 the United States has been a net importer of oil. This state of affairs enabled the smaller US oil companies (and some foreign companies, such as Shell) to break into the US oil market in a big way. This was facilitated by the fact that the well-head price of oil produced in the US was roughly twice the landing price of foreign oil. The great oil monopolies thus found their markets and profits severely threatened by the unrestricted importation of foreign oil.

In 1959 the pressure of the US oil monopolies was effective in getting the Eisenhower administration to impose a strict quota system on such importation. The official pretext for this action was "the danger to national security" caused by dependence on vulnerable tankers bringing oil from abroad, and the argument that "national security" would better be served by importing as much oil as possible in peacetime in order to conserve supplies for the event of war was studiously ignored. This, and the fact that South America was included in the quota system, make it clear that the real motive of the oil quota system had nothing to do with "national security", but was designed to protect the prices and profits of the great US oil monopolies.

The effect of the 1959 oil quota system was to limit imports of oil to $\frac{1}{3}$ of total US consumption (the figure pertaining in 1959). Thus, although oil imports could increase, they could increase only in proportion to home production.

The US oil companies whose production was based on foreign oilfields found not only that their home market was restricted, but that they were unable to make good this loss in markets dominated by rival imperialists; they were, therefore, compelled to cut back production in the foreign oilfields under their control. The bigger US oil companies drawing their supplies from sources within the United States took advantage of their now protected position to cut back on the development of their production (from the time of the introduction of the quota system total US oil supplies have been increasing at an average rate of 3% per annum, compared with 15% when oil importation was unrestricted).

The lower rate of increase of US home oil production was due neither to exhaustion of home resources nor to the physical inability of the oil monopolies to increase production. It was the result of a deliberate policy of holding back production in order to maximise prices and profits. It was this policy which was the primary factor in causing an "energy crisis" in the United States which first manifested itself in 1972. The oil monopolies then took advantage of this "energy crisis" to increase their monopoly power within the United States (e.g., by cutting off supplies to independent petrol stations in favour of those controlled by them).

There was a further motive for the holding back of domestic oil production by the US oil monopolies, in addition to that of securing higher profits in the short term. Known liquid oil resources in the United States are estimated to be only 5,600 million tons (barely eight years' supply); but there are within the country vast resources of solid oil in the form of oil shales and tar sands. The technical problems involved in the extraction of oil from these solid sources have long been overcome, but exploitation has been held back by reason of the fact that the profitable cost of production is somewhat higher than that for home-produced oil from liquid sources. Thus, if the production of oil from liquid sources could be held back to the point where its price rose to the level where the extraction of oil from solid sources becomes competitive, the long-term profits of the oil monopolies would also be assured.

A further factor in the "energy crisis" which manifested itself in the United States in 1972 was the holding back, under pressure from the oil monopolies, of the development of nuclear power. Despite the greatly superior productive resources of the United States, despite the fact that scientists employed by US imperialism had

pioneered nuclear research, nuclear power stations were built in the United States with a far smaller capacity than in Britain:

	Number	1967	Capacity in MW
Britain:	13		4,167
United States:	18		2,835

The "energy crisis" which manifested itself in the United States in 1972 was thus not a crisis of resources or of technique; it was a man-made "crisis" resulting from the economic and political policies of the US oil monopolies.

The fact that this "crisis" came about, despite its adverse effects on the majority of US monopoly capitalists, was due to the fact that since 1963 the oil monopolies had been among the monopoly capitalist groups which had gained control over the Executive branch of the state.

"The Watergate affair", which broke through to the surface in 1973, reflected the campaign of the majority of the US monopoly capitalists to seize back control of the White House from this minority.

(A detailed analysis of this struggle within the ranks of the US monopoly capitalist ruling class appeared in the special edition of CLASS AGAINST CLASS of January 1974 entitled "Watergate: The Unmaking of the President").

Retreating to some extent before this campaign, at Easter 1973 the Nixon administration abolished the oil import quota system, and the economic and political struggle of the US oil monopolies took on a new form.

By the beginning of 1974 two Senate sub-committees, acting on behalf of the US monopoly capitalist majority, were investigating the activities of the oil companies and their role in the "energy crisis".

A typical example of the manoeuvres of the oil monopolies was quoted by Paul Unger in "The Guardian":

"For the past two months the waters of New York and New Jersey shores have served as temporary anchorages for anything from one to two dozen oil tankers. Some have remained there for as long as three weeks before finally putting into harbour for unloading. ...

From January 4 to 16 ... the German tanker Caparata rode at anchor in New York harbour with 186,489 barrels of heating oil in its hold, while many in oil-starved New York shivered in sub-zero cold.

During these 12 days the inshore spot 'cash' price of the Caparata's contents leaped from \$8.65 a barrel to \$12.26 a barrel. ... That put the profit for the 12-day delay at ... £280,000". ("The Guardian", January 25th., 1974; p.1).

The conclusion to be drawn from this and other evidence was summarised in "The Guardian" on the following day:

"More evidence began piling up that the fuel crisis here may have been artificially created by the oil industry".

("The Guardian", January 26th., 1974; p.1). and by the Washington correspondent of the "Evening Standard", Jeremy Campbell, on February 25th.:

"The suspicions of Congress are already aroused over reports over the weekend that a 'grey market' operated by freelance oil brokers who claim to have millions of gallons of high priced petrol for sale has developed in the United States.

The Government's energy office concedes that such a grey market exists and that the oil is not accounted for in reports of total supply provided by the oil industry to the Government. Congressmen charge it 'borders on fraud'.

Some mystery surrounds the question of where the oil brokers obtain the vast quantity of petrol but much of it appears to have been held back by the leading oil companies in America and overseas to await higher prices. Some was originally refined for use in Europe, but was attracted to the US by the prospect of rising prices as the shortage worsens. ...

Reports of this kind are leading many Americans to the conclusion that the petrol crisis here is fraudulent, just as the Shah said and is being manipulated to increase the profits of the big companies". ("Evening Standard", February 25th., 1974; p.8).

The "energy crisis" which they had engineered proved indeed extremely profitable to the oil monopolies. The profits of the Exxon Corporation in 1973 were 60% up on the previous year at \$2,500 million, while those of Texaco were 45% up at \$1,292 million.

The struggle between the majority of US monopoly capitalists and the US oil monopolies continues to be reflected in a struggle between Congress and the Nixon administration. On March 6th. Nixon vetoed the Emergency Energy Bill

".. because Congress had added amendments which would keep down the price of some types of crude oil produced in the United States. It was intended to curb what are widely considered to be excessive profits by the major US oil companies". ("The Guardian", March 7th., 1974; p.2).

OIL AND THE MIDDLE EAST WAR

Oil played a significant role in the Middle East War of October 1973, as the MLOB pointed out in its analysis of that war:

"By the summer of 1970 it had become clear to the most influential section of the United States imperialists that it would be essential for the USA to import large quantities of oil in the next few years from the Arab states in the Middle East. This meant that full support of Israel against these Arab states was no longer in the best interests of the US imperialists.

From this time on the US imperialists made their position clear to the Arab Middle East governments. They would endeavour to persuade the Israeli government to withdraw 'voluntarily' to the boundaries existing before the war of 1967. And if those attempts failed, they would hold back (without discontinuing entirely) their military 'aid' to Israel and would tacitly approve of an all-out war on the part of the Arab states against Israel. ...

Whatever the military outcome of such a war might be, it would gravely weaken the military and economic power of Israel and facilitate the imposition upon its government of a new cease-fire compelling it to accept the terms of the Security Council resolution of November 1967. ...

The US imperialists have, in a new world situation, given the green light to the Arab states".

(CLASS AGAINST CLASS, Special Edition, October 1973; p.3,4).

The war and the subsequent peace negotiations have to date followed closely the pattern of this analysis, which was written shortly after the war began.

THE "ENERGY CRISIS" STRIKES EUROPE AND JAPAN

As a complimentary to their military action against Israel, the Middle East Arab oil-producing states announced a boycott on the export of their oil to states which did not publicly support their war aims. The EEC states and Japan immediately declared such support, and were declared to have been exempted from the boycott, which

was stated by the Arab states to be being operated mainly against the United States.

The oil monopolies, however, on the pretext of sharing shortfalls "fairly" among all their customers, proceeded to hold back from supply to the states not covered by the boycott, oil coming from non-Arab states (principally Iran and Nigeria) and to transfer this oil to the countries covered by the boycott. Thus, as a result of the manoeuvres of the oil companies, the Arab states' oil boycott caused a much greater "energy crisis" in Western Europe and Japan than in the United States, which was still much less dependent upon imported oil than its imperialist rivals. In fact, the "fairness" of the oil monopolies was such that, as the Shah of Iran told CBS interviewer Mike Wallace in February, oil supplies to the United States were not in fact reduced at all:

"When the interviewer, Mike Wallace, mentioned the oil embargo, the Shah said sharply: 'I don't know why you attach so much importance to that. You have imported more oil than at any time in the past!..

'You mean we are still importing more oil than we were in September?', Wallace replied; 'you believe, that?'

'I cannot say for sure', the Shah replied. 'but what is certain is that you are not importing less'.

'You seem to be saying is that some fraud is involved'.

'Well something is going on for sure' ...

'And who is being enriched by it?'

'The oil companies', the Shah replied at once".

("Evening Standard", February 25th., 1974; p.1).

It was also the oil monopolies, in collaboration with the Nixon administration, which encouraged the oil-producing states -- both Arab and non-Arab -- to increase the price of their oil by 400% within a few weeks. From the viewpoint of the US oil monopolies, this action gave them protection from cheap imported oil greater than that which they had enjoyed under the quota system abolished in 1973.

Already the oil monopolies are moving in a big way to exploit the new economic resources of shale oil in the Rockies:

"Colorado is on the edge of the boom she has been patiently expecting for the past 50 years. She is about to become the oil capital of the entire world. . .

Ten years ago when world oil prices were fairly low . . . little was done to exploit the oil shale deposits. . . Now, though, oil prices have moved into the realms of reality so far as these mountain deposits are concerned. . .

So they are streaming in now, hoping to win a piece of the action from an oil reserve now conservatively estimated at 600 billion barrels -- enough to supply the needs of the United States for a century or more. . .

In a decade or less, it is now officially forecast, one million barrels of oil will be produced from the shale fields here every day. . . Those in the industry . . . prefer to forecast production of five million barrels a day -- one-fifth of all expected consumption.

The scale of the oil companies' confidence in the Rockies was evident last month when the first of the 5,000 acres of federally owned land bearing the miracle rock was offered up here for 20 year lease. . .

The winners, Standard Oil of Indiana and the Gulf Corporation, put in a bid of no less than \$210 millions. And only last week, when the second of the six Federal tracts was offered, TOSCO and Atlantic Richfield, Ashland, and Shell got together and bid \$118 millions for the right to produce oil a few miles to the south".
(Simon Winchester in: "The Guardian", February 26th., 1974; p.13).

This large increase in the price of imported oil will, of course, be very serious for the economies of the West European and Japanese imperialists since such a large proportion of their oil has to be imported.

The French and British imperialists, in particular, have sought to alleviate their problems in this respect by signing bilateral agreements with individual oil-producing states for the supply of oil at special rates in return for the supply of arms and industrial equipment. On January 7th., for example, Sheikh Yamani, Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister, confirmed a deal with the French government under which his country would supply 40 million tons of oil a year to France (almost one-third of France's current consumption) in exchange for Mirage jet aircraft and heavy arms; at the same time a similar deal, valued at £200 million, was in process of negotiation with Britain. And on February 10th. France and Iran signed an agreement under which, in return for assured supplies of Iranian oil, France would build 5 nuclear power plants, a gas liquefaction plant, a petrochemical complex and a steel works in Iran, a pipeline to bring Iranian natural gas to Europe and a fleet of gas tankers, -- the total value of the agreement being estimated at £700 million.

The US imperialists, however, were interested in making use of the "energy crisis" which they had been largely instrumental in bringing about, in order to recover their declining domination over Western Europe and Japan. The US government publicly denounced bilateral deals for oil, and as a result of the pressure of the US imperialists, their puppet government in Saudi Arabia refrained from signing the deals negotiated with France and Britain. And, in pursuance of their strategy, the US imperialists invited the Western European and Japanese imperialists to attend in February an "energy conference" in Washington, with the purpose of setting up US-dominated international machinery for energy. As French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert declared after the conference:

"The conference was not about energy at all. It was simply an attempt to get Europe (and Japan) back into an Atlantic system".

The manoeuvres of the US imperialists which led to the great increase in oil prices made by the oil-producing states also formed a part of this same strategy. The journal "Petroleum Economist" estimates that, as a result of these increased prices, the oil revenues of the states belonging to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries will rise from \$35,000 million in 1973 to \$116,000 million in 1974, and the aim of the US imperialists is that part of the large extra sum accruing to those oil-producing states under US domination will be used for economic penetration by these puppet governments into Western Europe, as the Shah of Iran admitted to Johannes Engel:

Engel: By hurting Western industry now, you are going to hurt your own policy aims.

Shah: No, because first of all we can plough back a lot of the oil money to those Western countries. . .

Engel: Could you envisage investing in Western Germany, in refineries, petrol stations, or even the motor industry?

Shah: I could. It all depends on what I can get. The petrochemical industry is interesting for us. . . Why shouldn't I just have some shares in Bayer?

Engel: Or some shares in Daimler-Benz or Volkswagen?

Shah: Something like this, why not? And this goes for the rest of the European countries."

("The Guardian", January 11th., 1974; p.12).

NORTH SEA OIL AND THE EEC

The imperialist powers of Europe and Asia emerged from World War II greatly

weakened and dependent upon United States imperialism.

The imperialist powers of continental Europe, headed by the French imperialists, were the first to begin to break free of US domination, this action being reflected in the formation of the European Economic Community.

British imperialism was, and remains, the weakest of the imperialist powers of Western Europe.

(The reasons for this weakness were analysed in the special edition of CLASS AGAINST CLASS, No. 4, 1974, dealing with the general election; p.2-3).

Because of this weakness the British imperialists were in 1970 faced with two alternative foreign policies, each involving a subordinate role in an alliance with a stronger imperialist power or group of powers: a majority of British monopoly capitalists favoured breaking free of US imperialism, by then on the decline from its post-war position of supremacy, and the seeking of a junior role -- the only role the economic and military weakness of British imperialism would permit -- within an enlarged EEC; a minority of British monopoly capitalists wished to continue a policy of dependence upon US imperialism. At the time of the 1970 general election the first group was represented politically by the Conservative Party, the second group by the Labour Party.

As the MLOB pointed out at the time, one of the reasons for the "dismissal" of the Labour government in 1970 was the fact that it was tied to what had become a minority section of British monopoly capital which wished to eschew the EEC and continue the "special relationship" of dependence upon US imperialism:

"Because of its unwillingness to break its special dependence upon that (now minority) section of British monopoly capital which favours collaboration with, and subordination to, US imperialism, the Labour Party had ceased to be, at least for the time being, effective in serving the foreign policy desired by the dominant section of the British imperialists".

(RED FRONT, August/September 1970; p.7).

The opposition of the leadership of the Labour Party to Britain's joining the EEC was not at this time made public. On the contrary, the party's 1970 election manifesto promised:

"Negotiations . . . will be pressed with determination with the purpose of joining an enlarged Community provided that British and essential Commonwealth interests can be safeguarded".

In July 1971, however, the leadership of the Labour Party threw off the mask of support for Britain's entry into the EEC, when the National Executive Committee of the party resolved, by 16 votes to 6,

". . . to oppose entry into the Common Market on the terms negotiated by the Conservative government".

This resolution was confirmed by the Labour Party conference in October of the same year.

Since the terms negotiated by the Conservative government for entry into the EEC were, for the British imperialists, the best that could be obtained at that time in view of Britain's continued economic weakness, the resolution was effectively one of opposing Britain's entry into the EEC. and since this same economic weakness prevented the possibility of British imperialism breaking free from the domination of the US imperialists without the support of the continental West European imperialist powers, this resolution was also effectively one of supporting continued subordination to the United States.

Meanwhile, however, significant changes in the economic prospects for British imperialism had been taking place.

The discovery of a large field of underground natural gas in Holland in 1959 raised the possibility of the existence of other such fields beneath the North Sea and led to the granting by the British government, from 1964 on, of licences for the exploration for, and exploitation of, hydrocarbons in the areas of the North Sea allocated by international agreement to Britain. In December 1965 the first of 5 major fields of natural gas was discovered in the British zone, and by March 1967 the first natural gas was being piped ashore.

In December 1969 the Amoco-Gas Council consortium struck oil 150 miles off Aberdeen, and in October 1970 -- four months after the general election -- the first of 15 major oilfields, that known as the "Forties", was discovered. The great North Seas oil rush had begun.

By 1980, on the basis of present proven deposits of 30,000 million tons (valued at £130,000 million), British oil production could be running at 150 million tons a year -- 25% above total current consumption in Britain -- making Britain the sixth largest oil producer in the world.

This radical change in the economic prospects of British imperialism has led to the development of a new policy trend within the British monopoly capitalist ruling class, so that there are now, on the question of Britain's relations with the EEC, three distinct sections within this class:

one section of British monopoly capitalists wishes Britain to remain within the EEC on the terms already negotiated; this section is represented politically, so far as a foreign policy is concerned, by the Conservative Party led by Edward Heath and by the Liberal Party led by Jeremy Thorpe;

a second section wishes to try to use the increased bargaining power of British imperialism to "re-negotiate Britain's terms of entry" into the EEC. This section hopes to take advantage of the inter-imperialist contradictions between Germany and France to collaborate with the West German imperialists in bringing about the transformation of the Community from a bloc in rivalry with US imperialism into a bloc dependent -- in the name of "Atlantic solidarity" -- upon US imperialism; this section is represented politically, so far as foreign policy is concerned, by the Labour Party led by Harold Wilson;

a third section holds that such a transformation of the EEC is impossible to bring about, and wishes Britain to withdraw from the EEC and -- although they do not say so openly -- re-establish Britain's former "special relationship" of dependence upon US imperialism outside the EEC; this section is represented politically, so far as foreign policy is concerned, by the Powellite wing of the Conservative Party, by the fascist National Front and by the revisionist Communist Party

Both these last two sections of monopoly capital are linked with United States monopoly capital, but the third section is prepared for the moment to give its support to the second section, being convinced that the efforts to transform the EEC will meet with failure and establish the correctness of its prognosis.

It was in order to place itself at the service of the second section of monopoly capital, while retaining the immediate support of the third section, that the leaders of the Labour Party began to develop the party's policy in relation to the EEC. At the Labour Party Conference in 1972, they secured the defeat of a motion calling for "complete withdrawal (from the EEC) on any terms" (which would have enabled the party to serve only the third section of monopoly capital) in favour of one pledging a Labour government to seek to renegotiate the terms of entry. The principles embodied in this resolution were included in the Labour Party's election manifesto of February 1974:

"A profound political mistake made by the Heath government was to accept the terms of entry to the Common Market, and to take us in without the consent of the British people. . .

If renegotiations do not succeed, we shall not regard the Treaty obligations as binding upon us. We shall then put to the British people the reasons why we find the new terms unacceptable, and consult them on the advisability of negotiating our withdrawal from the Communities".
(Labour Party Election Manifesto, February 1974, cited in: "The Guardian", February 9th., 1974; p.6).

This policy enabled the Labour Party to serve -- in the short run -- the interests of both the last two sections of the British monopoly capitalist class described above, both of which had a common interest in defeating the first section, represented by the Conservative Party headed by Edward Heath.

(The election aspects of this situation are discussed in more detail in the article "Changing the Guard" in this issue of CLASS AGAINST CLASS).

THE HEATH GOVERNMENT AND THE OIL COMPANIES

In discussing the reasons why the Heath government pursued its attempt to impose its rigid wage restraint system on the miners beyond the point where serious and unnecessary damage was being done to the profits of the British monopoly capitalist class as a whole, the MLOB pointed out that

". . . the minority section of monopoly capitalists still represented by the Heath government embrace sections which would suffer negligibly from a grave coal and steel crisis -- for example, those linked with oil, property and land".

(CLASS AGAINST CLASS, Special Edition, No. 4, 1974; p.8).

But the fact that the Heath government was tending to serve the interests of the great oil companies at the expense of the majority of the British monopoly capitalist class was obvious long before its confrontation with the miners in 1973-74.

In March 1973 the Committee of Public Accounts of the House of Commons published a report which constituted an unprecedented and damning indictment of the government's policy in relation to the oil companies in respect of North Sea oil. It pointed out that the terms of the four successive rounds of licensing had remained virtually unaltered between the time when North Sea oil was no more than a risky gamble and the time when the presence of huge deposits had been assured. And it found that, as a result of the highly privileged tax position accorded to the oil companies by the government, they had paid virtually no tax in Britain for many years -- a total of £ $\frac{1}{2}$ million between 1965 and 1972.

As Bennie Gray and Christopher Booker point out in the Business Section of "The Observer", the concessions of the Conservative government to the oil companies operating in the North Sea are

". . . big enough to mark out Britain as one of the oilmen's friendliest host countries anywhere in the world".

("How to Stop the Sell-Out", in: "The Observer", February 17th., 1974; p.13).

Defending his government's policy in relation to the oil companies during the 1974 election campaign Heath declared:

"If you want to see the acceptable face of capitalism, go out to an oil rig in the North Sea. . .

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By 1979 ... the capital costs would amount to about £2,000 millions
By 1979 ... the capital costs would amount to about £2,000 millions.
This is risk capital with a vengeance".
(Edward Heath: Speech on February 18th., 1974, cited in: "The Guardian",
February 19th., 1974; p. 6).

Gray and Booker, however, present a somewhat different picture of this private investment:

"As a result of capital allowances, ... for every £1 invested by the oil companies, 60% of which are foreign owned, the British taxpayer will be putting in £4".
(Ibid.; p. 13).

They point out that gross profits accruing to the oil companies from North Sea oil will be

"... more than £1,000 million a year. This is considerably more than the latest figure for gross profits made by the whole of the UK manufacturing industry. ..

And the most extraordinary fact of all in this story of this astonishing sell-out is that, as things stand at present, almost the whole of this gigantic profit would go untaxed".
("The North Sea Sell-Out", in; "The Observer", February 10th., 1974;p.13).

With the aim of preventing, in their own interests, this sell-out to the oil monopolies, an influential section of British monopoly capitalists is now demanding state control of North Sea oil operations, including the setting up of a state oil company such as exists in France and Italy:

" What, then, is the solution? It is surprisingly obvious and scarcely revolutionary: it is simply that Britain, like France, Italy and many other countries, should set up her own State oil company. The company's most important single function would be to act as monopoly buyer for all the oil produced in the North Sea, as the Gas Council already is for gas.

The company would buy the oil at an 'administered price', which could be regulated in accordance with changing circumstances -- but which in essence would be the lowest price at which there would still be an incentive to continue the desired level of production. The State oil company would then either refine and market the oil itself -- as ENI does in Italy -- or sell it back to the companies at 'the going rate'.

Based on our calculations, the oil companies would be able to sell North Sea oil to a State oil company on present costs at about \$3 a barrel, and still make a return on investment comparable with anywhere in the world. ...

By 1980, this would give the State oil company revenues of more than £3,000 million a year.

Not only would this clearly provide Britain with a much greater return from her North Sea assets than could practicably be achieved by any other method -- but the State oil company would be in a position to ensure that the oil companies still had plenty of incentive to maintain their momentum of search and production.

First, it would be able to provide finance for the colossal investment programmes of the private oil companies.

Secondly, it could control and coordinate production -- as is done

even in Texas -- to ensure that Britain's finite oil reserves are exploited only at a rate governed by the national interest, and that over-production does not take place simply to serve foreign markets.

Thirdly, it would have the resources to conduct its own ever-widening exploration and production programme".

("How to Stop the Sell-Out", in: "The Observer", February 17th., 1974;p.13)

The leaders of the Labour Party, anxious in the new situation to serve the interests of the monopoly capitalist majority in this as in other fields, now stand for precisely the above policy. Although the party's election manifesto is somewhat vaguely worded, promising only that a Labour government will

"secure not only that the North Sea oil resources are in full public ownership, but that the operation of getting and distributing them is under full government control".

(Labour Party Election Manifesto, 1974, cited in: "The Observer", February 17th., 1974, p.13),

its less publicised policy statements include the setting up of a State oil company along the lines envisaged above:

"Although you would never guess it from their manifesto, this apparently ideal solution to the North Sea problem (i.e., the setting up of a State oil company --- Ed.) is already the official policy of the Labour Party.

It at last year's Labour Party conference was adopted almost by default.

From our conversations last week with senior members of the Labour Party, including Shadow Secretary for Energy Tony Benn, there is no doubt that, if Labour is elected, this is precisely the policy which they intend to follow".

(Ibid.; p. 13).

In an election speech Heath distorted the Labour Party policy by describing it as

"...nationalisation of the oil programme".

(Edward Heath: Election Speech, February 18th., 1974, cited in: "The Guardian", February 19th., 1974; p. 6),

and, loyal to the oil companies to the end, denounced it:

"This Labour nonsense .. is exactly the kind of dogmatic and impractical politics which we Conservatives are trying to prevent. It is exactly opposed to the stable and rational Government which the oil companies trusted Britain to have when they made their huge investments. Among all the disastrous proposals on Labour's programme, this would be the worst". (Ibid.; p. 26).

CONCLUSION

The immediate "world energy crisis" is not a crisis of resources or of technology. IT IS A MAN-MADE CRISIS RESULTING FROM THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POLICIES OF THE GREAT OIL MONOPOLIES AND OF IMPERIALIST STATES -- PARTICULARLY THE USA -- CLOSELY LINKED WITH THESE MONOPOLIES.

There is, of course, a real long-term "world energy crisis" in the sense that

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resources of energy on the form of coal and oil are limited. But the technical problems of obtaining virtually limitless supplies of energy from nuclear sources, from the sea, from the sun, etc., have already been largely solved. The problem is that capitalism in decay is becoming increasingly a fetter on the development of these energy sources, so that the long-term energy crisis can be solved ONLY BY THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY, IN WHICH PRODUCTION IS GEARED TO PROFIT, AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY A SOCIALIST SOCIETY, IN WHICH PRODUCTION IS PLANNED TO MEET THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE.

THE "WORLD ENERGY CRISIS" -- BOTH IN ITS FRAUDULENT SHORT-TERM ASPECT AND ITS REAL LONG-TERM ASPECT -- IS A REFLECTION OF THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM.

SALUTE TO CLAY CROSS!

The small Derbyshire town of Clay Cross (population: 10,000) has become famous throughout Britain for the action of its 11 Labour councillors who -- in defiance of the Conservative government's Housing Finance Act 1972 -- refused to increase the rents of its 1,600 council houses.

The government proceeded to "surcharge" the councillors with nearly £7,000 of uncollected rents; they refused to pay.

The government installed a housing commissioner to collect the rents; the councillors refused him accommodation and the tenants refused to pay him.

In August 1973 the councillors defied the Conservative government again by giving pay rises to the council's 60 manual workers in excess of the amount permitted by the government.

In March 1974, after the councillors had been disqualified from holding office by Master of the Rolls Lord Denning, new elections were held. 10 of the 11 Labour candidates pledged to continue defiance of the Housing Finance Act were elected. Charles Bunting, the former housing chairman, said:

"The rent collectors will not collect the higher rent under the Housing Finance Act and the new council will advise tenants not to pay higher rents. The election has proved a full vindication of our actions and it has been a smashing victory".

All militant workers will salute the councillors of Clay Cross, who have set an example of self-sacrificing struggle for the defence of the interests of the working people that is almost unique at the present time and who have demonstrated the utter falsity of the claim that working people shy away from honest militancy in favour of legalistic "moderation".

SHOP FRONT

THE ENGINEERING FRONT

In June 1970 the 172 workers at the US' owned Fine Tubes factory in Plymouth struck in support of a wage claim. The leaderships of two trade unions nominally supported the strike, but did almost nothing to secure the backing of Fine Tubes products, and even cut off strike pay after 12 months. Only from below did the strike receive support from other sections of the working class.

The strike was continued until June 1973 -- making it the longest strike in British history -- by which time increasing hardship had reduced the number of strikers to 31. In its statement announcing the calling off of pickets, the strike committee declared that the decision "has been made with great regret, but we all feel it is better to end the strike when we are still an organised body rather than watch it disintegrate.

(Continued on page 40)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STUDENT MEMBERS OF THE CPGB

DEAR COMRADE,

Whatever one may feel about the revisionist policies of the Communist Party of Great Britain as a whole, it is often difficult to apply these criticisms directly to student members of the Party. The reason is not that these members have realised how utterly degenerate the CP has become, but rather that the student member is in a somewhat different position from the rank-and-file worker member. A considerable breach has opened up between many student branches and the rest of the party, mainly as a result of the privileged position which students tend to enjoy in major university towns to the detriment of the townspeople, so that "comradely relations" within the party are often replaced by bitter antagonisms. These antagonisms are due to the fact that the class relationship which has existed for years (the so-called business of "town and gown") is reflected and even magnified within the party.

Would such conflicts occur if the Party were truly based on genuine Marxist-Leninist principles? Clearly not. But the ludicrous situation can arise -- and has arisen -- where two secretaries of CP branches in the same town, one at the university and the other of townspeople, will ignore each other completely if they pass in the street.

Student members of the CP tend to fall into three categories:

Firstly, there are those who joined on paper at the same time as they joined the Table Tennis Club; their feelings are vaguely socialist (although they would not know the difference between the National Front and a National Liberation Front); they would never sell the "Morning Star" or attend a meeting to save their lives, but found it vaguely exciting to be able to say "Look, I'm a Communist!".

Secondly, there is a small group of "hack-workers". These tend to do an enormous amount of purely physical work. They sell the "Star" valiantly; they organise meetings and write letters; their grasp of Marxism-Leninism is small, as is their knowledge of CP policy, but they are perhaps the most honest members still to be found in the CP.

The tendency is for this category of student members to be exploited by a third group, the "super-actives", the "whizz-kids" of the student left, who are utterly immersed in committees and counter-committees, adhoc committees and pro-tem committees. There is no denying the vital need for a strong, fighting union for all students, nor the important help which students can give to working-class struggles; but the "super-actives" tend to see the student world as a universe of its own, with its own political battles, its own class struggles; and unconsciously the situation begins to evolve where the next political move for the student is seen as more important than that for the worker, the next student demonstration more important than the strikers' picket. Once again the university takes priority over the town.

The CPGB leadership tends to regard its student members (not without justification) with a degree of caution and even cynicism. The Annual Student Conference is not allowed to Pass resolutions, although the Executive Committee sends formal fraternal greetings. The Student Organiser is supported by donations from student members alone, unlike other full-time Party workers. Even the general body of party members has reservations about student members, since all too often the students' red banner is used to decorate a lecture platform rather than as a symbol of comradeship.

The active student member of the CP is thus dragged along behind the super-organisers, not quite sure what is wrong with his party but as yet convinced that anyone on

the Left not "holding a card" is "plainly of trotskyite intent" (as a leading member of Cambridge University Communist Party expressed it in May 1973, referring to the MLOB).

A small minority make some impression in carrying on their own miniature wars within the essentially petty-bourgeois structure of the student world, but even they tend to be submerged by the tide of events once a genuine mass movement is under way among students and sweeps the bureaucracy along with it.

There are close to a thousand student members of the CP, cynically acknowledged by the party, often the object of suspicion by the workers, and fragmented among themselves. How many are honest enough to examine their party and its role in the spectrometer of Marxism-Leninism?

S.Wiles,
Cambridge University

THE CPGB AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Dear Comrade,

I should like to comment upon and amplify the references in "What is to be done now" (p. 24) to the C.P.G.B. as supporters of neo-colonialism.

It is instructive first to see how the Communist Party leadership hoodwinked honest Party members by introducing their outright revisionist policy towards the colonies in gradual stages.

Already in "The socialist road for Britain" (Dec. 1949), the Communist Party's general election programme adopted at the 21st Congress, the Party spoke of the "development of trade and economic co-operation with them (the colonial peoples) on a basis of equality and mutual benefit" which can "assist to solve the economic problems equally for those peoples and ourselves" (p.23). This comment, however, stood in relation to references to "the thinly veiled imperialist intervention which still goes on in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Burma" and to "the unequal treaties which conceal domination and intervention in Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt" (p. 22).

When the Executive Committee issued "The British road to socialism" (Feb. 1951) they no longer spoke of the operation of neo-colonialism in the Indian sub-continent but continued to rebuke "the efforts to maintain Britain's strategic, political and economic stranglehold in Egypt, Persia and the Middle East generally" (p. 6 of the revised version adopted at the 22nd Congress in April 1952). The revised version of 1952, even more than the original version, notes the pressures of U.S. imperialism upon Britain's spheres of influence (p.9):

"This would provide the basis for a new, close, voluntary and fraternal association of the British people and the liberated peoples of the present Empire to promote mutually beneficial economic exchange and co-operation, and to defend in common their freedom against American imperialist aggression."

The general election programme "A policy for Britain" (Feb. 1955) likewise calls attention to the encroachments of U.S. imperialism (p. 15):

"Such a policy would not only lead to the freedom of the colonies but to friendly, fraternal relations between their peoples and ourselves. We could work together in harmony to defend our common independence and world peace against American designs."

It is well to recall that all these revisionist formulations were put

forward when the Soviet Union either was still a socialist state or had not come out openly with revisionist policies. After the notorious 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (Feb. 1956), however, a number of leading Party members felt that the time had arrived for a more clearly stated neo-colonialist approach to the former colonial countries. A commission was appointed by the Executive Committee to prepare a revised draft of "The British Road to Socialism" and held its meetings between the middle of August and 1st December 1956. A minority of the commission proposed an alternative paragraph in the section "Alliance of the British people with the peoples of the Empire" (pp. 8-12 of the draft revised text). At the 25th Congress (Apr. 1957) R. Palme Dutt carried the amendment against the majority of the Executive Committee.

The main difference between the majority and minority proposals ("Work. News Discussion Supplement": no. 1, 26th January 1957), when stripped of the hypocritical verbiage, was that, while both groups visualised a neo-colonial empire which operated to Britain's economic advantage, the majority proposal which spoke of 'mutual defence against any imperialist attempts to undermine their (the close fraternal association's: J.A.W.) independence' had a certain progressive element. Since the comprador bourgeoisie of the former colonies would have little stomach for a struggle against other imperialist groupings in Britain's interest a looser form of wording was thought to be necessary. It is ironic that Palme Dutt helped to put over this point of view by suggesting that the 1951 programme could give rise to a neo-colonialist interpretation!

The final form in the revised version of "The British road to socialism" contains the quintessence of revisionist thinking on colonialism:(p.25)

"In the gigantic tasks of reconstruction on which the former colonial peoples will be engaged to end the heritage of colonial economy - to industrialise their countries, modernise agriculture and raise living standards - British industry can play a valuable part through technical and economic aid and the supply of machinery and technicians.

The carrying out of this policy will be the effective recognition of the complete independence and right of self-determination of all countries in the Empire. A socialist government in Britain can seek to promote close voluntary fraternal relations for economic, political and cultural co-operation of mutual benefit, on the basis of national independence, equal rights and non-interference in internal affairs, between Britain and the former colonial countries and existing Commonwealth countries willing to develop such relations."

The influence of the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. led to the dropping, even from the point of view of the British national bourgeoisie, of all references to the danger of U.S. imperialism. In view of the duality of this position it is not surprising that the tendency since then in the C.P.G.B. has been towards ultra-revisionism which is now at the stage of consolidation.

The development of this social-chauvinist base over the post-war period shows how the leadership of the C.P.G.B. has pursued a policy of conscious disruption of the working class movement through a step by step revision of Marxism-Leninism.

J.A. Wilson
Swindon.

Dear Comrade,

I see that Uri Geller, who claims he can bend spoons and stop liners by means of his mental concentration (assisted by some mysterious extra-territorial force) has succeeded in persuading a number of eminent British scientists to investigate

his powers.

It seems to me that such a remarkable pioneer in psychic science should be honoured in some way -- perhaps by naming a metrological unit after him as in the case of Watt, Joule, etc. Thus the "geller" would be the unit of hoodwinkability, defined in accordance with the Lincoln Equation ("You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all of the time"):

$$G = DT,$$

where G is the hoodwinkability in gellers, D is the number of people duped and T is the number of days during which they are duped.

Thus, Heath's propaganda campaign to the effect that a three-day working week was necessary would, according to my calculations, rate only 1,638 megagellers -- not enough to force the miners to capitulate.

HS
London W5

THE UGLY FACE OF CAPITALISM (CONT.) from page 15)
the purchase of Rhodesian copper in defiance of United Nations sanctions, and its sale on the world market.

Ogilvie resigned as director in April, and in May the government ordered an inquiry into Lonrho's affairs.

Also in May, Lord Lambton resigned as Conservative Under-Secretary of Defence and Lord Jellicoe as Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords after their relations with call-girls had been revealed. Lambton was later found guilty of the illegal possession of drugs.

In June Lord Polwarth, Minister in Charge of Oil Development, was exposed as a shareholder in three investment trusts with interests in oil companies; he then sold his shares.

In July it was revealed that Sir Deny Lawson, a former Lord Mayor of London, had in August 1972 purchased a controlling bloc of shares in the National Group of Unit Trusts at 63p. a share from companies of which he was Chairman; in January 1973 he had sold 70% of the shares at £8.67 a share, so making corruptly a profit of £6 millions on the deal.

The bankruptcy proceedings in the case of former architect John Poulson was followed by a number of prosecutions for corruption including that of Poulson himself. At least three Teeside Aldermen were directly in the employ of Poulson, who also built up "close relations" with another seven Councillors -- both Conservative and Labour. Between them, these assisted Poulson to win major commissions in the area in return for massive gifts of money, houses, holidays, etc. These commissions included the designing of a £3 million shopping centre at Stockton-on-Tees, and every major public building put up over ten years in Eaton, near Middlesbrough. Among these involved in the scandal was former Conservative Cabinet Minister Reginald Maudling, who had acted as a high-class commercial traveller charged with winning contracts for Poulson.

In July 1973 Conservative Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, ruled out any government inquiry into the Poulson affair, and in the same month the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet rejected a party inquiry.

Following the resignation in July 1973 of Hamish Conochie as City Editor of the "News of the World", it was revealed that he had been in the habit of buying shares cheaply, tipping them in his column, and then selling them at a substantial profit when they rose in price in consequence; in one year he made a profit of £4,000 by these kinds of share deals. In particular, Conochie was connected with the "Midas savings scheme" run by millionaire Sir Julian Hodge; he frequently recommended this scheme to the readers of the "News of the World" -- drawing commission from the Hodge group for this of up to £7,000 a year.

THE APPEAL GROUP

(In our last issue we published an Open Letter to the "Appeal Group", composed of members and former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain who had come to reject the revisionist illusion of "peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism" put forward by the leadership of the CPGB. In our Open Letter, while criticising the support given by the "Appeal Group" to the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union -- which itself puts forward "peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism" -- we noted the expressed desire of the group to hold discussions with "all Marxist-Leninists" and proposed that representatives of the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain should meet with representatives of the "Appeal Group" for such discussions.

This proposal was ignored by the leaders of the "Appeal Group", forcing us to draw the conclusion that, whatever these leaders were desirous of building, it was not a Marxist-Leninist Party.

Since then we have received a copy of a statement made by Peter Thorpe at the formal Founding Congress of the "Appeal Group", a statement which confirms the above conclusion, and we publish below some of the more important passages from this statement).

The prime task for any genuine leading nucleus of a group purporting to embrace Marxism-Leninism would be:

a). to carry through a fundamental class analysis based on Marxism-Leninism of British state monopoly capitalism and the world capitalist system; and

b). to elaborate that fundamental class analysis into a concrete programme, so as to arm the Marxist-Leninist vanguard and the revolutionary proletarian movement of the future with the scientific guide to action capable of charting the way forward to the victory of the socialist revolution.

In place of genuine attempts to discharge such tasks and responsibilities, however, what have we experienced throughout the brief history of the "Appeal Group"? Precisely the kind of narrow contempt for scientific theory, thinly disguised as 'struggle against bourgeois intellectuals', which Engels castigated so mercilessly.

Those who have assumed a leading role in our group have chosen as the main gambit for their criticisms of the CPGB the fact that this party maintains the utilisation of Parliament as the sole form of transition to a socialist society. It seems to me that, in fact, the isolation of the position of the British Party of this question from that of other parties in general and from the Soviet Party in particular has an extremely doubtful political basis.

THE "PEACEFUL" ROAD TO SOCIALISM

It is impossible to build a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, to mend the splits created by one school of revisionist traitors, by appealing to another, slightly different brand of revisionism. An examination of the pronouncements of the Soviet revisionist leaders from both the Khrushchov and Brezhnev-Kosygin eras reveals that they maintained, as one of their main tactical gambits, the feasibility of "either road to socialism". The fact is, of course, that a very large proportion of the pulp literature churned out by the Novosti Press is devoted to the most nauseating philistine elaborations of the peaceful, parliamentary perspectives opening up in the developed countries, while the perfunctory allusion to the

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revolutionary "alternative" is included merely as a genuflective ritual. Facts demonstrate irrefutably that, while seeking to keep in reserve a brief, vague and undefined "possibility" of "non-peaceful" -- the very use of a negative variant of the epithet "peaceful" is itself symptomatic -- the whole weight of the programmatic perspective of the Soviet leaders is thrown into the peaceful road. As far as the pigmy Gollan is concerned, the difference is merely a tactical one: the CPGB leadership finds it unnecessary to keep the possibility of a non-peaceful form of transition as a ritualist reserve.

Here are the relevant quotations:

"The present situation offers the working class in a number of capitalist countries a real opportunity .. to capture a stable majority in parliament and transform the latter from an organ of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the people's will. In such an event this institution, traditional in many highly developed capitalist country, may become an organ of genuine democracy -- democracy for the working people".

(N. Khrushchov: Report of the Central Committee to the 20th. Congress of the CPSU; London; 1956).

"Parliament in Britain is the product of a centuries' old struggle for liberty. .. Today the constitutional position is that Parliament is sovereign, it has power to pass what laws it likes. ..

A Communist-Socialist majority in Parliament would be a product of mass struggle, would be supported by powerful mass organisation, and would act to change the whole bourgeois framework".

(J. Gollan: "Which Road?"; London; 1964).

I have said nothing so far of the most important complex of questions relating to the Great Debate between the Soviet and Chinese parties -- an issue which, incidentally, has nothing to do with Macism. Why has no reference been made in our documents to this most vital question, or to the question of the "Cultural Revolution" unleashed by Mao and his followers in 1966? It seems to me axiomatic that these are minimal questions requiring a principal standpoint in the part of any individual or group purporting to be Marxist-Leninist.

THE SOVIET UNION TODAY

However, to return specifically to the question of the Soviet Union. What does, in fact, comprise a socialist society? Under socialism, all private property in the means of production has been abolished; most property in the means of production has been converted into state property - and, since the working class holds power in the state, this means that the working class also owns those means of production -- and for a time in co-operative forms. Under socialism, labour power has been abolished as a commodity and cannot be a source of surplus value. And under socialism, production is centrally planned by the state of the working class in the interests of the working people.

Is this applicable to the Soviet Union as it exists today?

Until the death of Stalin, Soviet production was centrally planned in a socialist way, transforming the USSR from an economically backward country into one of the most advanced industrial states in the world. But the revisionists who succeeded Stalin have in recent years been dismantling the socialist system and transforming it into a form of bureaucratic state capitalism, with the development of a new bourgeoisie.

The first steps in this direction were taken more than ten years ago under Khrushchov, with the scheme to transfer the management of industry from the Soviet state to regional "economic councils" under the guise of "reducing

bureaucracy", This created such obvious chaos that Khrushchov's successors - who had noisily supported "decentralisation" as "creative Leninism" -- were compelled to annul the measure and transfer the management of industry back to the Ministries -- again in the name of "creative Leninism".

The "economic reforms" of the Brezhnev-Kosygin clique, adopted in September 1965, are designed to destroy the socialist system of the USSR in a more radical way. By these "reforms" centralised planning has been abolished, except in the form of laying down (as British governments have long done) a series of desirable targets for the economy as a whole.

"Centralised planning .. can and should determine general proportions, growth rates and optimum ratios. .. Control figures will be drawn up.. in a generalised, value form, to be given to Ministries. In the same form these control figures will be handed down to the enterprises, not as precise directives, but rather as guide-lines for drawing up their plans".
(Y. Liberman: "Plan, Direct Ties and Profitableness", in: "Pravda", November 21st., 1965).

"The enterprise shall exercise the rights of property utilisation and disposal of the property under its operational control." (Clause 8)

"The enterprise shall not be responsible for meeting the commitments of the body to which it is subordinated. ..The body to which the enterprise is subordinated shall not be responsible for the enterprise's commitments...The state shall not be responsible for meeting the commitments of the enterprise, nor shall the enterprise be responsible for meeting the commitments of the state" (Clause 9).

"The enterprise shall carry out capital construction or reconstruction of its fixed assets" (Clause 49)

"The enterprise may take out bank credit and shall be responsible for its adequate application and timely repayment" (Clause 72)

"The enterprise shall set, in accordance with the law, the prices and rates for different products (or work and services) which are not subject to approval by superior bodies" (Clause 74)

"The enterprise shall have the right to set piece rates, time rates and job rates for the different groups of workers; ... to set indicators and terms for the payment of bonuses, based on standard rules" (Clause 81)

(Statute of the Socialist Industrial Enterprise, in: "Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta", No. 42, 1965).

In the absence of centralised planning, the management of the Soviet "Khozraschot" enterprise plans its production on its estimate of market needs, this assessment being based as far as possible on direct contracts negotiated with trading organisations.

"The 1965 economic reform makes planning of output and direct contract ties between enterprises compatible and essential. .. the important stages of this development have already been mapped out: the release of enterprises from limitations of the wages fund, release from centralised planning of the entire list of products and, as a consequence, the organisation or supply on the basis of wholesale trade".

(Y. Liberman: "Plan, Direct Ties and Profitableness", in: "Pravda", November 21st., 1965).

The economic mechanisms of incentives which binds the production plans of the management of a "Khozraschot" enterprise to its estimate of the market is that of profit.

"Let us consider profit, one of the economic instruments of socialism. A considerable enhancement of its role in socialist economy is an indispensable requisite for Khozraschot. .. The profit of an enterprise and material incentives based on the profitableness indicator are economic means designed to achieve the aim of socialist production".

(Editorial, "Pravda", January 14th., 1966).

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Of course, say the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union, this is not capitalist profit, but "socialist profit".

"Under socialism profit differs fundamentally in socio-economic content and role from profit under capitalism. Capitalist profit is .. a form of capitalist exploitation. .. In contrast to this, profit under socialism is a form of surplus product which accrues to the working people, and to them only",
(Editorial, "Pravda", January 14th., 1966).

But let us look at that part of 'socialist profit' which is retained by the 'Khozraschot' enterprise. This certainly accrues to the "working people" of the enterprise -- but the working people include the director and management.

"Profit turns into an important source of the bonus fund, the fund for rewarding the workers for improving the operation of their enterprise. This fund will be used to pay all bonuses to managerial, engineering and technical personnel for the results of their economic activity and also the bonuses to the workers in addition to those that are paid from the wages fund".
(B. Sukharevsky: "New Elements in Economic Incentives", in: "Voprosy Ekonomiki", No. 10, 1965).

Since this profit is

"an economic instrument for developing socialist enterprises and materially stimulating their activity".
(Editorial, "Pravda", January 14th., 1966).

it is distributed between the director, management, foremen and shop floor workers in proportion to their assessed "responsibility" for stimulating the economic activity of the enterprise. And it is, of course, the director and management who assess this "responsibility".

Managements naturally tend, as do managements in orthodox capitalist countries, to attribute the greatest responsibility for the making of profit (and so the largest share of that profit) to themselves. This view is approved by the revisionist leaders of the Soviet party and state:

"The director shall organise the entire work of the enterprise and shall bear full responsibility for its operation",
(Statute of the Socialist Industrial Enterprises in: "Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta", No. 90, 1965).

Next priority in the rewards from profits goes to the "non-commissioned officers" of the management, the foremen.

"It has long been suggested that the foreman be given more responsibility and higher wages. ... Sometimes workers earn more than the foreman. Since the foreman now contributes more to production, directors have the right to raise the wages of highly skilled foreman and technical personnel in order to provide an additional incentive, this increase amounting up to 30% of their fixed salaries, to be paid out of the planned wages fund".
(A. Volkov: "Profit and Personal Incentive", in: "Pravda", November 14th., 1965).

At the lowest rung of the ladder come the workers on the shop floor, who share what remains of the 'socialist profit' of the enterprise among them.

Clearly, a Soviet "Khozraschot" enterprise differs little from a factory under orthodox capitalism. Its ownership by the state is made nominal by its "economic independence". Its management plan the factory's production for profit according to their judgement of the market. They have become state capitalists who exploit

the workers of the factory for their own profit, while operating like many "progressive" managements under orthodox capitalism) a profit-sharing scheme for the workers in order to

"... enhance their interest in accelerating the growth of production and labour productivity, in increasing the rate and amount of profit".

(N. Baibakov: "Under the New Conditions", in: "Kommunist", No.7, 1966).

The fact that it is not possible to buy and sell stocks and shares on a stock exchange in the Soviet Union, the fact that all enterprises are nominally state-owned, is neither here nor there. Engels, in his day, referred to the complete compatibility of state ownership with capitalist exploitation: so long as competition between enterprises exists and so long as the intervention of the money commodity as the unit of measurement and of the value of other commodities and the main store unit for value was maintained, state ownership was perfectly compatible with the maintenance of capital. He showed how this could represent an extremely efficient means for the capitalist class both to maintain the subjective deception of the working class by pretending that such a "reformed" state capitalism was a form of socialism and, on the other hand, for obtaining the ruthlessly efficient utilisation of means of production.

In the Soviet Union today, therefore, the profit motive has been fully restored and is now the main motive of production. Free competition prevails between the different enterprises, each of which is free to fix the prices of the commodities it produces and tries to sell on the market.

What, then, constitutes the main difference between the economy we now see in the Soviet Union and that of a developed western-type capitalist country? The main difference relates purely and simply to the mode of appropriation of the surplus value: in the case of Soviet state capitalism, the bourgeoisie exists in the form of an "employed" managerial stratum attached to an enterprise, which is state owned.

The dictatorship of the proletariat which formerly existed in the Soviet Union inherited a low, backward level of economic development. For this reason it was not possible to achieve a simultaneous transition to socialist relations of production in all spheres of that economy.

The sphere which remained particularly backward was that of agriculture. Thus, for the small and middle peasants who comprised the bulk of Russia's rural population, it was necessary to devise the transitional unit of the collective farm as the means whereby such elements would be trained in collective forms of labour organisation and to break the centuries-long individualistic bond between the peasant and his own private plot of land.

A collective farm is not a fully socialist form of agriculture, but represents a form of cooperation. One of the first decrees of the Soviet state after 1917 was to nationalise all the land, and the collective farms depended upon a lease of their land from the state in perpetuity.

Nor did the socialist Soviet Union permit the groups of individuals in collective farms to own any other means of agricultural production -- agricultural machinery -- which was owned by state machine and tractor stations and hired out to the collective farms. The machine and tractor stations provided the working class state with vital bases of operations in the rural community from which the revolutionising activities of the proletariat and the Party could proceed.

In the attempt to abolish the economic foundations of socialism, one of the first measures taken by a counter-revolutionary regime would be to abolish the state machine and tractor stations and to vest ownership of the agricultural means of production in the farming cooperatives, an objectively petty bourgeois stratum which was a latent force for capitalism, This is precisely what the Khrushchov regime proceeded to do. In 1957 the machine and tractor stations were

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disbanded and their agricultural machinery sold to the collective farms as their property, giving them group ownership of means of production. The revisionist leaderships which followed Khrushchov have taken further steps, as my quotations reveal, along the road of capitalist restoration, along the road of exploitation and oppression of the Soviet working people.

"THE WORKING CLASS AND THE PROLETARIAT"

Some seven years ago, in 1956, a small group in London with openly Maoist sympathies came out with exactly the same position as that of our group on the question of "the working class and the proletariat". For me it gives rise to very grave misgivings that there should be any coincidence of views on the matter. The group I refer to is the "Finsbury Communist Association", and in 1965 they brought out a statement entitled "Class and Party in Britain" in which they put forward the view that what is termed the "working class" comprises two distinct divisions: the proletariat and the working class as a whole, that in fact the proletariat comprises a section of the working class, the only true exploited section.

It is alleged that a proletarian sells his labour power at its bare value in money wages, whereas the working class as a whole includes sections of workers who are able to sell their labour power at a price considerably above its real value.

In the same way as those who put forward this line within our group have done, the FCA uses the Dept. of Social Security benefit rates for unemployed workers as the guide for determining what comprises "subsistence level". But to equate the value of labour power with the means of subsistence of the worker alone is to make a mockery and a mechanical distortion of Marx's theory. Above all, Marx was at pains to demonstrate that the value of the commodity labour power is a variable factor in the determining of which a number of historical and cultural factors enter.

Marx's economic analysis proves that the various intermediate strata of society are gradually and increasingly being swept into the ranks of the working class, whilst the class of capitalist exploiters becomes relatively ever smaller and more parasitic. The FCA, and now the Appeal Group, declare on the other hand that the working class has become smaller and smaller.

Marx demonstrates further that the main aim of capitalist production is the accumulation of capital through the extraction of ever larger quantities of surplus value from the labour of the workers. Has imperialism done away with this basic law of capitalism as far as the developed capitalist countries are concerned and shifted the scene of exploitation to the colonies in order to eliminate exploitation at home? Obviously, the upholders of the FCA theory think so, thus taking their stand with the social-democrats and revisionists of all lands.

Imperialist super-profits serve, in the main, precisely as a source of investment capital to maintain capital accumulation on an extended scale in the conditions of the decline of monopoly capitalism, when the rate of profit tends to fall with the rise in the organic composition of capital. In other words, they serve to secure the more thorough-going exploitation of labour power, for extracting ever greater quantities of surplus value from it.

The fundamental question for all workers is the fact that they own no means of production and have to sell their labour power in order to live. The question of what the price of that labour power as obtainable on the market, reflecting that value, may be, is a question of quantity, not quality. Qualitatively, all are workers and have to sell their labour power in order to live. In doing so, all produce surplus value and are thus exploited. What the authors of this "theory" are confusing is, on the one hand, the objective position of workers as the exploited class and, on the other hand, the differing levels of subjective class consciousness, of understanding of the historic mission of the working class,

between different strata of the working class. In so far as the authors of this division are seeking to create a qualitative separation between one stratum of the working class and another, where in fact the distinction is a purely quantitative one, they are objectively assisting the monopoly capitalist class to maintain this dangerous form of disunity and to prevent the most advanced sections, organised in a genuine Marxist-Leninist vanguard, from winning the support in class struggle -- and ultimately in socialist revolution -- of those strata with a lower level of consciousness, without which the victory of socialism remains an impossibility.

CONCLUSION.

That the Appeal Group should have failed so ignominiously in the task of developing a Marxist-Leninist programmatic position is no accident. For its formation and subsequent activities represents a development in no way inspired by the interests of the British working class movement, but, on the contrary, brought about at the behest of the Soviet neo-imperialist ruling class and its revisionist spokesmen as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the ultra-revisionist -- i.e., more openly liberal and above all pro-US -- leadership of the CPGB designed to induce the Gollan clique to return once again to the fold of Soviet revisionism.

It is this which provides the final explanation, on the one hand for the arrogance and ignorant dogmatism of those who style themselves as our "leaders", as well as, on the other hand, for the mystical obscurantist fervour which they seek to kindle by attempting to keep alive, in the form of illusions, loyalties which were originally correctly held towards the first land of socialism. Truly, there can be nothing so low, so corrupt, so devoid of the faintest vestige of scientific objectivity, as this kind of emotive sentimental demagoguery which exploits and feeds on the inevitable inferiority complexes with which workers must under capitalism be beset.

I express my warm confidence in the ability of at least the more politically conscious of those present here today to recognise the opportunist features and the demagoguery of the Appeal Group leaders, to take the necessary minimum steps to try to transform it into a Marxist-Leninist group and establish its unity with other Marxist-Leninist groups which may exist in Britain today. In this way, some at least of those present today may yet come to play a positive role on behalf of the British and world working class, for the cause of socialism and communism, and for the final victory of the world proletarian-socialist revolution.

SHOP FRONT

THE ENGINEERING FRONT

(Continued from page 29) "We have all learnt a lot about the working class movement in this country in that time but most of all we have learnt that solidarity is not a dream; it is a reality that has been expressed to us in many different ways ..."

Each and every one of us intends to take jobs in factories in this area and to do all in our power to strengthen trade unionism in this part of the world".

CIVIL SERVICE FRONT

During January 1973 work-time meetings were held in a number of towns by members of the Society of Civil Servants and of the Civil and Public Services Association (representing between them 250,000 civil servants of the clerical and executive grades) in support of their demand that any pay increases resulting from the forthcoming pay negotiations should be backdated to January 1st.

On February 27th, a one-day stoppage by these unions was joined by Customs and Excise officers, and further selective strikes took place during March.

On April 3rd, the CPSA called off its industrial action "In the absence of support from other civil service unions".

"STAGE THREE" GIVES WAY TO "ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY".

"Stage Three" of the Conservative government's wage restraint programme -- still disguised under the title of "counter-inflation measures" -- came into force on November 7th., 1973 and was due to operate for twelve months.

The main purpose of this programme was, of course, to boost the profits of Big Business and, arising from this, to stimulate investment in the new modern industrial equipment urgently needed to pull British monopoly capitalism out of its deep rut.

"Stage One" of the programme (the complete "freeze" of wages from November 1972 to April 1973), together with "Stage Two" (£1 a week plus 4% from April to November 1973) had, at the expense of the working class, succeeded in this aim to a certain extent -- official figures showing a rise in profits, production and investment.

In the light of this development and of the rise in the prices of goods and services (which continue faster than ever under the "counter-inflation" programme), "Stage Three" raised the level of legally permitted wage increases to £2.25 a week or 7-8%. Furthermore, it made provision for "threshold agreements" under which wages could be permitted to rise by a further 40p. a week for every 1% rise in the official cost-of-living over 7%.

The division within the monopoly capitalist ruling class on the question of trying to continue state-imposed wage restraint in existing circumstances -- a division brought about by the solid refusal of the miners to accept a wage settlement within "Stage Three" -- and the electoral struggle of February 1974 in which this question was a principal issue, have already been analysed in the pamphlet "National Lock-out and Shrewsbury Lock-in" (published by the RED FRONT MOVEMENT in January 1974), in the special election issue of CLASS AGAINST CLASS of February 1974, and in the article "CHANGING THE GUARD" in this issue.

"Economic Democracy"

The defeat of the Conservative government in the general election of February 1974 and the installation of the Labour government represented a victory for that section of the monopoly capitalist ruling class which had become convinced that state imposed wage restraint could not be enforced until further steps had been taken to build a corporate state, in which the trade unions are incorporated within the framework of the capitalist state.

The first steps envisaged in this programme -- for which the name of "economic democracy" has been coined -- are:

1) the formation in all but the smallest companies of "supervisory boards" in which "workers' representatives" would sit alongside representatives of the shareholders.

This concept has been endorsed by the Labour Party, the General Council of the TUC and the Liberal Party. Already last year a draft directive was under consideration within the EEC authority providing for the compulsory establishment of such "supervisory boards" in all companies within EEC countries employing more than 500 workers -- the boards to be made up of "workers' representatives" to the extent of one third, and of shareholders' representatives to the extent of two-thirds. The proposed directive is modelled upon the practice in West Germany, where trade union officials sit on the supervisory boards of many companies; the board meets only four times a year, and the officials draw payment of £1,000 to £3,000 a year for each directorship (and some officials hold up to four).

2) the introduction of "profit-sharing" schemes, under which employees of a company would receive a portion of their wages in the form of shares in the company in which they work.

This concept was endorsed by the Home Affairs Committee of the Labour Party in June 1973, and also figures in the Liberal Party programme.

3) the establishment of new "conciliation and arbitration machinery", within which employers representatives and trade union officials would collaborate in settling industrial disputes "in the national interest" and "without class struggle".

This concept was included in the Labour Party election manifesto of February 1974 and in the "Queen's speech" of the new Labour government in March 1974.

The aim of this programme is clear: it is to give to politically backward workers the

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illusion that they have a real share in the control of the enterprises in which they work and the illusion that their welfare depends on the profitability of the company, so that "their own interests" require the "moderation" of wage claims which might interfere with profitability ; and it is to bring trade union officials still further into collaboration with Big Business and to increase their vested interest in so doing.

And on the pseudo-left, of course, the advocates of "workers control" are assisting in these anti-working class moves by spreading the illusion that this kind of "workers participation in industry" constitutes some kind of "socialism".

It is necessary for Socialists and politically conscious workers to expose these manoeuvres and mobilise working class struggle against them, to make it clear that there can be working class control of industry only when the capitalist state has been smashed in a socialist revolution and the working class has become the ruling class in society.

THESES ON THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

1. In capitalist society, as in earlier social systems based on the exploitation of one class by another, female workers form a more oppressed, more exploited section of the working class.
2. The continued existence of capitalist society in its present period of decay depends on the impregnation of the mass of the workers with false ideas, with ideas which are contrary to objective reality. An important part of these false ideas serving the interests of monopoly capitalists is concerned with the fostering of antagonistic divisions in the ranks of the working class -- antagonistic divisions based on skin pigmentation, sex, religion, occupation, etc.
3. In the sphere of the false ideas which serve to foster antagonistic divisions in the ranks of the working class on the basis of sex, the predominantly reactionary ideology fostered by the media controlled by monopoly capital is that of male chauvinism.
4. The complex of social and personal prejudiced which make up the ideology of male chauvinism have their objective basis in the privileged economic and social position accorded in general to males within capitalist society. A fundamental tenet of male chauvinism is that this privileged position is due, not as it is in reality to conditions imposed by the ruling class in society, but to the "natural superiority" of males over females. This false view is sustained by another false view -- that the abolition of the privileged position of male workers would be disadvantageous to them. In fact, radical improvement in the living standards of all workers -- male and female -- depends on the eradication of these false ideas and of the antagonistic divisions to which they give rise, depends on coordinated struggle by all workers -- male and female.
5. Male chauvinist ideas take many forms: that females are intellectually inferior to males (and when one isn't she ought to be!); that females are particularly suited to, and enjoy most, monotonous tasks requiring a minimum of creative thought; that the role appropriate to the female is in the home, as a source of sexual satisfaction to the "superior" male, and as domestic servant and nanny, such tasks as washing-up and changing the baby's nappies being beneath the dignity of the "superior" male to perform; that the female should leave important decisions to the "superior" male; that the "ideal female" is the pretty dumb blonde of fashionable physical measurements who accepts and enjoys her inferior social position; that the economic needs of the female are less than those of the male, so that it is "socially just" that she should receive lower wages for the same work; that the female appreciates a good beating-up from time to time, this assisting in the prevention of psychoneurosis; etc., etc.
6. With the increasing entry of women and girls into commerce and industry over the past 50 years, a movement has developed -- in the first place among women of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie -- directed against sexual discrimination (and its ideological support, male chauvinism) and in favour of equality of economic and social status for women. The first significant expression of this was the Suffragette movement, the primary aim of which was to secure the right of women to vote. When this primary aim was achieved, the movement subsided for a considerable time until, by the 1960's, it had become clear that the

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attainment of the right of female suffrage had done little to abolish the continuing inferior economic and social status of women.

7. The aims of the new movement for the emancipation of women are progressive in so far as they are directed against discrimination in the sexual field, and towards the exposure and repudiation of male chauvinism. Marxist-Leninists -- both those working within womens organisations and those working in other fields -- must give full, active support to these aims. At the same time Marxist-Leninists must make it clear that -- within capitalist society and so far as the working class is concerned -- these aims are in reality aims to secure, not the liberation of women, but equal exploitation of women with men. The true liberation of female workers, as of male workers, requires their liberation from oppression and exploitation; this can only be achieved by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society and the construction of a socialist society by the working class as ruling class. Since the existence of discrimination on the basis of sex is in the objective interests of the ruling class of monopoly capitalists, but contrary to the objective interests of the working class, only when the working class has become the ruling class in society, led by its Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, can discrimination on the basis of sex be completely abolished. Thus, the movement for the liberation of women must, if it is to remain true to its progressive aims, become a part of the movement for socialism, a part of the proletarian-socialist revolutionary movement.

8. It follows from this that it is the task of Marxist-Leninists -- both those working in womens' organisations and those working in other fields -- to work to bring about the closest integration between the struggles for the economic and social emancipation of women and the struggles of the working class movement in general, and to do this in such a way that both male and female workers learn through their own experience the falsity of all divisive sexual chauvinist ideas and the paramount necessity for united action of both male and female workers.

9. There exists in Britain at the present time no Marxist-Leninist vanguard party of the working class. Under these conditions, such as the white racism fostered by monopoly capital has led to the development of a certain degree of black racism among politically backward black workers, so the male chauvinism fostered by monopoly capital has led to the development of a certain degree of female chauvinism among politically backward members (especially those drawn from the petty bourgeoisie) of the "Womens' Liberation Movement".

10. It follows, then, that while male chauvinism forms the main weapon of the monopoly capitalists to bring about antagonistic divisions in the ranks of the working class on the basis of sex in society at large, within the working class movement and organisations for the emancipation of women the main danger comes from female chauvinism, which complements the divisive role of male chauvinism just as black racism complements the divisive role of white racism. Just as all forms of racism are reactionary and serve the divisive interests of monopoly capital, so both forms of sexual chauvinism are reactionary and serve the divisive interests of monopoly capital.

11. Female chauvinism manifests itself in forms which are far more dangerous to the developing revolutionary movement and the ludicrous extremes of S.C.U.M. (The Society for the Castration of Unwanted Males), which holds that lesbianism is the only worthwhile human relation. The call for "womens trade unions" on the grounds that existing trade unions are "male dominated" performs the same divisive role as the call for "black trade unions" on the grounds that existing trade unions are "white dominated". The call for "womens' cells" within the organisations of the developing socialist-revolutionary movement on the grounds that existing cells are "male dominated" is a most reactionary blow at the unity of the developing nucleus of the vanguard party of the working class and the organisations which accept its leadership.

In particular, the leading elements and personalities of the "Womens' Liberation Movement" are for the most part under the influence of the reactionary ideology of female chauvinism, seeking to lead its women members into the foetid cul-de-sac of sexual hatred. In highly-charged meetings women who feel particularly strongly about the question of their emancipation can have their actual or potential class consciousness worn down to the level of impotent ravings about the real or imagined enormities of their menfolk, can be prevented from organising actively for the achievement of the very aims of the emancipation of women they profess to believe in.

12. Marxist-Leninists -- both those working within women's organisations and those working in other fields -- have as a vital task the complete exposure and liquidation of both male and female chauvinism within the working class movement. In particular, under no circumstances can these reactionary ideologies be permitted to gain the slightest foothold within the ranks of the developing Marxist-Leninist nucleus, the M.L.O.B. or its broad training school, the R.F.M.

Marxist-Leninists have the task of bringing working class women increasingly into political activity, of changing the class composition of women's organisations in a working class direction.

They have the task of exposing the falsity and total reactionary content of both male and female chauvinism. This exposure can best be carried out in practical struggle around partial objectives -- for equal pay for equal work in particular industries or particular enterprises; for nursery schools; for free school milk; for improved health facilities for women and children; etc.; etc. Such practical struggles, if properly led, can demonstrate that politically conscious workers of both sexes are the champions of the emancipation of women, while the monopoly capitalists and their political lieutenants are its enemies -- not because they are predominantly male, but because they are exploiters of the working class whose interests are served by fostering divisive and reactionary ideologies.

SHOP FRONT

THE GAS FRONT

On December 28th., 1972 -- following the freezing by the Heath government of negotiations between gas workers and the British Gas Corporation "until guidelines had been laid down" -- an official overtime ban began in some gas works, and was accompanied at the beginning of 1973 by a series of one-day stoppages.

On January 30th, 1973, following deadlock in the resumed negotiations, the General and Municipal Workers' Union gave notice of an official overtime ban, withdrawal of cooperation and selective strikes. Support for action was expressed on the following day by the Transport and General Workers' Union.

Official industrial action began on February 13th., and was followed by the cutting off of gas supplies to large industrial areas in the West Midlands, and a reduction of pressure in many other areas. In early March, cut-offs spread to London -- by which time 19,000 workers had been laid off as a result of the cutting of gas supplies to industrial and commercial premises and 1,600 schools had been closed for the same reasons.

On March 12th the British Gas Corporation made a new offer amounting to a net increase in pay of £2.80 a week, plus a reduction in pension contributions equivalent to another 45p. A ballot resulted in a vote for acceptance of the offer, and industrial action was called off on March 23rd.

THE BUILDING FRONT

Shaken by the building workers' strike of 1972, in recent months the building trade employers have been endeavouring to weaken trade union organisation by increasing the number of "lump" workers. The "lump" system involves building firms contracting "self-employed" workers to whom they have none of the obligations which they have for employees and for whom they need pay no insurance or pension contributions etc. As a result of this situation, building firms are frequently willing to pay higher rates to "lump" workers than to employed workers -- while the former, being more mobile, are frequently able to evade the payment of income tax.

In 1973 the London Boroughs Association unsuccessfully attempted to persuade all London Councils to agree to insert a "no-lump" clause in all building contracts, and a Labour Party Bill to outlaw the "lump" was squashed in Parliament in May. The new Labour government has pledged itself in the "Queen's speech" to introduce a new Bill to this effect. (See also the article in this issue: "The Struggle Against Trade Union Repression")

THE SPORTS FRONT

In protest against the suspension of Yugoslav lawn tennis player Nikki Pilić by the International Lawn Tennis Federation for exerting his right not to play in a particular match, the Association of Tennis Professionals organised a boycott of the 1973 Wimbledon final.

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE IN BALUCHISTAN

BALUCHISTAN IS THE TERRITORY INHABITED BY THE BALUCH NATION, WHICH IS AT PRESENT UNDER THE REPRESSIVE RULE OF TWO FOREIGN STATES, BOTH DEPENDENT UPON UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM.

Baluchistan is, except for the coastal region of Makran, mountainous, arid and with great extremes of temperature. The Baluchs were driven from their original homeland in north-western Iran by the Seljuks, and arrived in their present territory in the 7th and 8th centuries; they speak Baluch, which is an Indo-Iranian language; their social structure is tribal; and most Baluchs are nomadic rearers of livestock -- camels, cattle, sheep and goats; most are, at least nominally, Muslims; and they are noted for their carpet-making and embroidery.

The western third of Baluchistan, inhabited now by some 3,500,000 Baluchs, was taken over by Iran during the 19th. century by agreement with Britain and now lies under the occupation of the dictatorial Iranian regime headed by Shah Reza Pahlavi. The eastern two-thirds, inhabited by some 4,500,000 Baluchs, was taken under the "protection" of Britain towards the end of the 19th. century. After the partition of India, the new state of Pakistan invaded and occupied the area in March 1948; it now lies under the dictatorial regime headed by President Zulfiqar Bhutto, and forms a province of Pakistan called "Baluchistan".

The Baluchi people have long been demanding democratic rights, cultural freedom and national autonomy. The governments of both Iran and Pakistan have replied to these demands by arrests, tortures, murder, the slaughter of livestock and the burning of villages.

In February 1973 Bhutto dismissed the Governor of the province of Baluchistan, Ghaus Bisenjo, and its elected government headed by Ataullah Khan Mengal as Chief Minister, on the grounds that they had not been sufficiently repressive with regard to the Baluch movement for national autonomy (Bhutto has, in fact, dismissed five Governors of this province during the last two years). At the same time he ordered several divisions of the Pakistan army into Baluchistan, in flagrant violation of the 1967 agreement according to which armed forces would not be stationed in Baluch tribal areas. The army indulged in an orgy of murder and arson, and forced increasing numbers of Baluchs to join those already engaged in guerilla warfare in the hills.

In April, seeking to play off one Baluch tribe against another, Bhutto appointed as Governor of Baluchistan the chief of the Bugti tribe, Sardar Akbar Bugti, who was immediately denounced as a traitor to the Baluch people. In the same month Jam Ghulam Qadir was appointed Chief Minister of Baluchistan; his puppet government did not have a majority in the Provincial Assembly and it was announced that this would not be summoned. Since then Pakistan agents have murdered two members of the Provincial Assembly, five others have been removed on trumped-up charges, and their seats have been transferred to Bhutto's People's Party in blatantly rigged elections.

In May Bhutto visited Iran and signed with the Shah a "defence agreement" -- in fact, an agreement for coordinated military action against the Baluch people in both occupied parts of their territory.

The struggle for democratic rights, cultural freedom and national autonomy in Baluchistan is led by the Democratic Party of Baluchistan, which is separately organised in the two occupied zones. The party publishes in English from London an excellent and inspiring paper on the national struggle of the Baluch people -- PEOPLE'S FRONT, which is available (Subscription: £1 in the UK, £1.50 abroad) from 30, City Road, London E.C.1.

In 1973 a committee of solidarity with the Baluch national struggle was organised in France. The record of British imperialism in the repression of the Baluch people makes the formation of such a committee in Britain particularly long overdue, and anyone willing to make work on such a committee his or her main field of activity is asked to communicate with the Editor of CLASS AGAINST CLASS or with the Editor of PEOPLE'S FRONT.

THE LABOUR PARTY -- TUC "COMPACT"

Much mention was made during the February 1974 general election of the "compact" made in February 1973 between representatives of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. In return for a TUC promise to use its influence to secure the "moderation" of wage claims under a Labour government, the Labour Party promised that a Labour government would:

- 1) take direct statutory action to hold down prices, with subsidies on essentials where necessary;
- 2) repeal the Housing Finance Act 1972;
- 3) construct more than 400,000 dwellings a year;
- 4) encourage the diversion from private to public transport, with subsidies where necessary to hold down fares and with experiments in free public transport;
- 5) redistribute wealth on a large scale from rich to poor by taxation;
- 6) remove NHS charges, beginning with prescription charges;
- 7) raise pensions to £10 a week (£16 for a couple), and review pensions annually in relation to the cost of living and also to average earnings;
- 8) reduce "defence" expenditure;
- 9) expand and direct investment into production, and establish state control of capital movement abroad;
- 10) promote regional development by manpower subsidies and investment grants;
- 11) promote "economic democracy" (i.e., "workers' participation in industrial management", so laying the foundations of a corporate state);
- 12) remove restrictions on free collective bargaining.

SHOP FRONT

THE HEALTH SERVICE FRONT

After pay negotiations on a claim for a £4 a week pay increase for 250,000 Health Service auxiliary workers had been frozen by the government, the workers began unofficial token stoppages in December 1972. The workers' representatives rejected an offer of an increase of £1.64 a week, later raised to £2 for men and £1.80 for women, and official industrial action began on March 1st 1973 -- ranging from complete stoppages to overtime bans, working to rule and withdrawal of co-operation.

Towards the end of March a number of workers began to work normally, and on April 13th the union leaders agreed to accept the last offer. Work was generally resumed on April 18th.

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

THE FACE OF HER MAJESTY'S STATE

In 1973 the Home Office decided to equip the British police with the L39A1 high-velocity rifle in place of the present .303, the ammunition for which is no longer being produced in Britain.

The L39A1 has been rejected by the New York police as

"... too dangerous for use in cities".

New York police small arms expert Frank McGee declares that the rifle is "simply too powerful" for police work:

"Its bullet is capable of going through walls. You are quite likely to hit a guy sitting in his apartment two or three away from the one you are aiming at".

The wounds inflicted by this high-velocity rifle are so lethal that the International Red Cross condemns its "explosive" effect as akin to that of the internationally banned "dum-dum", and the Swedish Defence Department has described it as "grossly inhuman".

.....

The Budget for 1973-4, approved in March 1973, provided for revenue of £17,451 million and expenditure of £18,684 million -- a deficit of £1,197 million.

Of this total expenditure, £3,365 million (or 19%) was allocated for "defence", including armed forces of the following numbers:

Royal Navy and Royal Marines:	82,300
Army:	181,400
Royal Air Force:	107,300
	<hr/>
Total regular forces:	371,000
Reserve & Auxiliary Forces:	571,000
	<hr/>
TOTAL FORCES:	942,000

.....

It was announced in July 1973 that Britain's contribution to the European Economic Community would be increased in the current financial year by a supplementary amount of £33 million.

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In July 1973 the pound fell to its lowest ever value -- a 19.43% devaluation against the exchange rates agreed in 1971.

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"The Times" of August 21st., 1973 (p. 1) reported that

".... a huge 3.9% jump in the money supply last month brings the annual rate of increase in this key economic control to 31.2% over the latest three months".

Economists are, of course, fully aware that it is this great increase in the money supply, and not wage increases, which is the cause of inflation.

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In October the Royal Commission on the Constitution, headed by Lord Kilbrandon, delivered its report, recommending devolution of certain powers of the central government to regional assemblies in Scotland, Wales and the English regions.

"THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY"

In June 1973 Housing Minister Paul Channon told the House of Commons that land prices had doubled in twelve months.

In August the journal "The Director" declared that a company director should spend £1,500 a year on his wardrobe.

In August the Inner London Education Authority announced that part-time education would be introduced in September in a number of London schools, due to "the shortage of teachers".

In August the "Financial Times", commenting on published figures of company profits, said:

"Much is going to be made of the fact that the rise in prices which has been pressing so hard on wage- and salary-earners has had strikingly beneficial effects for company profits".

In August the General and Municipal Workers' Union published a pamphlet showing that US drug firms were charging up to 145 times the free market price for some of their products sold in Britain.

In September postal rates for letters were increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ p.

In October the charge for telegrams was raised from 25p. for 12 words to 40p. for 10 words.

In January 1974 admission charges to museums and art galleries were introduced.

In February 1974 official figures were issued showing that food prices had risen by 20% during 1973, and by 53% since 1970. In the same month the trade journal "The Grocer" reported that more than 12,000 increases in the prices of food had taken place during 1973.

In February the price of petrol was raised by 8p. a gallon to an average of 50p

In February a pamphlet "What Happened to the Welfare State?", by George Clark of the City Poverty Committee, disclosed that 23% of all households on Britain were in 1972 receiving less than £30 a week. The real purchasing power of £30 a week in 1937-8 was £3.84, whereas the average weekly expenditure of working class families in 1937-38 was £4.12.

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The 1971 Census figures revealed that 644,040 homes in Greater London (25%) are without exclusive use of one or more of three amenities: hot water, fixed bath or shower, and inside flush toilet. Of the half a million people who have only use of an outside toilet, over 75,000 have to share even this.

CITY NOTES

In September 1972 British European Airways and the British Overseas Airways Corporation -- both state-owned -- were merged into British Airways. With 220 aircraft operating to 84 countries, British Airways is now the largest airline in Europe.

At a shareholders' meeting of Lonrho in May 1973, Roland ("Tiny") Rowland won his fight against 8 other directors to stay on as managing director and chief executive of the company.

In May the Court Line took over Clarksons, Britain's largest travel agency.

In an out-of-court settlement in June, the government agreed to pay £87.5 million for the aero-engine assets of Rolls-Royce, nationalised after the firm's bankruptcy in February 1971. With the sale of Rolls-Royce Motors for £38 million, this means that Rolls's creditors will be paid in full and shareholders (who normally receive nothing in a liquidation) will get about 30p. per share. The government had already advanced £190 million of taxpayers' money to finance the RB211 programme since the crash.

Share dealings in Rolls were suspended by the Stock Exchange on February 4th., 1971, when the firm was placed in the hands of a Receiver. On February 9th., dealings were reopened and when the Register officially closed on March 31st, 25 million shares (almost 40%) had been transferred to Guaranty Holdings (a subsidiary of the US Morgan Guaranty) at around 1p. a share; now that, as a result of the government's action, these shares are worth 30p., some £8 million of British taxpayers' money will go to this US finance house.

In June the controversial merger between Slater Walker Securities (founded jointly by Peter Walker, ex-Conservative Minister for Trade and Industry and financier Jim Slater) and Merchant Bankers Hill Samuel which would have created a banking conglomerate with assets of £1,500 million, was called off after being approved by the Bank of England and the Department of Trade and Industry. A terse statement gave as the reason for cancellation of the merger "fundamental differences in work style and personalities".

In June "Counter-Information Services" published a pamphlet entitled "British Leyland: The Beginning of the End?", which criticised that company's decision to allot only £400 million for capital investment over the next five years, compared with £1,300 million to be spent by Volkswagen, and declared;

"In the face of growing overseas competition this is not enough to keep this section viable".

Trade figures for the first six months of 1973 revealed that for the first time the value of cars imported into Britain (£225 million) exceeded the value of British cars exported (£197 million).

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

In October the Department of Trade and Industry announced that it was making inquiries into the affairs of London and County Securities, a minor bank of which Jeremy Thorpe (leader of the Liberal Party) was a director. Following a run on the bank and a fall in the value of its shares from £36 million to £4.6 million, dealings in the company's shares were suspended on November 30th. The most controversial aspect of the bank's operations had been its practice of making loans against a second mortgage at interest rates of up to 280%. The bank was temporarily rescued from insolvency by the joint action of the National Westminster Bank, the United Dominion Trust and the Eagle Star Insurance Co,

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TRADE UNION REPRESSION

In October 1973 the National Industrial Relations Court fined the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers £75,000 for contempt of court (and ordered seizure of union assets to the amount of £100,000) on the grounds that the union had ignored a court order to call off the strike which began in September at the small Surrey engineering firm of Con-Mech Ltd. in support of demands for union recognition. In November the Commission on Industrial Relations rejected the management's case and recommended that it should recognise the union.

In November the court ruled that the Transport and General Workers' Union was liable to pay compensation of some £100,000 to General Aviation Services, an aircraft servicing firm which had been forced out of London (Heathrow) Airport by industrial action.

Meanwhile in March a special congress of the TUC called for a one-day strike to protest against the Conservative government's National Industrial Relations Act. The strike was called for May Day and, despite the efforts of the General Council of the TUC to play down the action, millions of workers struck and tens of thousands marched in demonstrations against the Act.

In December 1973 three building workers who had acted as pickets during the 1972 strike were sentenced at Shrewsbury Crown Court to imprisonment (varying between 9 months and 3 years) for "conspiracy under an Act of 1855. The Transport and General Workers' Union called a one-day national strike of building workers in January 1974 to protest at the jailings, a "Shrewsbury 24 Defence Committee" was set up to defend these and other pickets awaiting trial, and in February the Liverpool Trades Council called a National Delegate Conference to work out ways of securing their release.

PHASE THREE?

On her marriage in 1973, Princess Anne's income was raised by £20,000 a year to £3,000 a year.

The couple were allocated the lease, for £8 a week, of a five-bedroomed house at Sandhurst, Oak Grove House, owned by the Ministry of Defence, after it had been renovated and redecorated at the taxpayers' expense.

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CULTURAL SECTION

ARTISTS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE MINERS' STRUGGLE

An exhibition of a qualitatively new type was held from April 9th to May 2nd in Congress House, the headquarters of the TUC. For the first time in many years, progressive artists, among them leading members of the League of Socialist Artists, organised an exhibition of realist paintings and graphic art in solidarity with the miners, who at that time had been placed at the van of the whole British working class movement in the struggle to bring down the Industrial Relations Act. Organised by the Art-Workers Sub-Committee of the Artists Union, the exhibition for the first time in many years succeeded in breaking away from the stranglehold of an art and culture imposed by the monopoly capitalist state and its framework and succeeded to a high degree in inspiring the independent creative initiatives of progressive artists who, whatever their good intentions, would never have succeeded as individuals in bringing the aims of the exhibition to fruition. We reprint below the programme for the exhibition issued by the Art-Workers Sub-Committee, from which a clear idea of the fighting proletarian spirit and unquenchable thirst for working class truth in art will be gained.

Bearing in mind the important fact the Exhibition received no material support of any kind from any political organisation or trade union in Britain other than the loan of the foyer of Congress House by the TUC, the exhibition must be counted among the outstanding examples of independent working class activity in struggle on the cultural front and against the degenerate "anti-art" of monopoly capital. Needless to say, no fraction of the credit due for this success can truthfully be given to the revisionist organisations of right and left who currently dominate the working class movement. They all took up an overtly or covertly hostile stance, from the Communist Party - which devoted a few column inches as compared with a three-quarters of a page devoted to an "anti-art" exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts - to the left revisionist Maoist organisations which chose to ignore it completely for fear of drawing attention to their own sterility and impotence in the field of working class art and culture.

The Art-Workers Sub-Committee having struck this telling blow on behalf of proletarian realist art, do not intend to let matters rest with a mere example, however magnificent. We understand that measures are in hand to convene a broadly based body to continue the struggle for a working class realist art on a more permanent basis and a meeting to establish a provisional organisation is to be convened shortly. Accordingly, we have pleasure in also reprinting, after the programme, the Manifesto issued by the Art-Workers Sub-Committee to this effect, and we call upon all members and sympathisers of MLOB and ISA to join in this important work to the best of their ability.

Details from J. Flavell, 57 Breakspears Rd., London S.E.4 (Provisional Sec. May Day Group)

ARTISTS IN TRIBUTE TO THE MINERS STRUGGLE AND FOR TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY

" In organising this exhibition, the Art-Workers Sub-Committee of the Artists' Union has wished to express its tribute to the miners in their just struggle to win an adequate living wage, a struggle they may have initiated in their own interests, but which has culminated in their taking up a position in the forefront of the working class and trade union movement. Because of their steadfast faith in their own strength, organisation and discipline, that struggle was crowned with victory - a victory which also led to the defeat of some of the most repressive anti-working class legislation attempted in Britain since the Taff Vale Dispute - the breaching of the "Phase Three" measures under the Industrial Relations and "Counter-Inflation" Acts.

In recognition of the importance of the miners' fight, the Art-Workers Sub-Committee initially approached artists whose work was known to take the miner as its central theme, with the idea of expressing the developing solidarity between artists, art workers and intellectuals, on the one hand, and the working class in struggle on the other. The organisers were also aware that they would be bringing together some of the finest artists working in Britain today, serving the finest of all cultural causes : art in the service of the working people.

The response from artists was immediate and whole-hearted, bearing out the initial enthusiasm of its organisers. The fact that some of the artists have an established reputation in the labour movement whilst others are only just beginning their apprenticeship to that cause was not of itself considered of any great importance.

The most significant feature of this exhibition is that, for the first time in many years, progressive artists working to a committed theme are making a clear public declaration of their allegiance to the working class movement and its growing culture. In so doing, they are giving a lead in defence of the future cultural development of the working class against all the rotteness of the "pop culture" disseminated by the "anti-Establishment" and its hired pushers of artistic dope. Simultaneously they are making the struggle for a working class culture a militant, living issue.

For the cultural and artistic life of Britain today does indeed present a scene of unprecedented confusion, pretentiousness and sterility. At the bottom of the cultural superstructure we find an entire industry geared, with all the complexity and finesse of precision engineering, to the production of a flood of dehumanised "entertainment art". This serves to disorientate the mass of working people and disarm them morally and ethically as well as politically in the face of the profit-hungry barons of Throgmorton Street - it is of no practical importance whether this is spontaneous or intentional. Through such media as an increasingly sensational and vulgarised press ("The Sun"); television programmes which present crude neo-fascist and racist prejudices as the norm of social consciousness in the working class (Alf Garnett); and books, periodicals and films which pervert and cynically promote a fetishistic attitude towards relations between the sexes - by these means the insatiable custodians of Big Business seek to appease their pityless god, the maximum rate of profit. To this end they are prepared to launch a massive onslaught on the integrity and cohesion of the working class.

Whilst the attempt is made to undermine the working class movement in the above ways, a different though complementary treatment has been devised in order, from the opposite flank, to disarm the ranks of intellectuals, students, artists, art-workers, and other sections of the working intelligentsia, the potential allies of the working class. In this sphere, the schemes of culture-reaction are aimed at obtaining acceptance by a majority of intellectuals of the most anarchistic, abstract or sterile effusions as "progressive" or even "revolutionary" - an attempt which is rendered all the easier through the absence of any effective alternative in the form of a true culture of the working class. Thus the artistic scene in Britain today is cluttered with the at best merely farcical, at worst openly lunatic excesses of this pseudo-progressive "left-wing" in art: -

A well-known "artist" is given permission to paint circles in various colours on the floor, up the walls and on the ceiling of a noted public gallery;

Another is encouraged to express his highly individual creativity by making extremely artistic and sensitive burn marks with a candle upon the walls of the exhibition room;

A group of avant-garde spectators - doubtless endowed with a superior sensibility denied us more crudely motivated and conscious mortals - sit upon rubber inflatables in an otherwise empty room on the premises of a certain well-known institution of the establishment and listen with silent and pensive concentration to a tape-recording of the screams of little children being subjected to torture.

These examples should suffice -- one does not need to drain the whole vat in order to taste the vintage.

Needless to say, lavish funds for mounting these provocations are made available from both state and private sources, whilst the life-assertive aspirations and contents of working class and progressive artists struggling for the barest recognition can hardly obtain as much financial support as would buy the very canvas they paint on.

Faced with this, many well-meaning and progressively intentioned artists find the problem of understanding and encompassing artistically in their work the evils of present day society temporarily beyond their powers. This is especially the case ^{among those artists} not organised in or related to the Labour Movement and who lack as a consequence any influence helping them to see through such provocations. In these circumstances, their only resort is to find a solution to their crisis of world view in a flight from the reality of that abhorrent society into a misty world of abstract art, an art which is incapable of expressing any content whatsoever. In practice, such art functions as a convenient sanction justifying the failure of such artists to "take sides" in the ceaseless battle between progress and reaction.

Were an effective alternative and a clear cultural and artistic lead to be given, many artists of both these groups could be won away from unwitting service to culture-reaction and for the cause of a progressive realist art.

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Such, then, is the climate in which our Exhibition takes place. The need for a lead, for a call from the Labour Movement for action by its artists, was never more urgent.

It is, therefore, of great significance that this group of artists, with all their different levels of commitment, should have come together on a common theme: that of presenting a clear alternative. These artists, whilst holding the most disparate views and ideas about the objective content which their art expresses, and employing the most varied forms and styles, all nevertheless share one overriding aim: an urgent desire to express their allegiance to the working class as the fundamental social force which represents the hope of all progressive humanity; to the miners as the spontaneous wider vanguard of that class which history has again brought forward into a leading role, and finally, the determination to express that allegiance through artistic forms and styles which enable the richest and most varied expression to be given to the many sided reality of contemporary Britain.

It is only through the building of a mass movement in art and culture that the working class and trade union movement of the future will as a whole come to be supplied with all those works of art, dramatic as well as visual, which will be needed to dispel and neutralise the products of culture-reaction. It is our firm belief that this exhibition will come to form the embryo of a future movement of cultural and artistic regeneration, and that this movement will, in its turn, function as a strategically necessary factor in ensuring that victory in the bitter struggle for social progress will be won by the working class in the years to come.

Among the contributors to the Exhibition we count the following:

THE ASHINGTON GROUP. Represented by :- Oliver Kilbourn, Fred Laidler, Harry Wilson, Len Robinson, James Floyd, John Harrison.

BERNARD CHARNLEY, CHIPPENHAM HOUSE ARTS GROUP, MARY LOUISE COULOURIS, ANTHONY DORRELL, GERTRUDE ELIAS, JAN FLAVELL, JOSEF HERMAN, DAN JONES, MAUREEN SCOTT, WALTER SOUTHGATE, KEN SPRAGUE, KEITH ARMSTRONG, CHRIS SEARLE & "Two Fingers".

The following is the draft Manifesto prepared by the Art-Workers Sub-Committee which is to be presented to a meeting of artists participating in the exhibition and others, in order to establish a provisional committee.

DRAFT MANIFESTO OF THE ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION 'UNITED WE STAND' AN APPEAL TO ALL PROGRESSIVE ARTISTS, ART WORKERS AND INTELLECTUALS .

In view of the reactionary situation prevailing in the arts generally in Britain today, especially the fact that all organised efforts, collective and individual, to promote a realist art expressing the life conditions, struggle and aspirations of the working class have collapsed or have become defunct, the progressive artists who have collaborated to put on the present exhibition have decided to continue their collective efforts in the future in a more permanent form. These efforts will be directed towards the establishment of a permanent organisation, the chief aim of which will be to promote all forms of artistic expression and awareness, together with a heightened cultural sensibility in general, amongst all sections of the working class.

Let there be more books, more poems, more paintings, more films, more of all kinds of art works needed by the working class. Let the example of the Ashington miners who began painting 40 years ago be taken as a living and thriving proof that artistic expression and aesthetic sensibility are not the purview solely of the "educated and enlightened" middle class. Most of the progressive artists who have exhibited in this exhibition, whilst they may not be industrial workers, are nevertheless mental or intellectual non-productive workers (white collar workers) who are compelled every bit as much to sell their talents to the highest bidder as is the manual worker. Let this exhibition therefore serve, amongst other things, to symbolise the union of these two broad sections of the working class, as a small but significant step towards the final emancipation of both from the backwardness, fetishism and sterility which at present form the unfortunate cultural environment of so many workers and working people. Together, under the broad guidance of reasoned scientific rationale, we will win through to the light of a new realist-humanist art capable of expressing in profound terms the inexhaustible tenacity, resource, courage and strength of those who, in the last analysis, are the product of the whole wealth of society; the workers by

hand and brain, the entire working class.

Originally conceived as an act of allegiance to the miners' just struggle for a decent living wage -- a struggle which, at that time, came to typify the entire developing framework of opposition to the programme of reactionary legislation through which it was sought to impose restrictions on the most fundamental liberties of the working class -- with the securing by the miners and their organisation, the NUM, of an important victory through the winning of their claim, the overall national situation became transformed. Linked as this was with the electoral defeat of those elements in the Government of the day which had instigated the reactionary legislation, it became necessary to reconsider the original concept of donating the proceeds of the exhibition to the NUM's strike fund.

Accordingly, a meeting of artists contributing to the exhibition and other interested workers was held on Thursday March 28th. It was at this meeting that the decision was taken to apply any monies raised from the sale of works of art at the exhibition to the establishment of a permanent organisation with the above broad aims. This measure was given the unequivocal support of the NUM itself.

It was further decided at the above meeting that steps should be taken, as soon as possible after the exhibition, to convene a further meeting on a wider and more representative basis at which a fully elaborated plan and set of organisational proposals should be presented. The time, date and place of this meeting will be notified to all interested persons at an early date and those wishing to be advised of the are requested to leave their names and addresses with the representative of the Art-Workers Sub-Committee present at the exhibition.

We appeal to all progressive artists, art workers and intellectuals to give this proposal their active support.

p.p. Art-Workers Sub-Committee.
Artists Union.

STOP PRESS We understand that the THE THESES ON ART, LSA's basic theoretical guide, was reprinted twice (albeit in the now revised 1st edition) and circulated by the organisers of the Conference ART AND POLITICS, THEORY AND PRACTICE held at the Royal College of Art on May 2nd - 5th.

We were especially gratified to receive the report that the Theses aroused the bitter enmity and hatred of the many variegated species of Trotskyite flora which luxurated there, one of which described his (mainly incomprehensible) paper: "Antitheses on Art as counter-proposals to the naive theses on art and vulgar marxism of neo-Stalinist revisionism". As was anticipated, the Conference disintegrated into a meaningless melee between the different Trotskyite and anarchist groups and, apart from the circulation of the THESES ON ART as described above, no positive contribution of any kind was made to the elucidation of questions of scientific theory and practice in art.

LECTURE ON MARXISM AND ART - GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE. A further blow on behalf of scientific revolutionary art and aesthetics and against the current obscurantism and degeneracy in art was struck when a leading member of LSA was invited to speak to a group of art students at Goldsmiths College South-East London in April. The group under whose auspices the talk was given themselves represent a dissident independent section who had demanded the organisation of an independent series of talks as an alternative to the lectures provided by the official curriculum. In his talk, the LSA member first of all gave an outline of the dialectical-materialist method in philosophy and then as applied to the scientific elucidation of historical laws of motion. He then went on to single out the particular sector of the superstructure of capitalist society broadly termed "Art and Culture" and subjected this to a lengthy theoretical analysis. The talk concluded with questions and discussion. The tutors present attempted to confuse and mystify the Marxist-Leninist analysis which had been given, describing scientific aesthetics as "dogmatism" and "mind-blowing". However, many of the students present, either joined in developing the scientific rational presented or at the least refused to join in the anti-intellectual witch-hunt which the tutors were attempting to organise. The result was an inspiring growth of enthusiasm for revolutionary realist art and

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culture. Finally, the tutors beat a hasty retreat and a useful amount of LSA literature was sold. An abridged version of the talk is now being prepared for publication by the students and will in this way be disseminated throughout the College and even further afield.

FILM UNIT

The LSA is pleased to announce the establishment of a practical film-making unit in 1973.

Equipped with the most all-embracing of all art-forms, we hope to begin by producing a series of 10 minute topical films, which can be shown in factories, halls, public meetings and wherever they are requested.

Work has already begun on an initial film, recording the main events around the picket-trial Shrewsbury prisoners.

It is proposed to set up in the Autumn, a film Society, showing films of Pudovkin, Eisenstein; the South American group, etc. and to hold discussion meetings on both political and technical aspects of film-making.

Contact LSA Secretary M. Scott, 18 Camberwell Church Street, London S.E.5, for details of dates.

SHOP FRONT

THE SEA FRONT

In March 1973 17 African seamen walked off the British ship "Clan Robertson" (owned by Union Castle) in support of their demand that their pay should be increased from £40 a month to the basic rate for British seamen of £87 a month. (In fact, many hundreds of Asian seamen are employed in British ships at only £14.75 a month !) The strike was supported by Swedish dockers, who promptly boycotted the ship, which was diverted with its cargo of fruit first to Southampton and then to Antwerp; in both of these ports the International Transport Workers' Federation organised a boycott by dockers, and the owners eventually agreed to meet the seamen's demand.

THE ELECTRICAL SHOP FRONT

In October 1973 the Electrical Power Engineers' Association announced on behalf of its 31,000 members an official ban on out-of-hours working from November 1st in support of the bringing into operation of an agreement reached in late 1972 but frozen by the government. The agreement provided for increases in weekly standby pay to £13 (from £5.10p), in payment for emergency calls outside normal working hours of £5 (from £2.40) during the week and of £9 (from £5.90) at week-ends. On December 28th it was agreed that the negotiated agreement would be brought into operation retrospectively to April 1st, and would be augmented by raising of the availability allowance to £84 a year (from £60) retrospectively to November 7th, with the further increase to £90 on February 1st 1974.

REVIEW :

" This Proof, Pythagoras" is the first published collection of poems by Hamilton Parry, a retired industrial worker with an outstanding record of struggle on behalf of the working class that goes back to the unemployed movement and the International Brigade of the 1930's.

The book contains some earlier poems, but those that make up the main body of the book have a common theme, that of crime:

"The blackmail siege and gauged embezzlement,
A bogus firm's decamping devilment,
The avid breaker into bank and house,
And hidden cat-theif quiet as a mouse,
The snaring snatcher of the padded gem,
A smuggler's beat, and con-man's acumen,
With all the multi-coloured warp of thought
Important paragons have gaily taught",

and he presents crime unequivocally as the fruit of a society based on the exploitation of the working people. For what, he asks between the lines, is crime but profit-making private enterprise carried to its logical conclusion?

Parry sees the shadow of the capitalists looming over Britain

"As stone-grey castles roost in Spain
O'er every white-walled town",

while

"Old Tom Robbery lies laughing in the sun".

His word-imagery is often vivid, as in the picture of the "commercial pelicans", great and small, who rob the workers of the fruits of their labour:

"Abaft this lacquered stage
There lurks the canker-wormed core, the skilled
Commercial pelicans, the pelf-installed
And deep of pouch, the niche-born plumed and groomed
Black-jacketed and Jaguared; acclaimed
They come, pearl-prototypes, the lords-elite
Of toil, intoxicant of touch, with gift
Of craft and garb of codes professional;
Their vaunted fees, inflated estimates,
Their spiral-looted land -- a ransom-pawn;
The rule-smooth tongues and trigger-holds
Of sly percentages, the deft-apportioned
Contracts gloved within the coil
Of wheels in wheels, suave city fathers' foil;
The hoary bluff of mythical repairs
To humdrum motor-cars and household wares;
Ruse-profitable rapes of ignorance,
Wide-angled tentacled belligerence,
The thousand-footed replicas and freaks
Of Rachman-mould --
All these their shrines enfold".

Parry presents clearly

"The clawed arch-criminal --the State"

as the apparatus of force by which the capitalist class maintains its rule over the working people it exploits:

"Know then that the law is the bastion
Of the Privileged,
Blood-borne from the womb of battle,
Bartered and besieged in the power-clad centuries,
Twin-fashioned in the grace of lords and kings".

The ringing effectiveness of Parry's language is often enhanced by his use of alliteration as a rhythmic device, and in this he follows in the footsteps of such Middle English poets as Langland. The capitalist judges, for example, are the

"Wit-fatuous and fumble-featured ones"

who

". . stand aloft, aghast and addlepat
To bemoan the blast".

At Easter 1973 I had the pleasure of interviewing Hamilton Parry at his home on the Sussex coast. He told me that the aim of the "Pythagoras" poems was to present in the language of poetry a Marxist-Leninist view of the origin of crime. As he put it:

"If the atmosphere is that of the rat-race, commercial trickery, wholesale craft and cunning, with millionaires made overnight out of mergers and property deals behind the backs of the people, then the entire set-up is a school for crime. What the fatcats get away with is seen as an example to the minions, with fiddling, fraud and pilferery becoming the rule. The rich always were the first of our thieves. The underlings simply emulate them. . . Laissez-faire, private enterprise, property-owning democracy, shares in industry, unit trusts, and all the other gibberish that constitutes the life-blood of capitalism digs a cess-pit out of which pour the imitative criminals -- with violence walking alongside as the struggle for ever bigger stakes becomes more and more vicious".

From this he drew the logical conclusion that the abolition of crime could be brought about only by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society, the smashing of its state apparatus of force and the construction of a socialist society. Of course, he went on, this could not be expected to bring about the instant elimination of crime. Although socialism

". . is a tremendous leap forward in the emancipation of man, the old habits and reactions have to be thrown off like the worn-out cloak of a chrysalis. This is not an easy or an automatic process. . . A 'cultural revolution', designed to inspire and purify, may be an inevitable twist to the dialectical spiral. The thing that matters is that we move relentlessly upwards".

I told Parry that I, personally, found some of the "Pythagoras" poems obscure -- in comparison with the crystal clarity of his earlier poems. He expressed surprise at this, and emphasised his firm belief in the need for the artist to communicate the content of his work clearly. I said that I linked the obscurity of some of the "Pythagoras" poems with the fact that in these poems the workers were presented only as victims, and not as the revolutionary force which would eventually sweep away the loathsome society indicted in the poems. He replied:

"I did consider this, but had to reckon with the fact that I am not an established author. A Shaw, a Priestley, even a Kingsley Amis, is free to shake the roof off society if his intelligence dictates it. At this stage I have to aim at a wider audience, many of whom are non-political".

It would seem, therefore that Parry stands at the crossroads. Either he uses his undoubted talents to become accepted by the sterile intelligentsia of capitalist society by distorting truth in order to make the content of his work acceptable to them, or he places those talents at the service of the working class so that his work becomes a weapon in the revolutionary education and inspiration of the working class.

Parry declared that he was determined to avoid the road of opportunism, and that he had already begun work on a poem which would express clearly and unequivocally the struggle for power of the working class.

This is something which all genuine socialists will await eagerly.

("THIS PROOF, PYTHAGORAS" is published by the Samson Press, 65, Sedlescombe Road, .
St. Leonards-on-Sea, at 50p.).

With the permission of the author we print below one of the poems from the collection:

THE TWO SEEDLINGS

Frail and beautifully slender
In my garden seedlings grow;
Here there are two
Chancing their tiny heads above the ground
To look around;
Spontaneous at the touch and stimulus of life
They tense,
And sweet they sway
Immaculate and fresh
With fools' foolhardiness.
There prospers one
Under the sun,
Loving the lovely rays and rains
Beating on brow and breasted-stem;
She opens wide her heart and kisses them,
Lashes her limbs to luscious earth
Full-intimate and warm,
And rides the storm,
The stout hedge harbouring to sheer the wind.
O with what dedicated care
This homely soil is diligently tended!
And rich with all the fare
The seedling - seen, and thankful -
Blooms and looms in my garden;
A joy to behold her,
A gem of adornment,
A fulfilment of loveliness.

But what befalls the other
Is another tale.

The leaves are less than elegant
Amid the martyr'd marl

Of weeds and wattles and unwanted things
Mounting in mounds where, stung,
The nettle stings,
And desiccated clods and clumps
Garner the garden rubbish dumps;
Or where the lordly villain-tree
Veils from the sun and shower
The wanton flower.
Aloof he leans, a rooted octopus
Goring the rubbled gutted ground:
There are no spears so ravenous
Nor tears more tender-torn. . .
Yet spurned, my seedling sought and fought
For very life;
Primeval with the violent wind
Bared its waif body to the wincing winds
And delved for living earth. . .
Alas! unkempt, unploughed -
Vested and vulture-proud
The avaricious tree had roundly plundered,
My plantlet pined. . .
Yearned for the soil-soft rains to play,
And gathered in the grip of stones and clay
The stunted little seedling, militant-mangled
Dangled deep its head,
And smothered,
It withered-
And died. . .

Never to know the touch of care
From birthlight to the tomb,
Nor love-sweet sinews under the sun,
Nor e'er a bloom.

Hamilton Parry.

REVIEW:

"FIGHT FOR SHELTON BAR", at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent.

In the spring of 1973 the British Steel Corporation announced its intention to close down its steel plant at Shelton Bar, Stoke-on-Trent, and so make 1,200 highly skilled steelworkers redundant. The workers responded by setting up an Action Committee which mobilised and led militant opposition to the closure and has, at the time of writing, won a not insignificant victory in "persuading" the BSC at least to defer the scheduled closure.

"Fight for Shelton Bar", directed by Peter Cheesman at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke, presents the story of that continuing struggle in the form of a documentary drama. In a programme note, this highly talented director makes it clear that his company's standpoint is not "impartial", but one of open commitment to the workers' cause.

The Victoria Theatre is a "theatre in the round": the audience sits on four sides of an open square stage, and the action proceeds not only on this stage, but among, behind and above the audience.

Conflict is, of course, the essence of good drama and, as its name implies, conflict is the essence of "Fight for Shelton Bar" -- not only the basic conflict between workers fighting for their livelihood and the callous top-level management of the Steel Corporation (personified in the contrasting upper class accents of the late Lord Melchett), but conflict between the Action Committee itself and individual steelworkers who question the desirability of militant action or who have no faith in the power of working class solidarity.

The play demonstrates clearly how participation in struggle under sound leadership raises the class and political consciousness of the workers involved: thus, it shows how at Shelton Bar the workers passed from appeasement (symbolised by the presentation by the workers of a Wedgewood bowl to Lord Melchett on his visit to the works to announce its closure)

to demonstrations, marches, works-to-rule and the threat of strike action.

It is, of course, extremely difficult for a playwright from the petty-bourgeoisie (from which most dramatists in our society are drawn) to present authentically the speech and expressions of the working class in a particular area, in a particular industry. Peter Cheesman's company has solved this problem in a most interesting and successful way: by making extensive recordings of interviews with the actual participants in the struggle and making these the basis of the script. This method means that the writing of the play becomes more a process of the artistic editing of the actual words of the workers themselves. In "Fight for Shelton Bar" the result carries a ring of authenticity which is almost unique in British drama featuring the working class.

Not only do the words themselves ring completely true to life, but also the attitudes of the workers which these words express -- attitudes sometimes overlooked even by conscious Socialists but which have a vital bearing on the strategy and tactics of working class struggle: for example, the intense pride of the skilled worker in his job and in "his" plant. In such a situation as that at Stoke, these attitudes have strengthened the solidarity of the workers concerned in opposition to closure.

The realism is heightened by the presentation of workers at work -- a phenomenon conspicuously absent from "working class" soap operas of the type of "Coronation Street". Running like a thread through the entire play and interlaced with the scenes of the struggle led by Action Committee, we "see" the entire highly skilled (and often dangerous) process of steel-making from start to finish; this is presented with the barest of props (a helmet, a ladle, sound effects and the searing red glow of the furnaces) and our imagination, stimulated and guided by the actors, does the rest.

Among a superlative cast, Graham Watkins is outstanding in his portrayal of the leader of the Action Committee, Ted Smith (not an easy part for an actor from London). And mention must be made of the songs which form an integral part of the play and are admirably and clearly presented by a group of young singers who also participate in the action.

My only criticism -- a very minor one -- was that I found the presentation of the first meeting of the Action Committee in the form of the reading of the minutes section by section by the participating actors, a slightly jarring departure from realism in comparison with the fully dramatised presentation of the later meetings. It is only fair to add, however, that the two representatives of the League of Socialist Artists who accompanied me (and who shared my great enthusiasm for the production did not agree with this criticism.)

A notable feature of "Fight for Shelton Bar" was the concentrated attention and active sympathy on the part of an audience composed largely of local working people and students. This involvement was consciously furthered at the end of the play when a member of the real-life Action Committee was drawn in from the audience to report on the struggle up to the minute. On the night I attended, after the play had been running more than a week, the cast still seemed to be a little surprised at the enthusiastic ovation received at the close of the play. No doubt this reaction is a hangover from the dramatic "theory" taught in most of our leading drama schools that socialist realism (and "Fight for Shelton Bar" has the essential structure of socialist realism) must be "dull". The audience were, however, keenly aware that this was their life and their struggles which were being portrayed, and they clearly found it -- as socialist realists have always maintained -- the very opposite of dull.

THE DEAD IN THE SQUARE

A poem by PABLO NERUDA

PABLO NERUDA is the pseudonym of Nefalf Ricardo Reyes, who was born in 1904 in the Chilean town of Parral. His father worked on the railway and, when Neruda was still very young, was sent to Temuco in the far south of Chile. Here, in what was virtually pioneer country, Neruda grew up and came into brief contact with the poet Gabriela Mistral, who taught for a time in Temuco.

At the age of only 14 Neruda became literary editor of the Temuco daily newspaper "Morning". In 1920 he went to the capital, Santiago, to study and there published in the following year his first book of poems "The Song of the Feast". A second collection, "Twilight" (1923), brought him nationwide recognition. In 1924 he published the enormously successful "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair".

From 1927 to 1945 he lived abroad and served as Chilean Consul, first in Rangoon and Java, then from 1933 in Barcelona. This is the period of the first two volumes of "Residence on Earth" (1925-31), first published as a collection in 1933. These poems reflect a period of spiritual nihilism; they present humanity as absurd and the universe as senseless chaos.

The great change in Neruda's poetry occurred just after the Spanish Civil War, the struggle of the Spanish working people and the International Brigades greatly influencing his ideas in a positive direction. In 1939 he went to Paris, where he worked on behalf of Spanish Republican refugees. After World War II he joined the Communist Party and announced a conscious change in his poetry, a change already evident in the poems of the third volume of "Residence on Earth". From now on he regarded his poetry no longer as an elite pursuit, but as a statement of the solidarity of the working people of all lands, to whom his poems were now addressed. One of the first fruits of this change was his "Common Canto" (1950), a poem of epic dimensions generally regarded as his masterpiece. It was conceived as a song of Chile, but developed into a hymn to Latin America, to its landscapes, to its animals and plants, and above all to its peoples.

In the 1950's Neruda published his "Elemental Odes" (1954), and his "Third Book of Odes" (1959). The odes represented a serious attempt to write simple poetry which could communicate its content to ordinary working people.

Later there appeared other collections of poems; "A Hundred Love Sonnets" (1959), "Song of Achievement" (1960), "Ceremonial Cantos" (1961), "Full Power" (1962), and "Memorial of Isla Negra" (1964), "End of the World" (1969) and "The Fiery Sword" (1970). In 1967 he completed his first play, "The Brilliance and Death of Joaquin Murieta".

Neruda was elected a Communist Senator in 1947, but was charged with treason for his criticism of the sell-out of the government of the day to United States imperialism and forced to flee to Mexico. When the Allende government came to office in 1970, he became Chilean Ambassador in Paris. He died in 1973 within a few days of the destruction of the Allende government by the right-wing military coup.

"THE DEAD IN THE SQUARE" relates to a former massacre in Chile, but recent events in that country make it tragically topical.

I DO NOT come to weep here where they fell.
I come to speak to you who are still living;
I address my words to you, and to myself.

THIS CRIME took place right in the open square.
Not in a forest was the innocent blood spilled
Not in the thirsty, concealing sand of the pampas.
No one made any attempt to cover it up.
This crime was done in the very heart of the country
Once I was in the nitre beds with the unknown heroes
who dig that powdery fertilising snow
from the hard crust of our planet;
I was there with those men at the time of the great strike;
I remember the proud, hard clasp of their earthy hands.
They said to me, "Look, brother,
look how we live
here in Humberstone, here in Mapocho.
in Ricaventura, in Paloma,
in Pan de Azucar, in Piojillo."
They let me gnaw at the miserable roots
that give them all the nourishment they get;
they showed me the packed earth that is floor for their houses,
the heap, the dirt, the bedbugs,
and the endless solitude that is their life.
And I saw the diggers sweating at their work
and how they leave the full print of their hands
pressed in the wooden handles of their picks.

PEOPLE, here you decided to lend a hand
to the bowed workers of the pampas; you answered them;
you called them, man, woman and child,
one year ago, to this Square.
And here your blood gushed forth.
In the very centre of the country it was spilled,
In front of the Palace, right in the middle of the street,
so that all the world might see,
and no one might mop it up,
but your red stains should remain there
like stars, fixed and implacable.
It was when one Chilean hand after another
was stretching out its fingers towards the pampas,
and your words came from the heart, speaking unity;
people, it was when you were marching in your own Square,
singing the old songs full of tears and hope and sorrow
that the hand of the murderer drenched the Square with your
blood.

THIS IS the way the flag of our country was made:
out of the rags of their sorrow the people stitched it;
they embroidered it with the shining thread of love;
they cut from their shirts, or perhaps from a fold of the sky,
that patch of blue to hold the star of their country,
and with eager hands they pinned it there like a jewel.
Drop by drop it is turning to fiery red.

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THOSE who came to this Square with loaded rifles,
those who came with orders to kill without mercy,
found here only a crowd of people singing -
a crowd made into a people by duty and love
and a thin girl suddenly fell clutching her banner;
a youth spun round coughing through the wound in his side;
in the shock of that silence the people stared at them falling
and slowly the wave of their sorrow lifted and froze into cold
fury.

Afterwards they dipped their banners in the blood
and held them up before the faces of the assassins.

IN THE name of these our dead

I demand punishment.

For those who spattered our fatherland with blood

I demand punishment.

For him by whose command this crime was done

I demand punishment.

For the traitor who clambered to power over these bodies

I demand punishment.

For those forgiving ones who excused this crime

I demand punishment.

I do not want to shake hands all round and forget;

I do not want to touch their blood-stained hands;

I want punishment.

I do not want them sent off somewhere as Ambassadors

or covered up here at home until it blows over.

I want to see them judged,

here, in the open air, in this very spot.

I want to see them punished.

I MUST speak to those dead now as if they were here.
Brothers; it will go on,
Our fight will go on in the land,
In the factories, in the farms,
In the streets the fight will go on,
In the nitre-pits, in the pampas,
In the craters of copper, glowing with green and red,
In the dank caves where coal-seams gleam through the dusk,
The battle-lines will be drawn,
And in our hearts these banners
the witnesses of your death,
will multiply themselves until they flutter
thick as the thrusting leaves in inexhaustible spring.

FOOTSTEPS shuffling a thousand years in this square
will not rub off the trace of your blood from these stones;
though the babble of countless voices cross this quietness
that bell will echo tolling the hour of your death;
though rain may rot these walls to their foundations
it will not quench the blaze of your martyred names,
nor the dead hand of a thousand nights of oppression
stifle your living hope for that destined day
that we throughout the world, so many of us,
are yearning toward, the final day of suffering,
the day of justice won through bitter struggle;
and you, O fallen brothers, out of the silence
your voices will rise in the mighty shout of freedom
when the hope of the people flames into paeans of joy.

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