

If the North Sea bubble collapses, projections of a mere one million unemployed in Britain are a gross underestimation. Fully 10 per cent of Britain's investment goods industries are now directly tied to supplying the North Sea energy development, and a much larger proportion of Britain's industry is indirectly tied to the projects. For West Germany, which now produces more of the drilling rigs, platforms, and pipeline for the North Sea projects than any other single national sector, the 8 per cent decline in exports registered this November will be multiplied geometrically. But most critical is the fact that cut off of funds for further North Sea development would rapidly translate into a run against the British pound, placing in immediate peril the 30 per cent of world trade financed by sterling.

RIOTS IN CAIRO: SATAT REGIME CRACKS AFTER SOVIET SNUB

Jan. 4 (IPS)--In an obviously well-coordinated display of anarchist rage, 1,000 Egyptian industrial workers rampaged through downtown Cairo Wednesday morning to protest the skyrocketing cost of living and miserable working conditions. The riots come after the sudden cancellation of the much-heralded visit of Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev to Cairo, a rude diplomatic snub by the Soviets which has vastly reduced Egyptian President Sadat's usefulness to the CIA and may signal efforts by Rockefeller to reorganize and prop up the wobbly Sadat regime.

As the political cornerstone of U.S. "Arab policy," Sadat represents the weakest link in a four-pole structure of CIA-controlled Middle East countries--Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. By abruptly cancelling Brezhnev's stop in Cairo, the Soviets have kicked the underpinnings out from under the left side of the Sadat government. In this instance, Rockefeller's choices are three: (1) improvise a new left cover for Sadat; (2) dump him altogether; (3) reveal the Egyptian leader in his full nakedness as a pro-American rightist thug. Otherwise, the weakened Egyptian regime might in turn pull down the increasingly vulnerable Shah of Iran.

The published circumstances behind the riots leave no doubt that the upsurge was not the result of a spontaneous working-class outburst nor of any underground Communist network. Angry and vastly exploited Cairo workers, excited by rumors of a planned strike at the huge Helwan steelworks south of Cairo, were kept waiting at a Cairo train station, then told that the trains were not running. Probably led by government provocateurs, the workers spilled out onto the streets of central Cairo, where their rioting achieved maximum visibility for eager Western journalists, who rarely visit the isolated Helwan complex. In their rage, the mob smashed Soviet bookstores, Libyan airline offices, and Western businesses alike.

The demonstrations were the first major sign of mass discontent in tightly controlled Egypt since the workers and students movement was provoked and smashed exactly two years ago during Sadat's drive to consolidate power after expelling 20,000 Soviet troops and advisers in July 1972.

The lack of a coherent strategy among Rockefeller-CIA thinkers since the Soviets moved to break the Middle East controlled environment has been reflected daily by the disarray among the Western press. Cued by the riots, Cairo correspondents for the Western newspapers and wire services seized upon and inflated the hot-air spectre of a red scare, ascribing the riots to mysterious "left-wing circles" and "Nasserist" elements. The CIA-run Egyptian Interior Ministry suddenly announced the discovery of a Communist cell in Alexandria last week, and then arrested several members of the pro-Communist MDLN among the 47 demonstrators seized on Wednesday, according to the Lebanese daily Al Anwar. Al Anwar is known throughout the Middle East for its unswerving faithfulness to Sadat.

By suddenly resurrecting the defunct MDLN and bothering to arrest the normally tolerated Communist "underground," the Egyptian regime has opened the path to Rockefeller's trio of options.

Sadat the Dispensable

Sadat's value to the Rockefeller cabal as a credible ruler lies in the decades-long connection that he has among the political and military elites in Egypt, as well as his association with Egyptian idol ex-President Gamal Abdul Nasser. Sadat has long inhabited the shadowy swamp of the Nazi/CIA Middle East underground and was a leading member of the paramilitary, right-wing Muslim Brotherhood secret society, from which netherworld emerged nearly the entirety of the Egyptian ruling group in the 1950s.

Despite these credentials, however, Sadat would quickly become expendable in the face of growing worker and student unrest, especially given Rockefeller's desire to recreate a new controlled environment in which to ensnare the Soviets. Should the CIA choose to seemingly weaken its hold over Cairo by replacing some or all of the Sadat government--with the primary aim being the seduction of the Soviets--a readily available "alternative government" can be inserted.

A leading member of Rockefeller's Council on Foreign Relations identified the collection of forces which would comprise this replacement regime: the "militant" army officers grouped around ex-Chief of Staff Saadeddin Shazli, the Nasserists led by former Al Ahram editor Mohammed Hassanein Heykal, and assorted leftists and ex-Communists such as present Al Ahram boss Ahmed Bahaeddine.

If Sadat is to be dumped, the likely replacement is Shazli. Shazli is reportedly popular among the junior army officers for

his alleged heroics as commander of the Egyptian army during the October 1973 "Oil Hoax War." Recently he has been quoted making pro-Soviet grunts from his current post as Ambassador to Great Britain. What is not often reported is that upon his nomination as ambassador in London "pro-Soviet" Shazli was nearly refused entry by the British government for his past ties to the British fascist movement!

Rather than lose Sadat entirely, however, Rockefeller might wish to "rearrange" the Cairo Cabinet, dumping Premier Abdelaziz Hegazi, singled out by the Western press as the supposed target of the demonstrators for his austerity policies. A new Egyptian government under a repentant Sadat, perhaps headed by a premier like Heykal, would severely challenge the Soviets to make a final break with the sort of right-wing Arab nationalism which the USSR disastrously has supported consistently in the past. The temptation would be severe for the Soviets to again enmesh themselves in a rerun of a "Nasserist" Egypt.

Should the Soviets make a steady push to topple Sadat and the Shah, however, coupled with a call by the USSR for a real Geneva Conference to discuss the socialist development of the Middle East, the only remaining "rational" CIA alternative would be straight hardline military consolidation of the Teheran-Cairo axis, behind the current Iranian and Egyptian dictators. The implicit threat of the extension of NATO into the Middle East--raised today by reports that NATO-controlled Turkey was planning to train Libyan troops!--combined with a provoked Rockefeller monster both in Europe and the Middle East would be immediately raised by any sign of hubristic Soviet moves in the area. As the Labor Committees have shown, it is precisely this which the situation demands.

CARLI MOVES TO RESCUE MAJOR BANKS FROM BANKRUPTCY

Jan. 4 (IPS)--An authenticated leak from an aide to the Shah of Iran has revealed that a highly-placed source close to Italian Central Bank head Guido Carli assured the former that Carli's policy is entirely dedicated toward the avoidance of defaults on Italy's international debts, come what may.

Last Thursday's announcement of Rome's new monetary policy is aimed precisely toward that end. The Central Bank, in a move preceded by Nazi Finance Minister Schacht's policy in the 1930s, will channel newly printed paper to the export-oriented industries to hopefully improve Italy's balance of payments position and thereby enhance Italy's ability to repay its massive debt to the international financial cabal. To ensure that none of this new liquidity ends up in the wrong hands, the Central Bank will strictly monitor the process carefully to assure that only "Italy's semi-public biggest banks" are the primary beneficiaries