

[Comment]

Watergate and Other Crimes

“The wide-ranging counterattack against Nixon is an effort to restore the familiar system in which the wealthy and the privileged control American politics. In several ways, Nixon threatened this system. For this transgression, he must pay a price.”

In January 1969, as Richard Nixon began his first term as Chief Executive, the American war in South Vietnam was raging in full fury. U.S. troops were again seeking to “pacify” the countryside after their devastating defeat in the Tet offensive of early 1968. The bombing of North Vietnam had temporarily ceased. Laos was suffering intense bombardment, though that secret was well kept here. Cambodia, however, remained an island of relative peace and tranquillity. American bombardment and ground operations in South Vietnam during 1967 had driven many Vietnamese from their homes to seek refuge across the border, but these “Communist sanctuaries” of cynical propaganda extended only a few miles into Cambodian territory. American bombing of Cambodia, also officially denied, remained relatively limited.

The intentions of the new Commander-in-Chief were made clear at once. By March, bombing tonnage in Southeast Asia had reached the highest level of the entire war. In the same month, a program of regular bombardment of neutral Cambodia was initiated, to be continued in secret until the outright American invasion in April 1970. Information as to the scale and extent of this program is only now being released, largely as a result of the efforts of Senator Harold Hughes.

Nixon stepped up the bombing of Laos as well. By the end of this first year, much of Northern Laos had been devastated and the largely rural population of the Plain of Jars evacuated to refugee camps. These operations had little to do with prosecuting the American war in Vietnam. They were an effort to destroy a popular movement of social

by Noam Chomsky

revolution in a country regarded as being of some strategic importance.

In South Vietnam, the new Administration at once initiated operations of unparalleled savagery. Operation "Speedy Express" in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Hoa allegedly pacified 120,000 people in early 1969, including 11,000 of the enemy who were permanently pacified, over 3,000 in the grim month of March alone. Altogether, 748 weapons were found, "suggesting the possibility that many of the killed are unarmed porters or bystanders," as Robert McNamara expressed it, rather diffidently, on another occasion. This six-month operation has been investigated in detail by *Newsweek* Southeast Asia correspondent Kevin Buckley, who reports that "the fabric of society long established by the NLF was destroyed." Villages were wiped out and productive land devastated. "The death toll there made the My Lai massacre look trifling by comparison." Farther north, the largest American amphibious operation since World War II—"Bold Mariner"—was launched in the Batangan peninsula, long a "free-fire" zone. The entire population was forcibly removed and the land destroyed by bombardment and Rome plows. Dikes were bombed so that sea water would destroy the rice paddies. Then, 4,000 of the 12,000 civilians were returned, to starve in the camps to which they were restricted by force. As of April 1971, the dikes had not been rebuilt, no doubt because "the people of the peninsula were written off as communists," in the words of one American official.¹

I will not recount here the further exploits of Richard Nixon and his renowned foreign policy adviser, culminating in the incident that Nixon seems to regard as the crowning jewel of his first term in office, the Christmas bombings of 1972—a last vain effort to terrorize the North Vietnamese into modifying the cease-fire proposals that they had offered. It was only after the defeat of this operation that Nixon formally agreed to the North Vietnamese proposals, while making it quite clear that the United States would continue to subvert the agreements in every feasible way, as it has done since the Paris Agreements were signed in January 1973. Meanwhile, a regime of torturers survives in Saigon with massive American support, blocking every possible path to political resolution of the conflict, for reasons that are not difficult to discern. The war in Cambodia tears that tortured country to shreds; with both sides supplied with American arms, the Phnom Penh regime is a shell that would quickly collapse without massive American aid.

For a year, the major preoccupation of the mass media in the United States has been Watergate. Public attention is focused on one crucial question: has the President committed high crimes and misdemeanors of a sort that would justify impeachment or forced resignation? By any rational standards, the question is ludicrous. Richard Nixon is one of the major criminals of the Twentieth Century, and the same is true of those who have designed and implemented the foreign policy of his Administration. The serious question is not whether the President and his advisers are guilty of major crimes. Rather, the question is whether the American system of law, as currently interpreted by Congress and the Courts, is so absurd that criminal acts of the highest magnitude are not to be considered violations of law in the technical sense.

But this question has already received its answer. There is no possibility that the President will be impeached, let alone tried for war crimes, on grounds of his criminal actions in Indochina. It has always been obvious that the Judgments of Nuremberg and Tokyo were mere farce, and that apart from defeated nations, any political or military leadership will be exempt from prosecution for crimes committed for reasons of state.

[NIXON'S "FATAL FLAW"]

Let's consider, then, the abuses that have so outraged liberal American opinion and evoked a groundswell of agitation for impeachment. Former Attorney General Elliot Richardson explained the central issue succinctly in a Boston press conference, not long after the "Saturday night massacre." The "fatal flaw" of the Nixon Administration, he observed, has been "the proclivity of the White House to perceive critics and opposition as 'enemies,' and the willingness to 'adopt tactics used against an enemy' in handling such criticism."² As Hans Morgenthau put it, the Nixon Administration has "attacked American democracy directly by depriving the minority of a chance to compete on approximately equal terms with the majority" and has thus taken a long step toward totalitarianism.³

The minority to which Morgenthau refers is the Democratic Party opposition. The critics and opposition who have been unfairly treated as "enemies" and subjected to unfair tactics are those who belong to the political center, men who are expected, in the normal course of affairs, to share in the exercise of power. The Dean-Colson "enemies list," which included such enemies of the state as Thomas Watson of IBM, Edwin Land of Polaroid, James Reston and McGeorge Bundy, symbolizes this "fatal flaw" of the Nixon Administration. Not surprisingly, there is a bipartisan counterattack against a man who has so infamously broken the rules of the political game.

Perhaps the most extreme indication of the criminal mentality of the Administration, from this perspective, is the aborted Huston Plan of June 1970, which called for strictly illegal acts against those designated as enemies of the state: surreptitious entry, tampering with the mails, and so on. It also called for expansion of "legal" efforts, such as FBI operations on university campuses. This plan, as is well known, though approved by Nixon, was blocked by the renowned civil libertarian J. Edgar Hoover, much to the annoyance of the Administration. One of the best of the recent studies of Watergate reports:

The demise of the Huston plan made it clear to Nixon's men that as long as Hoover remained in charge of the FBI, it was going to concentrate on its traditional targets—card-carrying Communists and Mafia gangsters. The so-called "student revolution," which obsessed the White House, was not being taken seriously enough. Hoover has, since his death, been criticized for his apparently callous disregard for the threat posed by the youthful New Left.⁴

This interpretation of the role of the FBI was not easy to sustain in the light of what was known even then of FBI activities. It was, for example, hardly consistent with the

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one bit of solid evidence available as to the allocation of FBI efforts—namely, the “Media files” taken from the Media, Pennsylvania, office of the FBI in March 1971 by a group calling itself “the Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI.” According to its analysis of the documents in this FBI office, 1 percent were devoted to organized crime, mostly gambling; 30 percent were “manuals, routine forms, and similar procedural matter”; 40 percent were devoted to political surveillance and the like, including two cases involving right-wing groups, ten concerning immigrants, and over 200 on Left or liberal groups. Another 14 percent of the documents concerned draft resistance and “leaving the military without government permission.” The remainder concerned bank robberies, murder, rape, and interstate theft.⁵

But whatever credibility the earlier quoted characterization of the FBI gave it as guarantor of investigative scruples should have been shattered by the release on December 6, 1973, by court order, of the documents headed “Disruption of the New Left.”⁶ The documents include a memorandum by Hoover, dated May 1968, which announced the COINTELPRO program, which had the following purpose: “to expose, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize the activities of the various New Left organizations, their leadership and adherents.” Agents were instructed to conduct continuous surveillance of such groups, and it is also “imperative,” Hoover ordered, to

inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant. . . . We must frustrate every effort of these groups and individuals to consolidate their forces or to recruit new or youthful adherents. In every instance, consideration should be given to disrupting the organized activity of these groups, and no opportunity should be missed to capitalize upon organizational and personal conflicts of their leadership.

A memorandum of May 9, 1968 from C. D. Brennan elaborates the motivation for this program:

Our Nation is undergoing an era of disruption and violence caused to a large extent by various individuals generally connected with the New Left. Some of these activists urge revolution in America and call for the defeat of the United States in Vietnam. They continually and falsely allege police brutality and do not hesitate to utilize unlawful acts to further their so-called causes. The New Left has on many occasions viciously and scurrilously attacked the Director and the Bureau in an attempt to hamper our investigation of it and to drive us off the college campuses. With this in mind, it is our recommendation that a new Counterintelligence Program be designed to neutralize the New Left and the Key activists. . . .

The program was initiated in May 1968, shortly after the Columbia strike, seven months after the Pentagon demonstration in which, as the Pentagon Papers relate, “the sight of thousands of peaceful demonstrators being confronted by troops in battle gear cannot have been reassuring to the country as a whole nor to the President in particular.” COINTELPRO was canceled in September 1971, three days after House Majority Leader Hale Boggs accused Hoover of tapping his phone and employing “secret police tactics.” Boggs accused the FBI of infiltrating college campuses, labor unions, black organizations and church groups.⁷ The threat of exposure, coupled with the Media revelations, were probably the cause for the abrupt cancellation of COINTELPRO.

One of the programs incorporated within this framework was the “SWP Disruption Program” [SWP = Socialist Workers Party—Eds.], which had in fact been in operation since 1961. Another recently released memorandum, dating back to October 12, 1961, laid out the basis for this SWP program. It notes that the Party had been “openly espousing its line on a local and national basis through running candidates for public office and strongly directing and/or supporting such causes as Castro’s Cuba and integration problems . . . in the South.” The memorandum went on to say: “It is felt that a disruption program . . . could be initiated against the SWP . . .”⁸ as indeed it was. One may compare the reasons advanced for initiating this disruption program with the crimes later cited in the Brennan memorandum to justify COINTELPRO: advocacy of revolution and defeat of the United States in Vietnam, allegations of police brutality and attacks on His Majesty the Director, attempts to drive the FBI off the college campuses.

COINTELPRO also seems to have incorporated the “Racial Intelligence” program directed against “Black Nationalist-Hate groups,” initiated in a memorandum of August 25, 1967. This program had as its purpose “to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.” In this case too, agents were instructed “to inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant.” The goal was to “frustrate” efforts of these groups to “consolidate their forces or to recruit new or youthful adherents” and to exploit and exacerbate internal and intergroup conflicts. Agents were directed to use “established local news media contacts” and other “sources available to the Seat of Government” to “disrupt or neutralize” these organizations. The “targeted group” must be “disrupted, ridiculed, or discredited through the publicity . . .” “Consideration should be given to techniques to preclude

violence-prone or rabble-rouser leaders of hate groups from spreading their philosophy publicly or through various mass communication media.”

A memorandum of March 4, 1968, gives some examples of procedures that “had been effective” prior to issuance of the August 1967 memorandum. In one case, “a new (censored) grade school” was harassed, and “(censored) obtained background information on the parents of each pupil”—to what end, we can only surmise. In another case, “(censored) alerted local police” to a group active in the summer of 1967. The police then arrested its leaders “on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail. As a result, (censored) leaders spent most of the summer in jail and no violence traceable to (censored) took place.”

Among the “long-range goals” of the disruption program were the following: “Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups,” for unity might be “the beginning of a true black revolution”; “pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence”; “prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining *respectability*, by discrediting them to . . . the responsible Negro community . . . [and] Negro radicals,” and also discrediting them “to the white community, both the responsible community and to ‘liberals’ who have vestiges of sympathy for militant black nationalists simply because they are Negroes . . .” A “final goal” is “to prevent the long-range *growth*” of these organizations, “especially among youth.” “Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed.”

Other documents describe a variety of devices to “disrupt and confuse Panther activities”: fabrication of documents, “ridiculing or discrediting Panther leaders,” “promoting factionalism among [Black Panther Party] members,” etc. In a discussion of the need to “Prevent the *rise of a ‘messiah’* who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement,” there are censored references to (presumably) Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. The document also warns of another person (name censored) who might “be a very real contender” for a position of leadership “should he abandon his supposed ‘obedience’ to ‘white, liberal doctrines’ (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism.”

Throughout the series of memoranda, it is taken for granted that the political police have the authority to suppress dissent, disrupt organizations and undermine their leadership, foment conflicts, “neutralize” potential activists by deceit, ridicule, fraudulent arrest, or other means to be developed under the “enthusiastic and imaginative approach” that agents are “urged to take . . . to this new counter-intelligence endeavor.” The model is the successful disruption of the Communist Party. A hint of further possibilities appears in the distinction between the “responsible” white community and those “liberals” with “vestiges of sympathy” for black nationalists.

The scale of the operations undertaken under COINTELPRO remains unknown. There is evidence that the efforts to “disrupt the New Left” reached the level of attempted murder. An FBI informer-provocateur, David Sannes, revealed in Seattle that he had been instructed to booby-trap a bomb so as to kill those who placed it. This was too much for him, and he exposed this escapade.⁹ In a suit filed nam-

ing Nixon and others as defendants, attorneys for the SWP list burglaries, attacks on SWP offices to terrorize campaign workers (in one case, by men armed with machine guns), bombing and burning of offices, wiretapping, mail tampering and other forms of harassment.¹⁰ To take a case of another sort, virtually at random, the Alabama branch of the ACLU argued in court that in May 1970, an FBI agent “committed arson and other violence that police used as a reason for declaring that university students were unlawfully assembled”¹¹—150 students were arrested. The Court ruled, in this case, that the agent’s role was irrelevant unless the defense could establish that the agent was instructed to commit the violent acts, but this was impossible, according to the ACLU attorney, since the FBI and police thwarted his efforts to locate the agent who had admitted the acts to him. Further questions are naturally raised by the recent revelation that when Fred Hampton was assassinated by Chicago police, possibly after having been drugged, one of the Panthers providing “security” was an FBI agent. Every movement activist has memories that will be stirred by the documents that have recently been produced.

We can now, incidentally, understand why Hoover opposed the Huston plan in 1970. He was not motivated, as has been alleged, by a sudden concern for his reputation as a civil libertarian. Rather, it appears, he feared that the Huston plan might have interfered with the far more extensive programs of political repression that the FBI was conducting, or might have led to the exposure of these programs.

The SWP Disruption Program was initiated under the Kennedy Administration. The “Racial Intelligence” Program was put into operation by the Johnson Administration, as was COINTELPRO. It is alleged that Attorney General Ramsey Clark was kept in the dark about COINTELPRO. But one may raise various questions—as Nixon’s defenders do—about the responsibility of public officials for actions of subordinates, particularly when these acts are more or less predictable on the basis of the historical record.

[APATHY AND OUTRAGE]

The programs for repression and stifling of political opposition that I have been discussing go far beyond anything revealed in the Watergate investigations. For anyone who is concerned with democratic principles and practice, they are far more significant than the whole collection of Watergate exposures. It is interesting, therefore, to consider the response in the mass media, in particular the liberal press, to the revelation of really significant programs of political repression over many years. There was virtually no response. I have cited two editorial comments (*The Nation*, February 9; *L.A. Times* March 12). No doubt a diligent search would reveal others. COINTELPRO did not come as a complete surprise. It was mentioned in the Media files and had been discussed by a former FBI agent in the *New York Review of Books*, January 27, 1972. Now, however, some initial documentary evidence is available.

The striking and significant fact is that programs of

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political repression put into operation under the most liberal democratic administrations are of almost no concern, in comparison to the much less significant violations of democratic principle under the heading of Watergate. The public is bombarded with news about the latest tape erasure or tax deceit, but extensive programs of the political police to maintain ideological orthodoxy, substantive moves towards totalitarianism, are unworthy of attention or comment.

Returning to the war policy of the Nixon Administration, we find a relevant analogy. When the Hughes investigations in 1973 revealed that Cambodia and Northern Laos had been bombed in secret since 1969, there was much indignation in the press over the fact that the government had lied and suppressed information that the people should know. This reaction was pure hypocrisy. The major news media knew very well since early 1968 that the United States was systematically bombing civilian targets in Northern Laos, remote from any war zone. Eyewitness reports by noncommunist observers had appeared in the world press, and these were specifically brought to the attention of major American daily and weekly news journals. The press chose to suppress this information. In January 1970, an official Cambodian government White Paper appeared, giving details of American bombardment and ground incursions and their lethal effects up to May 1969, with dates, places, and photographs. The international press covered the story. I recall no mention here, though again, the information was readily available. The press simply chose to censor information that contradicted official propaganda. The pattern is a common one. A striking recent example is the collusion of the press in distorting the contents of the Paris Agreements of January 1973 and the events that led to them. I have discussed this matter elsewhere,¹² and will not expand here. Many other examples can be cited.

But we have agreed to put aside consideration of criminal acts committed overseas and to consider only the domestic excesses that are charged to the Nixon Administration. Why, then, should liberal opinion be so outraged by the Watergate exposures, but not by the far more serious COINTELPRO or the earlier SWP and black nationalist disruption programs? The explanation has already been given in the incisive remarks of Elliot Richardson already mentioned. The error of the Nixon Administration was that it concentrated political power too narrowly and attacked the political center with “tactics used against an enemy.” Use of these tactics against such enemies as the New Left, the Black Panthers, the SWP, or anyone who departs from the conservative consensus of American political ideology may evoke some clucking of tongues, but the “fatal flaw” is the use of these tactics against men of power. For this crime,

Nixon must be brought to heel.

To be sure, Nixon broke the rules in other respects as well. His petty chicanery has demeaned the office of the presidency, and the majesty of the office serves as a powerful technique for ideological control. His miserable efforts to dismantle progressive programs offended bureaucratic interests and led to perfectly justified irritation and protest. But it is difficult to believe that any of this is what threatens to do him in. On the contrary, his major error is surely the “fatal flaw” identified by Richardson.

Nixon has accused his critics of hypocrisy and pursuit of narrow political advantage. There is considerable force to his charge.

The outrage over Watergate can hardly be explained on grounds of commitment to democratic principle or the belief that criminal actions should not go unpunished. That much, I believe, should be evident even from the brief review of relevant issues just sketched. The wide-ranging counterattack against Nixon is an effort to restore the familiar system in which the wealthy and the privileged control American politics. In several ways, Nixon threatened this system. For this transgression, he must pay a price.

[DREAMING OF CAMELOT]

One might place these events in a somewhat different political context. Liberal forces in the United States now sense that the prospects of their return to political power are enhanced. With Nixonian conservatism in disarray, perhaps Camelot can be rebuilt. For segments of the intelligentsia with a taste for rubbing shoulders with the great and powerful, the prospects are particularly attractive. To this end, Watergate can contribute mightily. But barriers still remain.

If Camelot is to be restored, American liberalism will somehow have to regain the sense of moral *elan*, the moral legitimacy that was undermined by Vietnam. This catastrophe is generally regarded, with much justice, as the liberals’ war. Hence it will be necessary to reconstruct the history of the 1960s, to create a new past in which every right-thinking soul was against the war from the start. Re-creations are out of place and the whole ugly affair should be quickly forgotten. Of course, the excesses of that part of the peace movement that was actually visible impeded the general effort to bring the war to a quick and honorable end. Had it not been for the misguided, sentimental, violent, totalitarian activist peace movement, we decent liberals could have restored sanity far sooner. But this too can be forgotten as we proceed with the task of reconstructing the political system of the early 1960s.

The fact of the matter is quite different. Until the Tet offensive demonstrated the bankruptcy of American policy, liberal American opinion expressed only the most mild and timid dissent, with some notable and honorable exceptions. The war was regarded as an error, but a noble enterprise to which no right-minded person could object if only American government strategy were to succeed—as appeared increasingly unlikely. But intellectuals are the custodians of history. With the decline of an active protest movement, the revised version of history will become the conventional wisdom, as untroubled by fact as other orthodoxies. For this reason alone, the real crimes of the state, whether in Indochina or at home, must be dismissed, while public attention is diverted to ridiculous escapades of the Watergate variety. Read the morning paper, turn on the six o'clock news, and you'll see that this is exactly what is happening.

It is remarkable to see how quickly the facts fade from memory. To take one of innumerable examples, consider the remarks of George Kennan, reviewing *Gulag Archipelago* in the *New York Review of Books*, March 21, 1974. "The initial reaction to Mr. Solzhenitsyn's account," he writes, "is . . . no small measure of puzzlement over the fact that such things could have taken place in our own time in a country sharing the Christian tradition," a country "with which we fancied ourselves to have in common at least certain standards of decency and humanity that would set us off against our common enemy [Germany in World War II]."

The initial reaction to Kennan's comments can only be amazement. Let us put aside the fact that the worst of the story that Solzhenitsyn recounts was known long ago.¹³ More remarkable is the reference to countries "sharing the Christian tradition" and their humanitarian record. Just what does Kennan have in mind? Nazi Germany, which "shared the Christian tradition" no less than Bolshevik Russia? Or perhaps the treatment of Blacks and Indians in Christian America? Or is it some other country sharing the Christian tradition, say, England, which was "furnishing the world with missionary bishops to teach Christianity" while reducing India to penury and starvation,¹⁴ pursuing a policy described in these words by a left-wing spokesman for the Indian Congress Party. "Hitler's deprivations, his Dachaus and Belsens, . . . pale into insignificance before this imperialist savagery" of the British who, "in the process of their domination over India, kept no limits to brutality and savagery which man is capable of practising"¹⁵? Or perhaps Kennan has in mind the American conquest of the Philippines, or the practices of Christian countries such as Belgium and France in Africa.¹⁶

But what is surely most striking is Kennan's puzzlement that a country we believed shared our "standards of decency and humanity" could be capable of such atrocities. The record of our standards of decency and humanity in Indochina has been consigned by this respected historian to the memory hole.

Nothing that I have said implies that Nixon should not be impeached, or that efforts to this end are necessarily an irrelevance or a deception. But the Left should not contribute to mystification. If an impeachment campaign is to be conducted, let it concentrate on the real and central issues. It should not mislead people to believe that the honor and

integrity of the American government will be restored, if only we are rid of Richard Nixon. The United States will undergo no process of "denazification"; such exercises in coming to terms with reality are reserved for defeated and occupied nations.

But the Left and the peace movement should not be a party to efforts to rewrite history or distort its meaning. They should try to understand and to explain the workings of our society and its institutions, not to conceal them. If they do so honestly and forcefully, they will be subjected to new COINTELPROs and Disruption Campaigns on the part of the political police, not to speak of lies, abuse and denunciation. If the Left is to be a force in American affairs, it will have to find ways to withstand state repression and to resist and overcome the ideological institutions that enforce conformity, legitimize privilege, and stupefy the populace with propaganda and pretence. These are matters that should be kept clearly in mind by people committed to democracy and justice, and certainly by serious socialists, as they consider the political meaning of an impeachment campaign or an indictment of Richard Nixon, under the conditions that now prevail.

1. For some details on these and related matters, see Kevin Buckley, *Newsweek*, June 19, 1972; Kennedy Subcommittee Hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee, May 8, 1972; Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, Pantheon, 1973; Chomsky and Herman, *Counter-revolutionary Violence*, Warner Module, 1973. The latter is not easy to obtain, since distribution was blocked by the conglomerate (Warner Brothers) that owned the publisher, and, shortly after, the publisher was put out of business.

2. Guy Halverson, *Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 1974.

3. "The Aborted Nixon Revolution," *New Republic*, August 11, 1973.

4. Lewis Chester, Cal McCrystal, Stephen Aris, and William Shawcross of the London Sunday Times, *Watergate*, Ballentine Books, 1973.

5. For analysis and texts of the Media documents, see Paul Cowan, Nick Egleson, and Nat Hentoff, *State Secrets*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.

6. Cf. Laurence Stern, "Hoover war on New Left bared," *Washington Post*, December 7, 1973.

7. Cf. Jack Nelson, *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1973, cited in *The Nation*, February 9, 1974, editorial.

8. *Los Angeles Times*, editorial, March 12, 1974.

9. *University Review*, no. 23, May 1, 1972, cited by Dave Dellinger, "Pre-Watergate Watergate," *Liberation*, November 1973.

10. Cf. *A Challenge to the Watergate Crimes*, Political Rights Defense Fund, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 703, NY 10010. This contains the text of the Class Action Complaint, the Government response, and other documents.

11. *Civil Liberties*, No. 273, December 1970; publication of the ACLU.

12. "Reporting Indochina: the News Media and the Legitimation of Lies," *Social Policy*, September/October 1973.

13. Cf. F. Beck and W. Godin, *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession*, Viking, 1951; S. Swianiewicz, *Forced Labor and Economic Development*, Oxford, 1965; and many other sources.

14. Henry Carey, *The Past, the Present and the Future*, London, 1848, cited in an important study by Frederick Clairmonte, *Economic Liberalism and Underdevelopment*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960.

15. Cited by Clairmonte.

16. To the Kennanesque mentality, however, this horrendous record may count for little. See his letter to the *London Times*, July 25, 1973, decrying the "hysterical reaction of liberal and leftist quarters" to reports of massacres by Portuguese troops in Mozambique and challenging "the evident assumption that the destruction of Portuguese authority and the establishment of the power of the guerrilla leaders in these territories is desirable." He wonders "on what this assumption is based," tacitly dismissing the curious idea that people have a right to self-determination, free from the tutelage of the Christian countries that have hitherto shown such solicitude in caring for them.

Noam Chomsky's most recent publications are *For Reasons of State* (Pantheon), and, with Edward Herman, *Counter-revolutionary Violence* (Warner Modular Publications).



Miners for Democracy

Year One at the UMW

Two summers ago, in one of those rare moments when the chemistry of human indignation and institutional rot blend to form the soul of righteousness, they came riding out of the coal pits on their white chargers of reform. These coal miners who were bent on reshaping a listing tower of the American labor movement, the United Mine Workers (UMW), were not to be stayed. Their fuel was outrage—the outrage over 100,000 of their brothers killed in the mines in this century, outrage over black lung and more than 1.5 million disabling accidents since 1930, outrage over the union-financed murder of Jock Yablonski, outrage from callous government and wanton corporations ignoring them and worse, outrage over their own leaders pillaging the union treasury, whoring with company sweethearts and managing their affairs with no less dictatorial style than watch-charm Trujillos.

But there was more to it than that, and when these rank-and-file Miners for Democracy, as they called themselves, swept Tony Boyle from the union presidency in December 1972, underdogs everywhere took heart. For here were genuine blue-collar men, guided by no other

cause than justice, sweeping away the yoke and crying “Enough.” Masters of their own destiny, they would be, putting their union on the front edge of social change in the Appalachian coalfields, where most other institutions had failed or given up in frustration. There was even more, a notion that this rank-and-file rebellion could plot new directions for the labor movement, progressive new strategies to carry workers beyond dollars-and-cents obsessions.

So the feeling went. In fact, the Miners for Democracy (MFD) reformers headed by Arnold Miller, a West Virginian who suffers from black-lung disease, have brought substantial changes to the big old UMW since the jubilant days in 1972 when the rebels got into their own building, many of them for the first time. But all is not well in this coal miners’ Camelot, and the troubles that Miller and his cohorts are now experiencing could not come at a worse time. Miller is negotiating his first contract with the soft-coal industry (the contract expires in November 1974), perhaps the most crucial test he’ll face in his union stewardship. His success or failure at the bargaining table will determine a good deal of the UMW’s future.

by Ward E. Sinclair