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## JOSEPH HANSEN (1910-1979)

## Filipinos Say No Thanks to Nuclear Wattage

[Work continues on the Philippines' first nuclear power plant, located on the Bataan Peninsula within 100 miles of four active volcanoes. The following article, excerpted from the December 15 issue of the *Philippine Liberation Courier*, reports on the most recent protests against the plant.]

The campaign to stop the export of a \$1.1 billion Westinghouse nuclear reactor to the Philippines went into high gear as anti-nuclear, human rights, and anti-interventionist organizations marked Nov. 30 as an "International Day of Protest."

Demonstrations, rallies, forums, or vigils took place in at least 28 cities in different countries. These included Manila; Boston, Seattle, Philadelphia, Fresno, New York, Denver, Pittsburgh, Albuquerque, Honolulu, Portland, Los Angeles, Raleigh, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. in the United States; Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montreal in Canada; Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra in Australia.

Spearheading the international action was the Campaign for a Nuclear Free Philippines. The four demands it put forward were:

(1) that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) refuse a license for the reactor export;

(2) that the U.S. Government stop its financing of the reactor deal;

(3) that Filipino anti-nuclear activist Ernesto Nazareno be released from jail and all other human rights violations caused by the reactor export cease; and

(4) that a moratorium be declared on all reactor exports to the Third World.

In Manila, an assembly of workers called to observe National Heroes' Day was converted into a protest against the reactor. A rally for human rights at the University of the Philippines also had as its main target the nuclear deal. . . .

Growing domestic and international opposition, however, has not yet stopped construction of the nuclear plant and repression in the Philippines. Twenty-two of the 44 floors of the reactor shell are reported to be finished. Repression has intensified in Morong, Bataan, the reactor site. A recent report from the Philippines claims:

"Ernesto Nazareno is still missing. Raids were conducted by the military in the towns and in three out of four barrios between July and September. Barrio Binaritan was twice raided. People feel more coercion and they notice more 'peddlers' and strangers whom they suspect are government spies." □

### Next Week . . .

For reasons of space, the interview with South African revolutionists originally scheduled for this issue will be published next week.

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## Joseph Hansen, 1910-1979

By George Novack

Joseph Hansen, veteran leader of the Fourth International and Socialist Workers Party and editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* since its foundation, died on January 18 in New York City at the age of sixty-eight. Although he bore a sizable load of journalistic and organizational responsibilities up to the end, he had suffered from diabetes for some years and succumbed in a few days from infectious complications.

\* \* \*

When Evelyn Reed and I were driving cross-country from Los Angeles to New York in 1965, we stopped at Richfield, a small town in Utah, attracted by a cowboy rodeo being staged that night. Some months later, when I told Joe Hansen how much we had enjoyed the spectacle of the Old West, known only from movies and TV, he exclaimed, "Why, that's my hometown!"

Joe was born June 16, 1910. He was the oldest of fifteen children in a poor working-class family and became the only one to go to college.

The rugged life of this semirural territory in which he grew up made a lasting mark on his makeup. He had a sturdy physique and felt thoroughly at home in wilderness ways. He was a crack shot, a skill that was handy when he later served as a guard in the Trotsky household. He and his companion, Reba, whom he married in 1931, were most happy when they could backpack through the mountains and woods of their native state on their vacations, breathing in the pure air and hunting for unusual rock specimens.

How did this young fellow from a backwoods Mormon community become an outstanding Marxist, respected the world over as a political strategist and theoretician of the Trotskyist movement? From adolescence, he once told me, he had been intrigued by the personalities and promise of the Russian Revolution, which took a stand for the poor against the rich.

However, it was the campus of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City that provided the springboard for his political career. Just as it had affected thousands of other students of that generation, the Great Depression turned his thoughts in an anticapitalist direction.

There fortunately he met up with Earle Birney, a professor who had broken with Stalinism in 1933 and started a branch of the Communist Left Opposition. Birney, who later became one of Canada's most prominent poets and literary critics, convinced him of the necessity for a socialist revolution and the correctness of the ideas

### Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund Announced

Reba Hansen and the contributing editors of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*—Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, and George Novack—have announced plans for the formation of a special fund to raise \$20,000 to make possible the publication of some of Joseph Hansen's previously uncollected works.

The aim is to obtain this sum by March 31, so as to begin without delay the work of selecting and preparing material for the first volume.

Reba Hansen, Joseph Hansen's companion and collaborator for forty-eight years, will serve as treasurer of the fund. George Novack, who had worked closely with Hansen in literary projects for four decades, will serve as chairman.

Those who have already joined the initial list of sponsors for the project include: Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Pierre Broué, Pierre Frank, Al Hansen, Quentin Hoare, Pierre Lambert, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, Ray Sparrow, Vsevolod Volkof, and Mary-Alice Waters.

In addition to his lifelong editorial responsibilities, including sixteen years as editor of this magazine, Hansen wrote extensively on a wide range of topics, both theoretical and polemical.

Among his most valued contributions were his writings on the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe following World War II, the Cuban revolution, revolutionary strategy for the world

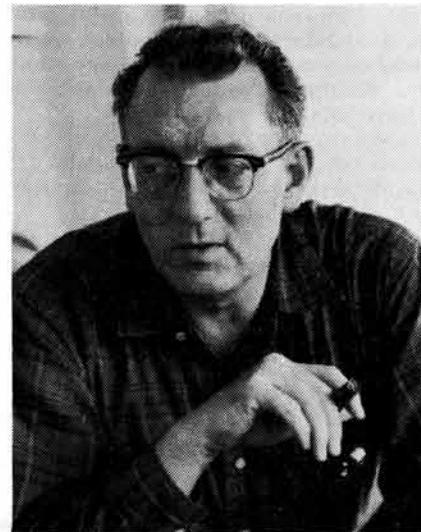


Photo by Reba Hansen (1959)

Trotskyist movement, and on such varied subjects as the Malthus theory of population explosion, the American forms of fascism, whether a new world war is inevitable, and the place of scientific freedom in the Soviet Union.

The fund will be launched at the New York memorial meeting for Hansen, scheduled to be held 3:00 p.m. January 28 at the Marc Ballroom, 27 Union Square West (between 15th and 16th streets).

Contributions to the fund may be sent to Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.

and program of Trotskyism. Joe joined the party in 1934 and never wavered in his convictions and affiliations.

He majored in English and edited the campus literary magazine, *Pen*. Before graduating Joe moved in 1936 to the San Francisco area where, as a party activist, he plunged into the chilly waters of maritime unionism, which was then going through turbulent internal and class battles. Together with Barney Mayes, he helped edit the *Voice of the Federation*, the organ of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, representing all the maritime unions. He also wrote for *Labor Action*, the weekly of the California Socialist Party edited by James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism. Cannon had transferred to the West Coast from New York following the entry of the Trotskyist forces

into the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas. Joe took charge of that paper from Jim.

This was Joe's initial immersion in the mass workers movement, which remained the breath of his existence. He was the finest sort of revolutionary intellectual, who placed his talents and education at the service of the socialist cause and wholeheartedly identified with the aims and aspirations of the multimillions who produce the wealth of the world.

Within the party, Joe at first fell under the influence of a group dominated by Martin Abern, one of the movement's pioneers. This induced him to distrust the leadership qualities of Cannon and to keep him at arm's length. "I can truthfully say," he later wrote in the admirable summation of that experience entitled

"The Abern Clique," "that I was never more suspicious of any man than I was of Cannon—and this suspicion was wholly the result of Abernism."

His Abernite origins did not prevent him and Reba from being chosen to go to Mexico in September 1937 to act as a secretary for the exiled Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky. Joe served in that capacity until after Stalin's assassination of his arch-adversary in 1940.

Trotsky preferred to have the cool-headed Joe chauffeur his car on outings. According to the recently published memoirs of Jean van Heijenoort, who had been a secretary for almost ten years, Trotsky felt closer to Joe than to any other of the American comrades who assisted the household.

He was on guard duty when the murderer drove his pickaxe into Trotsky's skull, and helped pin the assassin to the floor until the police arrived.

Joe esteemed the training he received in the company of the "Old Man," as Trotsky was called, and tried in every respect to pattern his own political conduct upon that of his teacher. He more than fulfilled that commitment. Once in a while

amongst ourselves, we would smile affectionately at the immoderate rigor he imposed upon himself—and set for others—in pursuit of that ideal.

Yet this self-assumed responsibility was not a burden for Joe; it was a pleasure. The record of his participation in the revolutionary-socialist movement on both the national and international arenas shows how well he lived up to the standards of his mentor.

Joe returned to New York from Mexico following Trotsky's death and the split in the Socialist Workers Party occasioned by the outbreak of the Second World War. He became indispensable as a journalist because of the shortage of qualified personnel. Very few of us could match his literary output. As a member of the National Committee, he then served his apprenticeship in the central leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

As a result of his discussions with Trotsky in Mexico and his deeper understanding of the stakes in the factional struggles of the party, Joe's attitude toward Cannon and his associates changed into its opposite. He came to appreciate Jim's exceptional capacities at their true value. The

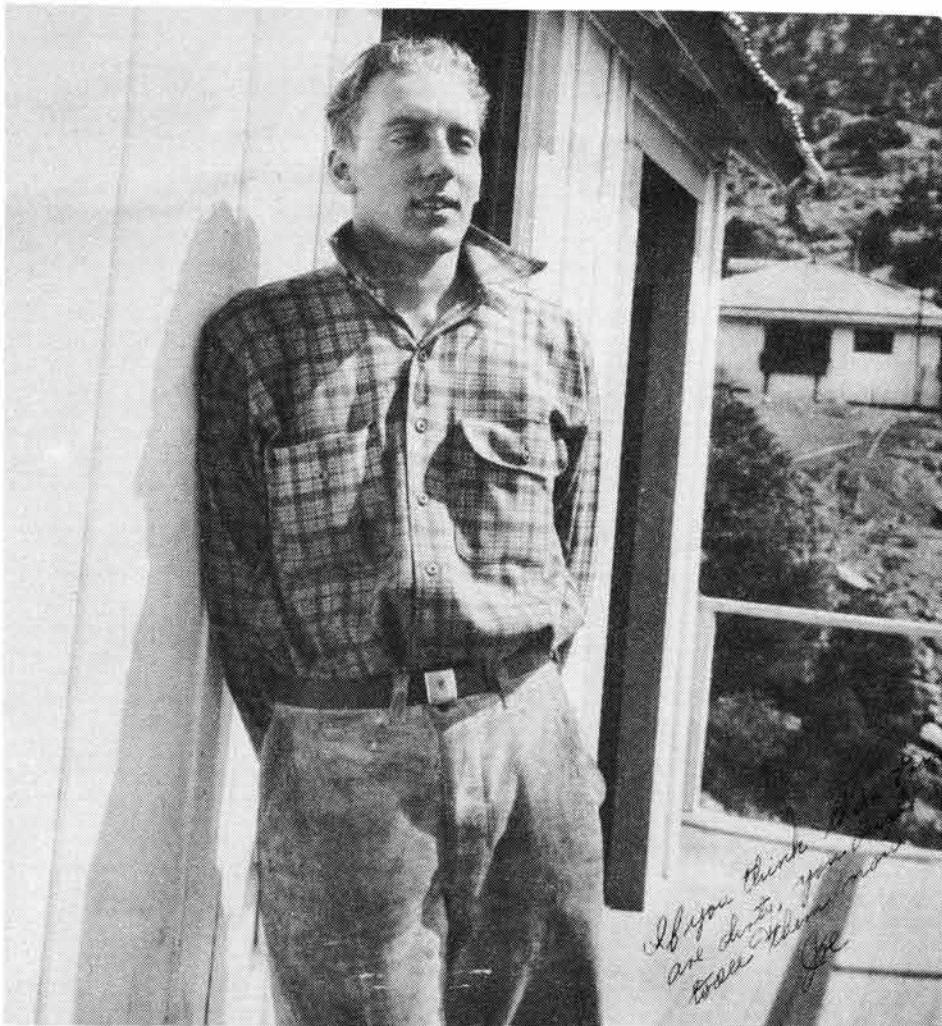


Photo taken in 1930 in Pioche, Nevada, where Hansen worked for the Bristol Silver mining company.

two men grew to be steadfast friends and intimate collaborators.

This relation was so readily recognized that when news came of Cannon's sudden death at the age of eighty-four in the midst of the party's convention in the summer of 1974, it was entirely natural that Joe be called upon to deliver the main speech at the memorial meeting.

Joe had so many accomplishments to his credit that only the most noteworthy of his contributions to the movement can be mentioned here.

Unexpected developments in Eastern Europe arising from the Soviet victory over Nazism in the Second World War posed challenging theoretical problems to the Fourth International. How were the transformations that took place in the countries occupied by the Red Army to be analyzed and appraised?

Joe was among the first to recognize that capitalist property relations had been eliminated in these countries by the end of the 1940s, giving rise to a series of deformed workers states ruled by bureaucratic castes.

He explained that while the Stalinist bureaucrats had restricted, repressed, and choked off workers struggles in occupied East Europe, they had nonetheless been compelled by Truman's war drive to launch a distorted form of civil war against the remaining capitalist forces, even mobilizing the workers to some degree to accomplish this. This conclusion accorded with the method of analysis of the government, state, and economy Trotsky employed in his last writings on Stalinism and the Soviet Union.

This basic analysis was further tested and refined in the crucibles of the Chinese, Cuban, and Algerian revolutions. In analyzing events in Cuba, Joe put special emphasis on the role of the "workers and farmers government" established in the latter part of 1959. Such a government, independent of the capitalists and based on the workers and peasants movements, can arise in the midst of a mass revolutionary upsurge. However, it finds itself in conflict with the capitalist property relations that still dominate the economy.

Thus, a workers and farmers government can lead relatively quickly to the formation of a workers state through the establishment of a qualitatively new socio-economic foundation (as happened in China and Cuba). Or, if the upsurge is misled or aborted, such a government can lead to a relapse into a rehabilitated capitalist regime (as occurred in Algeria). The concept of a workers and farmers government, originally advanced by the Communist International in Lenin's and Trotsky's day, was made an integral part of the founding program of the Fourth International.

Joe's incisive commentaries enhanced our understanding of the role of the workers and farmers government as a transitional instrument in the transformation of the state.

For the first decade, Joe followed every step in the progress of the Cuban revolu-

tion in the pages of the Trotskyist press. He grasped its historic importance as the breakthrough and pacesetter of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere. In 1960 he visited Cuba, together with Farrell Dobbs, presidential candidate of the party, and helped launch the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The last words he wrote were a message to the Young Socialist Alliance convention this December, saluting the twentieth anniversary of the victory of the Cuban people.

While solidarizing with the aims of the revolutionary leadership and defending its achievements against U.S. imperialism and its apologists, Joe plainly set forth his criticisms of the manifest shortcomings of Castro's regime, both in its domestic and foreign policies, from the standpoint of the Marxist program. Numerous articles and polemics of his on Cuba can be studied in the just-published book *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*. It offers ample insight into the progressive thrust and contradictions of the Cuban experience to date.

Joe belonged to the "Old Guard" of American Trotskyism who had to endure the hard times inflicted by the cold-war witchhunt from 1948 through the early 1960s. He was a seaman during the Second World War and could have resumed that occupation except that Truman's loyalty purge barred him and scores of other party members from maritime employment because of their political views and affiliations.

In late 1953, when the party leadership decided to send Joe to the upcoming World Congress in Europe as the person best able to explain the opportunist and liquidationist character of the Cochran faction in the SWP and our differences with the Pablo grouping internationally, the American political police directly intervened to deepen the split in the Fourth International.

Joe's application for a passport was rejected on political grounds by the State Department. No central leader of our party was able to travel abroad to directly discuss our political views with our co-thinkers in the Fourth International until Farrell Dobbs received a passport in the late 1950's. In Joe's case, it was not until January 1961 that he was able to obtain his right to a passport and travel abroad.

This prolonged period of persecution and isolation bore down on and disheartened many of our former co-workers. Joe was a tower of strength throughout those difficult years, especially in the bitter faction fight that culminated in the breakaway of the Cochran group from the SWP in 1953 and the split in the Fourth International inspired by Michel Pablo.

Joe never lost confidence in the prospects of the working class or the decisive role of the proletarian party in bringing about a socialist America in a socialist world. He carefully analyzed the phenomenon of McCarthyism and helped elaborate a policy to counter its threat. During the darkest days of the 1950s he taught classes on Marx's *Capital* at the Trotsky School. We were then so short-handed that



With Trotsky and Natalia Sedova in Mexico in October 1937.

our theoretical monthly, the *International Socialist Review*, could not be produced in New York; Joe and I, assisted by Frank Graves, had to publish it for a while in Los Angeles.

Transcending his upbringing in a provincial place, Joe managed to acquire a world-historical outlook on all questions. He had assimilated the internationalism at the basis of Marxism into the marrow of his bones. He carried this into practice as an envoy of the Socialist Workers Party in promoting the unification of the Trotskyist forces that had been divided since 1953, and consolidating that unity early in the 1960s before the new wave of radicalization began. He helped draft the documents that provided the platform for overcoming the nine-year split.

The launching of *Intercontinental Press* (then named *World Outlook*) was one of the most important products of the unification. From 1963 to 1965 it was put out in mimeographed format by Joe and Reba with the help of Pierre Frank to serve as a weekly news service to the international movement and provide its cadres with information and timely analyses of events that could help orient their thinking and activities.

If an institution can be, as Emerson says, "the lengthened shadow of a man," that was certainly the case with *IP*. The universal scope of its coverage and its exceptionally high technical and political quality have given it an enviable reputation in radical circles on all continents.

At one time or another Joe edited the principal publications of the Socialist Workers Party, the *Militant* and the *International Socialist Review*. He was an

extremely exacting editor who detested slipshod work in any endeavor, whether in preparing a meal, repairing a motor, or polishing an article. I sometimes marveled at his punctilious insistence on checking a quotation or verifying a fact. He set very high standards for his staff. Yet he asked no more of them than of himself.

Joe was guided in all his political work by the method of the Transitional Program, elaborated as the charter of the Fourth International while he was with Trotsky in Coyoacán, as well as by the Leninist strategy of party building. He was constantly preoccupied with the grand problems of political strategy in the emancipatory struggles of the proletariat whether these took place in Portugal, China, Chile, or an advanced capitalist country.

Joe mustered all the knowledge he had gleaned from his teachers in the polemics over Latin American policy connected with the factional alignments in the Fourth International from 1969 to 1977. He was most proud of these writings. His contributions not only clarified the issues at stake but helped set the tone of objective exposition in the debate. This facilitated the eventual resolution of the major differences between the contending factions, which were dissolved in late 1977. He, as much as anyone else, was responsible for the fact that this most prolonged struggle of tendencies in the history of the labor Internationals ended not in separation, but in a better-grounded ideological homogeneity.

He did not feel that the task of unifying the dispersed Trotskyist cadres had been completed with the fading of the factional

situation in the leadership of the United Secretariat. He looked forward to the next steps in that process whereby the comrades of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, who had refused to go along with the 1963 reunification, would be brought together with us in a single organization. He did what he could in these last years to accelerate this convergence, which has still to be consummated.

\* \* \*

My own association with Joe goes back to the grim days of the Moscow Trials in 1937-38 when we collaborated with Trotsky to unmask these frame-ups to the world. He, as part of the secretarial staff in Coyoacán; myself as national secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky in New York.

Our first joint literary venture was the writing of the introduction to Trotsky's last work, *In Defense of Marxism*.

Felix Morrow had made a draft that focused exclusively on the political issues posed by the conflict with the petty-bourgeois opposition of Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern and impermissibly omit-

ted the underlying philosophical and methodological aspects. We, like Trotsky, considered the fundamental questions of Marxist theory involved of greater long-term importance than the immediate issues that had precipitated the factional disputes.

The Political Committee rejected Morrow's treatment as inadequate and turned the assignment over to us. Our agreement on basic matters provided a durable basis for intimate collaboration over the succeeding decades.

We worked together on the editorial boards of the *ISR*, the *Militant*, and *IP*. We also drafted countless resolutions and theses for the movement over the years. I had the habit of submitting much of what I wrote to his discerning judgment, and he rescued me, as he did so many others, from committing errors, large and small.

We had dissimilar temperaments but were of like mind in our conceptions of philosophy, politics, and methods of organization. We had learned from Trotsky and Cannon the indispensable necessity of teamwork and spurned the "star system" so rife in bourgeois society and among intellectuals that elevates considerations

of personal prestige and individual accomplishment above the collective needs of the movement.

Joe was skilled at shorthand and a paragon of industriousness. We never worried whether he would fail to meet a deadline. This highly versatile man had wide-ranging interests. He was an assiduous student of Freud, of botany and geology, and of the latest developments in the physical sciences and theories of artistic creativity. His acquaintance with rather esoteric subjects and his skills in handicraft often amazed me.

Joe sometimes impressed people as being taciturn. Though he was convivial enough among close friends, he was not given to chitchat. He grew more and more reserved in that respect in later years, as though he was husbanding his energy for priority matters.

He came of sturdy stock (his father is still living at ninety-five) and was physically vigorous and active up to 1965, when he suffered a massive peritonitis attack in Paris that brought him close to death's door. When Evelyn and I met him and Reba at the airport upon their return to the United States, we were shocked and dis-



With Trotsky in Coyoacán.

mayed to see how frail his bodily frame looked. He never fully regained his health from that time on.

\* \* \*

Just as we joined forty years ago in exposing the Moscow Trial frame-ups against Trotsky and the Old Bolsheviks, so I stood by Joe's side when he became the target of a pettier but no less perfidious and shameless slander campaign engineered by Gerry Healy, leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party of Britain, who had broken from the Fourth International in 1963. The Healyite poison penmen accused Hansen of being an agent of the GPU and the FBI and of conspiring in Trotsky's assassination. They have dumped buckets of dirty lies week after week since October 1975, designed to discredit Joe and compromise the SWP and the Fourth International.

Healy's vengefulness is traceable to his rage at Joe's effectiveness in consummating the 1963 unification and preventing him from blocking it. He was infuriated by Joe's scathing indictment of his sectarian politics and hooligan organizational practices.

Joe remained unflappable amidst these unremitting provocations. He neither ignored the false charges nor became entangled in answering them bit by bit to the detriment of carrying out other tasks. Taking his cue from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, who were likewise victims of slanders in their day, he set subjectivity aside and took the occasion of Healy's vendetta to show its political motivation as the expression of sectarianism gone berserk and the bankruptcy of that type of anti-Marxist politics.

His articles refuting the allegations, assembled in an educational bulletin entitled "Healy's Big Lie," can serve as a textbook on how Marxists handle the most despicable attacks by enemies of their movement.

Joe was one of the twelve plaintiffs in the landmark suit of the SWP against government harassment.

Joe's reputation as a revolutionist remains spotless; the results of his forty-five years of service are enduring. He was the trusted confidant of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon for good reasons. At the moment of his death he was one of the most respected leaders and influential theoreticians of the Fourth International.

We commend his career to younger revolutionists as an example to learn from and emulate. As he said in his message to the Young Socialist Alliance this New Year's:

"At some point in life, youths are confronted with a crisis of orientation—that is, to what course should they dedicate themselves for the rest of their lives? My choice was Trotskyism, a choice I have never regretted."

I hope this will be the occasion for others to make a similar choice.

"For the Fourth International!"

"For the Socialist Workers Party!"

"For the Young Socialist Alliance!"

January 20, 1979

## Two Trotskyist Journalists Still Face Frame-Up

## Protests Win Release of Peruvian Prisoners

By Fred Murphy

An international campaign of protest has won the release of American human rights activist Mike Kelly from the jails of the Peruvian military dictatorship.

Kelly, executive secretary of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA), was released from the State Security prison in Lima on January 19. He was then handed an "invitation to leave Peru," which he had little choice but to accept. But he was not formally expelled from the country, and there will be no charges pending against him in Peru.

Kelly was arrested January 9 while taking photographs in downtown Lima. He was held at the State Security prison along with some 700 Peruvian trade unionists, political activists, and journalists arrested between January 6 and 11. In all, more than 1,000 persons were detained as the military sought to head off a three-day general strike. (See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 22, page 26.)

Upon learning of the mass arrests in Peru and the detention of its executive secretary, USLA launched an emergency campaign. Picket lines were held January 16 at Peru's UN mission in New York and at the Peruvian embassy in Washington to demand the release of the prisoners. Efforts on Kelly's behalf were also made by U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas and by Lawrance Birns, chairman of the U.S. Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

Kelly reported after his release that word of the protests in the United States reached the prisoners in Lima and bolstered their morale. He said everyone felt that USLA's campaign had been key in securing the release of most of the prisoners.

As of January 19 twenty-seven persons were still being held at State Security in Lima. At least fifteen of these were expected to be transferred to the jails of the Callao Military Zone—a branch of the armed forces notorious for the torture of prisoners. They would be tried by military courts and sentenced to between six months and two years in jail.

Most of these prisoners are youths arrested during confrontations with the police in the shantytowns of Lima. Also still being held on January 19 were Alfonso Barrantes Lingán, president of Democratic People's Unity (UDP); Herrera Montalvo, general secretary of the seamen's union; and the general secretary of the printing trades union. Barrantes was expected to be released on January 20.

Most of those released will have charges pending against them of one kind or another. Usual practice for the regime in the past has been not to bring such per-

sons to trial but rather use the outstanding charges as an excuse to rearrest them at any moment.

The two prisoners in the most serious danger are Luis Olibencia and Guillermo Bolaños—both photographers and writers for *Revolución Proletaria* (Proletarian Revolution), the fortnightly newspaper of the Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party (POMR).

Olibencia and Bolaños have been interrogated for hours about "weapons," about the activities of the Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front (FOCEP, the POMR is a member of this front), and about what the cops called "Hugo Blanco's plans for armed revolution." (Blanco, a leader of the Trotskyist PRT and a FOCEP deputy in the Constituent Assembly, was singled out by the government-controlled news media as one of those "responsible" for the general strike.)

The two Trotskyist journalists have been told they are to be transferred to the Callao Military Zone and tried under Decree-Law No. 22339. This draconian measure was promulgated by the junta in November as a means of intimidating the independent press. It provides for the Code of Military Justice to be applicable to civilians and establishes as a crime "besmirching the image of the armed forces."

Soon after D.L. 22339 was announced, all the political parties in Peru spoke out against it. On December 5 the Constituent Assembly declared it to be "lacking in legal validity."

The case against Olibencia and Bolaños will be the military's first attempt to apply D.L. 22339. There is already widespread support for the two POMR members. Thirty journalists from both the independent press and the government's own dailies have signed a statement of protest, and the independent periodicals that are still publishing (seven were banned January 6) have declared their opposition to the regime's frame-up.

USLA urges that telegrams or letters demanding the immediate release of Olibencia and Bolaños and the other remaining prisoners, and the dropping of all charges against them, be sent to Peruvian embassies or to Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez, Presidente de la República, Palacio Presidencial, Lima, Peru. Send copies to USLA, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, N.Y. 10003. □

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## **Shah Flees Iran—‘The Americans Are Next’**

By Fred Murphy

Iran's official Pars News Agency—free of censorship—reported on January 16:

"The people of Tehran raced through city streets in joyous uproar this afternoon after news of the shah's departure spread like wildfire."

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of the capital within minutes of the first radio announcement that Mohammed Reza Pahlavi had fled the country he ruled through terror and oppression for thirty-eight years.

The celebrating masses waved banknotes with the shah's portrait cut out, showered jubilant soldiers with kisses and red carnations, and chanted: "Shah raft" (the shah is gone) and "The Americans are next."

By the end of the day not a single statue of the shah or his father was left standing

in Tehran. If the monuments proved too massive for the demonstrators alone to topple, they got help from soldiers driving army trucks festooned with portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni.

Khomeyni—the exiled religious leader who has come to symbolize uncompromising opposition to the shah and the monarchy during a year of massive protests—hailed the hated dictator's exit. But "the shah's departure is not the final victory," he said. "It is the preface to our victory."

Khomeyni urged the Iranian people to continue their strikes and demonstrations to bring down what remained of the monarchy—the regime of the shah's hand-picked prime minister, Shahpur Bakhtiar.

On January 19, the masses showed they needed little urging. By the millions they again poured into the streets of cities across Iran, still chanting "Death to the

shah" and declaring Bakhtiar "the new American lackey."

In Tehran alone between 1.5 and 4 million persons turned out. They acclaimed a resolution declaring that "the Pahlavi reign is unlawful, and the shah is deposed from the throne."

### **Shah's Fate Sealed in Washington**

Whatever slim hope the shah had of clinging to power evaporated after a top secret White House huddle on January 10, involving President Carter, Secretary of State Vance, Defense Secretary Brown, national security adviser Brzezinski, and CIA chief Turner. Vance announced U.S. approval of the shah's "vacation" plans at a news conference January 11. Five days later, the monarch departed Tehran at the controls of a Boeing 707.

Mass mobilizations were a constant feature of the days preceding the shah's flight. Some 200,000 marched in Qum on January 6, and on January 7 and 8 hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran and other cities. In Shiraz a crowd of 20,000 stormed the secret police headquarters on January 11 and brought several SAVAK torturers to immediate justice.

Fraternization between army troops and demonstrators became widespread in the capital beginning January 13, when 600,000 marched to celebrate the reopening of Tehran University. On January 14, *Washington Post* correspondent Jonathan Randal reported:

Peaceful crowds, large and small, marched through Tehran without sign of army displeasure despite the martial law ban on public gatherings technically still in effect. Demonstrators stuck carnations down the barrels of soldiers' rifles and machine guns. Some troops riding in trucks were seen displaying color portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

At the Justice Ministry, families of political prisoners demanding unconditional release of their relatives staged an overnight sit-in after several thousands of their supporters occupied the building....

While all this was happening, the strike by Iran's oil workers remained solid. The workers council that is leading the strike announced January 9 that it had authorized production of enough fuel to meet domestic needs, but that exports would remain shut off until "final victory."

There were more signs of the disintegration of the shah's regime as the monarch made his escape. On January 16 the entire diplomatic staff at the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York declared their "full support for the Iranian revolu-



Tehran crowd topples statue of shah's father.

tion" and denounced two mission attachés as SAVAK agents. At the Iranian embassy in Washington, one diplomat and several staff members declared they would no longer serve under the shah's ambassador, Ardesir Zahedi.

In Tehran, individuals began appearing on the streets wearing hand-lettered signs: "I was a SAVAK agent. I beg forgiveness."

#### What the Shah Left Behind

To demonstrate that he was not abdicating the throne and that the monarchy would remain intact, the shah left a "Regency Council" to rule in his place. This august body is composed of Prime Minister Bakhtiar, military chief Gen. Abbas Gharabagi, and about a half dozen aging courtiers and retainers.

The council sits atop the Bakhtiar cabinet—an assortment of political unknowns and technicians without support among the population. Bakhtiar's own National Front, itself little more than a collection of leftover politicians from the early 1950s, expelled him the moment it became known he had accepted the shah's appointment.

To try to quell the mobilizations and gain some credibility, Bakhtiar moved quickly to abolish press censorship, release hundreds of political prisoners, withdraw army troops from the oil fields, and pledge to cut off oil exports to Israel and South Africa and to dissolve the hated SAVAK. With most of these moves he was only ratifying what was already being implemented by the masses.

But Bakhtiar refused to lift martial law, vowed that the Communist (Tudeh) Party would not be legalized, and warned oppressed nationalities that he would "be pitiless against everyone who threatens the unity and integrity of Iran."

Demonstrators continued to be gunned down under Bakhtiar's self-styled "social democratic" rule. "I spend most of my time trying to locate police and soldiers to send from one trouble spot to another," he complained to Nicholas Gage of the *New York Times* January 12.

Bakhtiar's weakness was demonstrated to the point of absurdity when the shah's premier "endorsed" national days of mourning called as protests *against* his regime for January 7 and 8.

By January 18 Bakhtiar's justice minister had quit and other cabinet defections were rumored. Most of the ministers were not at their posts anyway—striking civil servants had locked them out of their offices.

The real power in Iran today lies with the masses in the streets who are determined to put an end to the monarchy, and not with Bakhtiar or the Regency Council.

Basing himself on that power, the Ayatollah Khomeyni has pressed ahead with efforts to establish what he calls an "Islamic republic." The exiled religious leader has set up an "Islamic Revolutionary Council" (whose membership was still secret as of January 21) and has begun

## Shah Cushions Exile With \$25 Billion

Being a "king of kings" may not be secure work, but it certainly pays well. When the shah of Iran had to flee the country he took with him what an aide described as a "modest" number of suitcases, only about forty.

Although the shah had to leave behind his royal palace, with its furnishings worth, in the words of one palace retainer, "many millions of dollars," he and the rest of the royal family will be able to set themselves up in style wherever they spend their exile.

An Iranian economist estimated the assets of the royal family at more than \$20 billion, while the Time-Life News Service put the figure at \$25 billion. The extent of this wealth can be seen from the observation that Argentina, a country of 26 million people, has a Gross Domestic Product of about \$22 billion.

The main repository of the royal family's wealth is the Pahlavi Foundation, organized as a "charity" but in fact an investment house managing the royal family's assets in Iran and abroad. Members of the royal family were as a matter of course given shares in new businesses established in Iran, and there are indications that as much as \$2 billion a year in oil revenues were routinely transferred by the National Iranian Oil Company to the Shah's bank accounts abroad.

The royal family's business ventures were quite varied. According to Iranian sources quoted by the January 17 *Washington Post*, the shah's twin sister Ashraf was deeply involved in big-time drug smuggling. "Ashraf," they noted, "was into anything that smelled of money."

issuing directives as though he were the government.

In messages distributed throughout Iran, Khomeyni has declared all the shah's possessions at home and abroad to be public property; has ordered the army to prevent the dismantling or removal of sophisticated hardware by U.S. military advisers still in the country; and has urged village elders to assure food distribution and the planting of new crops. He has also appointed two special commissions—one to coordinate the ongoing strikes while keeping essential services functioning, and another to take charge of Iranian diplomatic missions in the United States.

Khomeyni sharply rebuffed the head of the Regency Council, whom Bakhtiar sent to Paris on January 19 to seek a compromise. The old courtier was told he would have to resign before Khomeyni would see him.

#### Soldiers Hold the Key

With Bakhtiar so clearly on his last legs, the situation in the armed forces becomes a crucial question. Sustained contact with the revolutionary masses has done much to neutralize or win over the ground troops that have been on the streets almost constantly for the past five months, but there has not yet been a decisive test of the soldiers' loyalties.

As for the officer corps, several of the shah's top generals have fled, while the rest have been lending at least halfhearted support to Bakhtiar. Some are said to have been in contact with Khomeyni.

There have been rumors of an impending coup—to a certain extent played up by Bakhtiar himself as a threat against the masses: "Either me or the tanks." But the danger is real. Some generals have no doubt realized that the monarchy is a dead dog, but others may seek desperately to turn back the revolution. And all must fear

for their skins now that their protector, the shah, has fled.

Moreover, Bakhtiar has said that he will order army commanders into action if Khomeyni tries to set up an alternative government. "I cannot give up the government of the country to the people because they have been persuaded by a religious personality," the prime minister told NBC News January 19.

Khomeyni asserted the same day that some army units had already "rallied to the Iranian people and others will follow."

The explosive state of the armed forces was brought home by the events in Ahwaz on January 17, witnessed by an ABC News cameraman:

The cameraman . . . said that three officers and a number of men had shouted "traitor" when their commanding officer told them this morning that with Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi out of the country, they must obey the orders of Dr. Bakhtiar.

They leaped into their vehicles . . . and burst out of the compound of the 92nd Armored Battalion, *with some of their comrades firing at them*. The tanks rolled over cars, crushing them, then attacked a peaceful anti-Government rally at the local university with guns blazing. (*New York Times*, January 18. Emphasis added.)

Once the shah's fall appeared imminent, Washington sent deputy NATO commander Gen. Robert Huyser to Iran to advise the generals in their new role of holding the capitalist state together in the absence of the monarch. U.S. strategy since the shah's departure has been to buy time by lining up the generals behind Bakhtiar, while trying to split the opposition or convince Khomeyni to drop his calls for the prime minister's downfall.

On January 19 Ayatollah Shariatmadari (the top Islamic leader inside Iran) told reporters in Qum that he was "afraid if the government is condemned, the country will enter into more violence and trouble. I fear

that if the Bakhtiar government collapses, there might be nobody around to take over."

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is said to have been in Tehran "on a mission to set up contact between Iranian opposition leaders and the Carter Administration" (*Newark Star-Ledger*, January 20). Clark was reportedly on his way to Paris to see Khomeyni on January 21.

Also on January 21, the Western press reported that negotiations were under way in Tehran between "representatives" of the Ayatollah Khomeyni and top military officers. The reports coincided with news from Washington that the Carter administration had "reluctantly" concluded that Khomeyni "now holds the key to the building of an anticommunist government in Iran," as the *Washington Post* put it.

#### Carter Gets Cold Shoulder

Khomeyni denied that any talks were taking place. A few days earlier the ayatollah had told Carter bluntly to "mind his own business." Khomeyni's spokesman Sadegh Ghotbzadeh elaborated:

We have declared that the Bakhtiar government is an illegal government and that it is a decision of the Iranians. It is not up to Mr. Carter. It is not for Mr. Carter or anybody on the face of the earth to deny the Iranians [the right] to collaborate with one, or with another. We want to be free and left alone to decide for ourselves. . . . [quoted in the *Washington Post*, January 19.]

Having made such categorical statements of opposition both to Bakhtiar and to U.S. intervention, it will be difficult for Khomeyni to reverse himself without facing the loss of his following to more radical leadership. And there are signs that such currents are gaining influence.

*Los Angeles Times* correspondent Joe Alex Morris Jr. reported from Tehran January 12: "In recent weeks, leftist agitators have emerged as the driving force behind anti-shah demonstrations across the country. Increasingly, the extremists have disavowed the religious leadership of the struggle."

When Mehdi Bazargan, a representative of the religious opposition, went to the oil fields during the first week of January to try to get domestic production resumed, he was booed by the strikers. "They do not respect religion," Bazargan complained to Khomeyni.

In a January 17 statement, Khomeyni warned his followers in Iran against "anti-Moslem hypocrites who want to create disturbances and disorder," and he told them to "cooperate with security officers who are striving to preserve law and order."

But the Iranian workers and peasants, along with growing numbers of soldiers, are in no mood for "cooperating with security officers." Their whole revolutionary upsurge is aimed at destroying to the roots the "law and order" so long maintained by the shah's SAVAK and army. If they have listened to Khomeyni thus far it has been because he has articulated these

desires more clearly and intransigently than any other prominent figure.

Throughout Iran workers are now organizing their own unions and workers councils. Committees of all kinds are being democratically elected in the cities and towns. In the countryside, peasant land seizures have become widespread. Journalists, writers, poets, and artists are expressing themselves without fear of censorship.

The Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Arabs, and other oppressed peoples are beginning to assert their right to national self-determination.

This great upsurge will not be turned back easily. The Iranian people will have a great deal to say if Carter, the shah's generals, Khomeyni, or anyone else tries to snatch the fruits of their magnificent victory away from them. □

## For Immediate Elections to a Constituent Assembly!

[The following has been excerpted from an article by David Frankel in the January 26 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

While the Bakhtiar regime staggered on, naming a nine-member regency council to preserve the form of the monarchy, opposition leader Ayatollah Khomeyni announced the formation of a "Council of the Islamic Revolution" January 13. Khomeyni, who remains by far the best known and most widely followed figure in the opposition, declared that he would return to Iran from exile to "supervise and direct the government."

Following the shah's flight, which Khomeyni called "the first step" toward ending the Pahlavi dynasty altogether, he urged that demonstrations and strikes against Bakhtiar continue.

In his statement, Khomeyni promised that "I will introduce very soon a provisional government to set up a popularly elected constituent assembly for the ratification of a new constitution."

Immediate elections to a constituent assembly—no matter what regime is in power—are necessary so that the Iranian people can freely discuss and decide the issues facing their country.

Such a constituent assembly must be able to debate and decide on all the issues facing Iran, not only on the proposals for a new constitution. Every party and every group in Iranian society must be free to participate in this national discussion and to vote for representatives of their choice.

This includes the high school youth who have played such a big role in the struggle against the shah. It includes women, those without any property, the millions who cannot read or write, and the oppressed nationalities. It includes all the political groups banned by the shah. And it includes the soldiers.

Committees to discuss the issues and to help organize the elections should be established in the barracks. After all, the rank-and-file soldiers, who may be ordered to shoot down their brothers and sisters demonstrating in the streets or else risk being shot down by the officers, have a big stake in the course of events.

Delegates to the constituent assembly should be elected by proportional representation, so that every grouping that gets a

certain minimum percentage of the vote nationally is guaranteed a voice in the debates of the assembly.

Nor should the debate be limited to the representatives in the constituent assembly. Continuing discussions on the great issues facing the Iranian people should be organized in the factories, the schools, the barracks, and the villages. Only in that way can the masses really take part, guarantee the gains that they have made so far, and continue to push forward the development of the revolution.

Trotskyists in Iran have already distributed thousands of copies of their newspaper, *Socialism*, calling for elections to a constituent assembly. Socialists would call on such an assembly to implement a program that would include:

- Release of all political prisoners, complete abolition of censorship, legalization of all political parties and groups, freedom of religion and the separation of church and state, and freedom of assembly.

- Complete abolition of the monarchy and confiscation of the wealth stolen by the shah, his family, and their hangers-on from the Iranian people.

- Nationalization of imperialist economic holdings. The natural wealth of Iran should go to the development of the country and the improvement of the lives of its people, not to the enrichment of imperialist corporations.

- A thoroughgoing land reform under the control of the landless peasants and small landowners. Despite the shah's so-called land reform, one-third of Iran's peasants still have no land.

- Recognition of the right of self-determination for Iran's oppressed nationalities. Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Baluchis, and Arabs, among others, have a long history of struggle for their rights and have played an active part in the movement against the shah's dictatorship.

- Measures aimed at abolishing the oppression of women. Repeal all discriminatory laws and establish legal equality. This would include especially repeal of the law permitting male family members to punish women relatives who supposedly tarnish their "honor."

Also, equal pay for equal work and the establishment of child-care centers for those women who want them. Both these demands have been raised by women in the course of the struggle against the shah.

## Religion, Democratic Rights, and Class Struggle in Iran

By Tariq Ali

[The following appeared in the January 11 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Dear friends:

Last November you distributed a two-page leaflet after a *Socialist Challenge* meeting I had spoken at in Birmingham.

The leaflet was headed: "On the Question of the Iranian Struggle: Islamic Revolution or Materialist Hypocrisy?" It presented a critique of the Marxist position on Iran and devoted itself to answering the points I had made in my speech.

You argue that:

(a) the Iranian revolution is due to the love of the Iranian people for Islam;

(b) "the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky are based on class-hatred and materialist belief and thus alien to the Iranian people";

(c) it is in the teachings of the ayatollahs and mullahs that the Iranian people's aspirations for an Islamic revolution and Islamic state will be fulfilled.

You speak in the name of "Islamic revolution" and declare your open hostility to socialists who are also involved in the Iranian struggle. You claim, somewhat arrogantly, that socialists are "misled people" who are not interested in what the people desire. The people of Iran desire Islam."

Before dealing with your points in detail, it is worth restating what, in our opinion, the Iranian struggle is all about. What is its dynamic and its ultimate goal?

Over the last twenty years the social weight of the urban working class has increased dramatically in comparison with neighbouring states. Class divisions and class contradictions have become more acute.

How can you doubt that Iran is a society divided by class? How do you explain the existence of parasites who live in unbelievably luxurious conditions in Tehran while a few hundreds yards away there are people who live in the most abject poverty?

They are all Iranians. They are mainly Muslims. Many capitalists regularly prostrate themselves before Mecca in the hope that their god will protect their privileges.

You could say that this latter breed are not true Muslims, they are imposters. But on what basis will you decide? The teachings of Islam itself (especially the Shi'ite version) are full of ambiguities which can be interpreted to justify both resistance and collaboration with authority.

The poverty-stricken masses retain their

religious beliefs to escape from the horrors and miseries of everyday life. The rich remain religious the better to safeguard their material interests.

Religion performed a different function hundreds of years ago, but in our century it has become the backbone of reaction. Today we have before us many examples of "Islamic states."

We have the Wahabbi fundamentalists who govern Saudi Arabia in the name of Islam. Is that barbarism to be reborn in Iran? Or there is the "enlightened despotism" of Libya.

The struggle in Iran began as a struggle for democratic rights. This united the overwhelming majority of the people.

In this struggle we all fight together to bring down the Shah. You shout "Death to the Shah" holding the banners of Islam. We chant the same slogan with the red flag in our hands.

But ask yourselves why it is that U.S. imperialism supports the Shah. Is it because he is "anti-Islamic"? Is it because they fear the rise of Islam? If that were so, how do you explain that Saudi Arabia is one of the oldest allies of the United States in the Middle East?

No, the reason the Americans fear the fall of the Shah is because they are aware that establishing political structures to keep Iran safe for capitalism is not going to be an easy process.

The awakening and radicalisation of the working masses has created tremendous expectations. If the government that follows the Shah cannot satisfy the people then there will be more upheavals.

The ayatollahs do not represent a coherent political alternative. The discredited bourgeois politicians have failed in the past. It was precisely the lack of an alternative opposition that made the religious leaders the only major focus of dissent.

The struggle in Iran is thus motivated not so much by a "love of Islam" (even though the majority of Iranians are Muslims) as by a hatred of the Shah and all that he represents.

In that sense the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky are very relevant. For their followers say to the working masses: only you and your class are capable of liberating Iran from the stranglehold of capitalism and imperialism. Only the victory of your class will ensure the real independence of Iran.

That is why the construction of a revolutionary workers party is an important priority.

The teachings of the ayatollahs and mullahs, which you claim are the real answer, offer no practical solutions in fact

to the real needs of the masses.

What is an "Islamic" state? What would be its class character? Who would own the means of production and especially the oil wells? Who would decide, and on what basis, the international alliances which Iran would need?

Let us take one question to illustrate your dilemma. Islam eschews interest on loans. So are Iranian banks going to charge interest?

If they are, then they cannot function as the financial institutions of capital. Our answer would be to nationalise them immediately. You would call that "communism."

There are, in reality, no consistent political or theoretical positions that can be derived from Islam. The logic of capital will force even the most ardent Islamic nationalists to take sides in the struggle that will develop after the fall of the Shah.

The Islamic movement itself will suffer further political rifts and divisions, precisely because a belief in Islam does not lead automatically to the same political conclusions.

You are quite correct to point out the disgusting role of China and the Soviet Union in supporting the Shah over the last decade. You then use this to discredit the very idea of socialism.

It is true that these states and their cynical manoeuvres had antagonised and disillusioned millions of people. But we are *Trotskyists*. Our political current has fought against these policies now for more than fifty years.

So throwing Brezhnev and Mao at us is the equivalent of us saying "Well, the Shah is a Muslim," and hurling him at you!

We stand for proletarian internationalism. We believe that the interests of workers throughout the world are one and indivisible. We argue that unless the workers seize state power over the next decades, capitalism will become more and more barbaric.

You claim that capitalism and socialism are "Western ideologies." This is false. They are both *international* ideologies, but with a crucial difference. One represents the interests of the ruling classes and the other the oppressed masses.

Islam, no more than Christianity or Judaism or Hinduism or Buddhism, offers no solution.

We do not deny for a single moment the role of the Islamic opposition, and Khomeini in particular, in fuelling the mass upsurge against the Shah and refusing to accept any compromise which retains the monarchy. It is what follows this which

will decide the immediate future of Iran. And as we are approaching the 21st century, it would be somewhat foolish to attempt to derive our future from a distant past whose echoes continue to fade.

To summarise:

1. We believe that the struggle in Iran, despite the predominance of democratic slogans, has a clear class character. The recent strike wave has made this abundantly clear.

2. We believe that the future of the Iranian masses does rest on the ability of their most advanced sections to construct a party that will be based on the teachings

of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky. We are trying to construct such a party at this very moment: the Iranian section of the Fourth International.

3. The ayatollahs and mullahs have been able to play an important role because the repression, the collapse of the bourgeois oppositions, and the bankruptcy of pro-Moscow and pro-Peking groups made them and their mosques the only centres of opposition.

But already this is beginning to change. The fall of the Shah will shift politics further away from the mosques. This is not just desirable. It is virtually inevitable.

In conclusion we can do little more than paraphrase Lenin's remarks to Indonesian communists in 1919. The latter had explained that the peasants were loyal to Sarekat-i-Islam, a progressive Muslim organisation. They were loyal to God.

Lenin advised Indonesian communists to work with Sarekat, but said: "Tell them that when they go to heaven they should be loyal to God. But here on earth the International Executive Committee of the Communist International is more powerful."

Yours comradely,

Tariq Ali

## Firsthand Account by Iranian Oil Worker

### How We Organized Strike That Paralyzed Shah's Regime

[One of the most powerful weapons unloosed in the battle to oust the shah was the strike by Iran's oil workers. The strike, which began in late September, demonstrated the strength of the organized industrial working class, virtually shutting down the country's key industry.

[The following account of how the strike was organized in Ahwaz is told by one of the founders of the Association of Oil Industry Staff Employees, a union formed in the heat of the struggle and one of the initiators of the strike. It was printed in the December 29 issue of *Payam Daneshjoo*, a revolutionary socialist Persian-language weekly published in New York. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

The way the strike started was that the very broad movement that developed in our country made us realize that we staff employees in the oil industry were part of this nation too, and so we also had to participate in this movement. We knew from the start that if we walked out our strike could play a very important role in this movement.

So, on October 18, various sections began going out. In two or three days almost all the sections had joined us.

Of course, five days before, we had heard that the Abadan refinery had gone on strike. But there had been no confirmation of this.

From the beginning, we felt the need to organize a committee that could give systematic direction to the strike. The purpose of electing or setting up a committee was not to set apart a leadership. In fact, a lot of people felt that if we singled out a certain group as leaders they would be immediately arrested and that would put us in a difficult situation.

But at that time there was another development that made organizing a strike committee seem to be more called for. They told us that we could set up a staff employees association.

So, we decided to elect one representative for every fifty persons. However, if a section had more than 200 or 300 people, it still should not have more than three or four representatives.

The representatives were not elected by secret ballot. The vote took place in front of everyone. We put up a list on the wall. People came and signed their names next to the name of their candidate. There were usually five or six candidates per office.

The first duty of these representatives was to organize the professional and office workers association. So, we called this body the Organizing Committee of Oil Industry Staff Employees.

But from the very first days of the strike, we realized that there were more important questions facing us. The strike itself had to be organized. We had to define our aims. We had to clarify for our co-workers what our overall aims were. This was not clear to many of them. We had to specify our demands. Everyone had a few demands in mind, but all of them had to be put together and presented to the company in a list.

Thus, the strike committee spent more of its energy organizing the strike and defining the demands of the strike than in building the association. We said, there will be enough time for that in the future. We sat down to plan the strike and work out a policy. We spent a lot of time discussing some questions. But at the end we made some good decisions.

One such question over which there was a lot of discussion was whether we should extend the strike through the entire oil industry, or whether some facilities such as hospitals, part of the telecommunications network, and some teams that do emergency repairs on the oil pipelines should be kept in operation. In particular, there is always a danger of explosions in oil pipelines, and if such accidents occur people may be killed along the route of the lines.

So, we said that we would designate a group of workers to make emergency re-

pairs if there was an accident or if someone did something deliberately. Thus, the final decision in the meeting was that this group of workers should remain on the job simply so that they would be able to take care of any such problems if they arose.

There was also a lot of discussion about maintaining production for domestic consumption. We decided finally to assure the supply for domestic needs. Domestic consumption is about 250,000 to 350,000 barrels a day. You know, oil consumption is generally less in the summer. But in the winter it gets cold in Iran. The cold weather was on its way, and so we knew that consumption was going to be high. We had to provide at least 350,000 barrels. So, we assigned some of the workers in Ahwaz to continue to operate one of the wells, namely Well No. 2.

This well furnishes crude to those refineries that supply the needs of internal consumption. We came to the decision that we would let this plant continue operating, and it did maintain production. We also allowed Well No. 1, which includes the pumping system, to continue functioning and pump the crude to the refineries in Abadan and elsewhere.

But later on, we found ourselves facing another problem. We were in fact producing the amount of oil required for domestic needs, even more than the necessary 250,000 or 350,000 barrels a day. But we discovered that the RAY refinery had gone on strike. In other words, they would not refine the crude that we were producing and pumping to them. The same thing happened with the Abadan refinery.

We began discussing with the refinery workers and urging them to refine the crude we were producing and pumping to their plants. We reasoned with them, explaining that the government would exploit this situation. So as not to allow the government to misrepresent our action, to set one section of the people against another, to open up a propaganda campaign against us, we thought that it was better for them to go ahead and refine the

crude that we were producing to cover domestic needs. If they did that, we argued, the government would not be able to divert people's attention from the central issues involved in the strike by playing up the long lines in front of the gas stations and petroleum distributors.

The workers at the refineries accepted our arguments and decided to go ahead and produce. But the next day, they reported to us that the government was taking all the fuel being refined and using it for military purposes. They said that they were resuming their strike, believing that we would agree with their decision. We told them that was fine, since they knew the local situation better than we did. They should go ahead and do what they thought best.

We reaffirmed that the essential aim was to meet the needs of domestic consumption. But if, for any reason, they thought that they were not achieving this objective they should act accordingly. Their decision was to go back on strike for eleven days. They also called on all workers to boycott the plants. The reason for this was that previously some workers were showing up at the plants to stage a slowdown. The call for a boycott was to keep the workers from turning up at the plants at all.

This is why a fuel shortage developed in many cities, including Tehran, and why long lines of cars and people formed in front of the gas stations.

Three or four days later the production workers in Ahwaz sent a delegation to our staff employees association, pledging their support to our strike. They said that they would collaborate with us provided we went all the way and stuck with them to the last. They warned us not to stop at a halfway point. We agreed to this since we had already decided to keep up our strike as long as necessary to attain our objectives. We told the production workers that that was our intention, and they joined with us.

At that point, we ourselves had about sixty representatives and we had no hall large enough for them to meet in. We discussed this problem with the production workers, explaining that if they elected seventy to eighty representatives, we would then have about a hundred and forty representatives and it would be a real problem finding a place big enough to hold so many people. They said that they had already elected twenty to thirty representatives, but in view of this problem they would send only seven to ten persons to represent them, if we agreed. Although this procedure was not very democratic, we decided to go ahead with it since there was no other choice.

After the production workers joined us, news of the strike reached practically all the oil fields. Perhaps I should mention the names of some of the oil producing areas in Iran. They are as follows: Ahwaz, Aghajari, Marown, Gachsaran, and secondarily Rage Safeed, Bebehakim, and Kazerun. The oil workers and staff em-

## Iranian Trotskyists Appeal to Ranks of Army

One of the key aims of the mass movement in Iran has been to win over the ranks of the shah's conscript army. One of the appeals addressed to the troops was issued by the Iranian Trotskyists.

"Brother soldiers," it began, "the people, who for years have suffered oppression and torture at the hands of the government, have gained their freedom. . . .

"Do you remember how on the 14 of Shahrivar . . . and on the 17 of the same month [September 4 and 7] we embraced each other? Do you remember how for two days not a pane of glass was broken? . . . Do you remember all the flowers we showered on you?"

The leaflet counters accusations that the demonstrators were out for loot by citing a report on the real "looters" issued by striking bank workers. This document listed large sums of money taken from the public till by top military officers.

The soldiers are reminded of the way they have always been treated by the officers and authorities. They are reminded of the small allowances they get by comparison with the amounts stolen by the officers.

The leaflet calls on the soldiers to start to think for themselves: "We say that soldiers should have a right to their own opinions, the right to vote. . . . They should not be used as a police force. . . .

"You should have the right to ask why you must drown your brothers and sisters in blood."

The concluding appeal is as follows:

"Brother soldiers, the people place their hopes in you. If you join them our criminal rulers will have no other force that can keep them in power. If you join us the workers, peasants, and poor people will be victorious. Victory to the Iranian revolution! Fight for a workers and peasants republic!"

ployees in all these places also joined us. As a result, oil production dropped sharply. The average daily oil production in Iran is, or was, 6.5 million barrels. It dropped off abruptly to 800,000 barrels.

It was at this point that oil tankers coming to Kharg Island to load had instead to drop anchor and wait up to forty hours. There was no oil. In the following days, production dropped to an even lower level—to about 500,000 barrels a day.

Both the government and Iranian Oil Company officials suddenly realized that we were serious about the demands we had been putting forward from the start. We had presented a list of twelve demands. Three of these were not economic, and had been raised separately. They were as follows: end martial law, full solidarity and cooperation with the striking teachers, and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Our economic demands included Iranianization of the oil industry, all communications to be in the Persian language, and for all foreign employees to leave the country.

In regard to the expulsion of the foreign staff employees, we said that this should be done gradually and according to a plan. Some of these employees were simply superfluous. They were drawing salaries and doing nothing. Such people could leave Iran very quickly, or else we would expel them. As for the others, there should be a plan to start replacing them.

The second economic demand was for an end to discrimination against women staff employees and workers.

The third demand called for implementation of a law recently passed by both houses of parliament dealing with the

housing of oil workers and staff employees.

Another demand was for revision of the regulations governing retirement of staff employees.

Our final demand was for support to the demands of the production workers. The production workers had raised a demand not included in the list presented by the oil industry staff employees. It was for dissolution of SAVAK. The other demands raised by the production workers coincided entirely with ours.

When we presented our demands, the oil company officials realized that they had to come and discuss these demands with us. Oil production had been completely halted. It was no longer profitable for them to load the tankers. Moreover, on Kharg Island, the dock workers and staff employees had already struck. Even if we were to produce oil there was no one to load the tankers and they could not get any oil out.

Since Kharg is a very small island, they usually do not keep the tankers there for very long after they have been filled up. This is extremely dangerous. So, when oil is not being transported out, they keep the tankers empty to avoid the risk of explosions.

We saw that Mr. Ansari [Iranian Oil Company official] went first to the southern oil producing regions. He began an inspection tour, stopping at such secondary fields as Gachsaran and Aghajari. Apparently he thought that in these areas he would be able to convince or intimidate the workers more readily. He went first to Abadan, then to Gachsaran, and later to Kharg Island, after which he visited Aghajari.

In these places the workers who talked to him and his entourage told him that

their demands were the same as those raised by the workers in Ahwaz. In fact, the workers had realized what he was up to. We had told them that his objective was to start with them, since they were in a minority, and to force them to go back to work. Then we in turn would be forced back ourselves. We told them that they should not go back and that they should refuse to negotiate with Ansari.

So, the oil workers in Abadan told Mr. Ansari that their demands were the same

## The authorities finally realized we were the only people who can operate the industry . . .

as those raised by the oil workers in Ahwaz. He said, then they must know what those demands were and should present them. The workers replied that since he was ready to discuss the demands, the Ahwaz workers should be brought there so that they could present the demands themselves.

Ansari tried again to get the Abadan workers to present the demands, and they again refused. As a result, he left Abadan, having achieved nothing in his talks. He had no choice but to go to Ahwaz.

In Ahwaz, Ansari participated in our assembly, trying to sell the government's proposals. He said that he had come there to discuss all our demands. Making money was his specialty, he said, and if we wanted more pay or more retirement benefits, he would be willing to meet such demands. He also made a number of other promises.

He said that since there were a lot of us there, close to 7,000 persons, he could not possibly talk to all of us. He asked us to elect a number of representatives so that he could meet with them, in the hope that some sort of agreement could be worked out.

In that same meeting, we once again laid out all of our twelve demands. He said that he would consider the economic demands but that the others were outside his sphere. We said that we only expected him to convey these demands to the government, since he was the highest official in the oil company. He said that he would be happy to do that. At this point we decided to hold another general assembly.

The meeting was scheduled for 5:30 the next afternoon. Mr. Ansari did not arrive until an hour after the meeting had actually begun, even though it had started an hour late for some other reason. He came at about 7:30, and asked us to present our demands.

In order to speed things up, we had elected someone to speak for us. Our representative began reading the list of demands, and the first was for an end to military rule. At this point, Mr. Ansari broke in, asking him not to read the noneconomic demands. He said that they

had nothing to do with him. We reminded him that he promised us that he would take all the demands to the government. Ansari said that he could not do that and asked us to read just the economic demands.

When we realized that he had not been honest with us, we told him that we were not going to make any distinction between our economic and noneconomic demands. We told him that we had only one set of demands, from number one to twelve. Up till now we had considered demands one through three as noneconomic, and from four to twelve, economic; but now we had just one set of demands, from one to twelve.

Ansari insisted that we should not present our noneconomic demands, but we would not accept this. At this point, he pulled a trick on us. Someone came to the meeting telling him that he had an important telephone call. Ansari left the assembly, ostensibly to answer the call, but he never returned. All in all, our meeting with him lasted about three minutes.

Later on he sent a message complaining that the air in the meeting was really impossible and suggested that three, four, or five of us meet with him in another location. We replied that not only were we not going to accept this proposal but that we insisted that any meeting had to be held in the same room with the same number of people and had to begin that very day. That is, it had to start that day, and it might last three, four, or five days. He did not accept our offer and went off to Tehran.

It seems that it was the shah's birthday, and Ansari wanted to take part in the royal ceremonies. Later on, his stooges began spreading it around that we had insulted him; supposedly we had put our feet on the table. We had not spoken to him with due respect, we had not stood up in reverence before him, and so on. They also said that we had some kind of complexes.

The purpose of all these stories was to sow division between our representatives and the ranks. But fortunately these divisive tactics did not work. We reported the proceedings of the meeting as they occurred to our fellow workers. A great majority of them agreed with us, but some did not, thinking that Ansari may have had a point.

At any rate, we found it necessary to act to neutralize these tactics. At the same time, our co-workers were pressing us, wanting to know what we were going to do next. They wanted to know who we wanted to talk to since we had refused to talk with Ansari. We replied that we did want to talk to him. He was the one who was not willing to talk.

So, in order to outdo Ansari in using this tactic, we sent a telegram to the Association of Iranian Jurists with copies to the newspapers *Kayhan* and *Ettela'at*, as well as the Complaints Commission of the lower house of parliament. Another copy was sent to the Association of Iranian Lawyers. In this telegram we described the context in which the oil strike was taking

place and pointed to the harm it was doing to the economy of the country.

We also said in the telegram that the responsibility for the continuation of the strike rests on Mr. Ansari's shoulders, since he was not willing to negotiate with us. At the end, we called on all the people of Iran to consider this crucial political question, so that they could understand where the responsibility really lay for the continuation of the strike.

When Mr. Ansari found out that we had sent a copy of the telegram to the Complaints Commission, he got in touch with Mr. Pezashkpour, the head of this body. Ansari said that the workers had lied, and that he was willing to meet with us at any time, in any place in Iran, and with any number of workers representatives.

Mr. Pezashkpour, in turn, telephoned us, and relayed what Mr. Ansari had told him. We told Mr. Pezashkpour that we had not slandered Mr. Ansari. And in order to prove to Mr. Pezashkpour that Ansari had lied, we declared our willingness to meet with him at any time and in any place in Iran. Pezashkpour invited us to send about fifteen representatives to the Complaints Commission and meet with him, which we agreed to do. Since Iran Air was also on strike, we used the oil company's plane to travel to Tehran, and availed ourselves of their hotel. We used all their facilities.

When we arrived at Mr. Pezashkpour's office, he handed us a message from Mr. Shariatmadari [a religious leader] supporting our strike. This was in spite of the fact that Mr. Sharif Emami, the prime minister at the time, had called our strike an act of treason because it had dealt irreparable damage to the country's economy. In his message, Mr. Shariatmadari not only did not call us traitors but praised us as acting in the service of the nation.

In his capacity as head of the Complaints Commission, Mr. Pezashkpour declared that our strike was legal, and no one had any right to declare it illegal and try to break it. He also pointed out that the three noneconomic demands we had raised were really national demands, since the entire nation supported them. So, Mr. Pezashkpour met with the fifteen representatives we had sent, but Mr. Ansari never showed up. On that very day, he left Iran, taking with him 480 million tumans [nearly \$70 million].

In his place, Mr. Ansari had sent two lawyers, Mr. Najmabadi and Najand. We started the meeting, and the first question we asked was: Where is this Mr. Ansari who was willing to meet with us at any time and in any place? The answer was that he was ill. Later on they said he had a heart ailment and had to go to the United States or France for treatment.

At any rate, we had exposed Ansari pretty well by that time. We had already told the entire nation that he would not meet with us to negotiate. Once again we sent a statement to the press pointing out that he had not showed up for this meeting. So, the entire nation approved of what we had done.

In the meeting, Mr. Najmabadi tried to

give us a lecture on the history of the Iranian Oil Company. We told him there was no need for that because we knew that history better than anyone. What he really wanted to do was confuse things and stall.

Mr. Najmabadi also refused to listen to our noneconomic demands, saying they did not concern him. As for our economic demands, he said they had been attended to, and no more raises would be granted.

So, they started using methods of intimidation to force us back to work. In the meantime, they came up with another tactic for breaking the strike. They brought in 200 retired workers and employees, paid them enormous sums of money, and tried to get them to operate the wells. But these people were unable to get the installations functioning. They were not fully familiar with the new equipment that had been introduced since their retirement. They burned out a couple of pumps and turbines.

After this tactic failed, they brought in 200 technicians from the navy. These are trained technicians who are usually sent abroad for education. They got one of the pumping stations operating for a while but got rattled when they realized that they did not know the direction of the oil flow in the lines.

That, of course, is a very alarming situation, since a fire can result from doing the wrong thing. Finally, our people went in to help them shut down the equipment and get out of the area.

The authorities finally realized that we were the only people who can operate the oil industry in Iran. And that is why they

went with troops to the homes of workers in Aghajari and Gachsarran to pull workers out of their houses and take them to the plants, where they forced them to work. But the workers in Aghajari had seen this coming, and had left the area for the weekend, so that they were not forced to go back to work.

The authorities did succeed in forcing some of the workers from Gachsarran back to work with the help of armed soldiers. And so, oil production picked up a little, gradually reaching 500,000, 800,000, 900,000, and even one and a half million barrels a day. When the workers returned to Aghajari after the weekend to see their families, they were picked up by the troops and forced to go to work. This forced labor operation finally raised oil production to four million barrels a day.

At this point, we realized that our strike had suffered a setback. It was no longer effective. The government could have continued this sort of thing, forcing the workers back until oil production was restored to the 6.5 million barrel level. So, we decided to go back to work.

But at this point, a couple of things happened that threw a monkey wrench into the government's strikebreaking operation. In those days, during the premiership of Mr. Sharif Emami, when radio and TV censorship was partially lifted, they would broadcast the list of all the governmental or nongovernmental organizations that had come out in support of our strike. Sometimes this would go on a whole hour. This showed the support that existed for our strike, but we needed more substantial backing.

Of course, Ayatollah Khomeyni had issued a statement supporting our strike and pledging financial help. We were not overly worried about money at that time since everyone could have endured the financial hardship for a few months. And we did not think that it would last longer than two or three months. Since the entire nation had joined the movement, we thought that sooner or later the government was going to have to retreat and grant our demands. But this did not happen.

The government did all it could to isolate our strike and keep it from getting help from other sectors of the population. Students and teachers at various universities across the country had tried to open up their schools and stage demonstrations. This would have helped take the military pressure off the oil strike. But the government kept the schools from being opened.

Here I should mention some things about the military pressure brought to bear on us and about the military occupation of the oil fields.

When we first began the strike, we used to gather in the halls and rooms in the main office building. The troops surrounded the building, occupied it, and forced us to disperse.

Later we gathered in the parking lots of the main office building. But special troops and Ranger units occupied these areas and forced us to disperse. We moved our assem-

bly site to an area in front of the company hospital. We were able to gather there for a couple of days, but we were again driven away.

Finally, we came up with a new tactic. It was to prepare our agenda and our instructions to the striking workers, get everyone together at a given place, and give them the instructions. We could do this in the half hour it took before the troops could come and drive us away.

Despite all our tactics, many of our mates had been forced back to work and production had gone up considerably. At this point, we decided to go back to work along with other workers and prepare for a new strike. We did not consider ourselves defeated, since it was obvious that there was a continuing movement of the entire Iranian people.

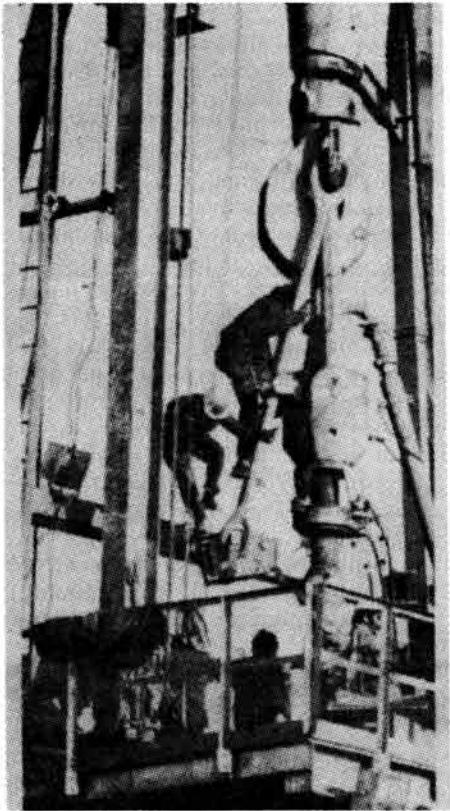
What was happening was that one group would retreat one day, and the next day would resume the struggle in a different form and propell it forward. This is why we decided to go back to work and prepare everyone to strike again. This gave us a chance to draw a balance sheet of our strengths and weaknesses and to get ready for the next battle. At the same time, we decided to build up the structure of the Association of Oil Industry Staff Employees.

Our first strike lasted thirty-three days. The first day we went back to work, we held an assembly. The agenda dealt with setting up the association. We elected a committee of fifteen persons. Their primary task was to contact other organizations and individuals to solicit help and coordinate our work. We called this body the Coordinating Committee. It was also given the task of drawing up a constitution for the association. A preliminary draft was prepared and distributed among the employees. I think by this time, the constitution must have been approved by a general assembly of the membership.

I should mention another point. When our strike began, it was virtually ignored by all the major press including *Kayhan* and *Ettela'at*, and even the BBC. We decided to boycott the daily papers since they would send their reporters to meetings but never give us any coverage.

When we complained to the papers about the lack of coverage of our actions, they said that their reporters were having difficulty getting the straight facts at our meetings. They said that they would be glad to report our actions, if we would elect a person or a number of persons to keep touch with them, and inform them of our strike demands.

So, we decided there was a need for a committee to keep in touch with the press. We set up a Communications Committee, including six persons. One of these was in charge of communications between the strike representatives and the Board of Directors of the Oil Company. Another was in charge of receiving and sending telegrams. Another was responsible for contacting the media. The work of this committee helped to get us a lot of support from all sections of the population. □



Ahwaz oil rig

# Nationalism and Revolution in Iran

By Ahmad Heydari and Cyrus Paydar

[The nationwide revolt that has driven the shah from his throne is the third revolutionary upheaval in Iran in this century. In 1906, inspired by the revolution across the border in Russia, the Iranian masses rose up against the monarchy and won a constitution and a parliament. In the years following the Second World War, a revolutionary tide again swept the country, forcing the temporary ouster of the shah in 1953. A CIA-sponsored coup was required to restore the hated tyrant to power.

[The following account of these two previous chapters in Iran's revolutionary history, in which the class struggle presented itself primarily in the form of a national struggle, has been excerpted from an article that appeared in a discussion bulletin published by the Socialist Workers Party in 1973. The authors are leading members of the Iranian Trotskyist movement.]

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Iranian nationalism arose in the late nineteenth century as a direct response to the plunder of the country by foreign capitalist powers, particularly Britain and Russia. These European countries were able to obtain economic concessions from the shah, and, in return, gave him nominal sums, which mainly went to keep up the luxurious Persian court.

Lord Curzon, before he became the Viceroy of India, said of one of these concessions that: "When published to the world, it was found to contain the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history." In fact, this particular concession was cancelled under pressure from both inside and outside the country.

In 1890, when the shah granted the concession and exclusive right to buy and sell tobacco to a British capitalist, a mass movement arose, demanding cancellation of the concession. This single-issue movement was led by the Islamic *ulema* (clergy) and the merchants. Mass demonstrations and confrontations with the army culminated in a complete boycott of tobacco—even in the shah's harem nobody touched tobacco! The cities were in turmoil for more than two years. Finally the shah and the British retreated and cancelled the concession. This was the first nationalist movement in the history of Iran.

The victory of the tobacco movement was the first of its kind, and opened the era of national liberation struggles in Iran. But it did not change the class character of the shah's state. The despotism of the regime and the plunder by the foreign capitalists continued. The court borrowed more money to keep up its luxurious existence, and more concessions were granted. In 1901 an Australian, D'Arcy, was granted an oil concession, which the British Admiralty later purchased. The fight against this concession culminated fifty years later in the movement for the nationalization of oil.

Foreign banks established branches in the country. In 1903 it was revealed that the Department of Customs,

headed by a Belgian named Neus, had made a secret agreement with the Russians, favoring their manufacturers and merchants. In the uproar about it the British were also able to obtain favorable treatment. Only the Iranians lost out.

National oppression bore down most severely on the poor peasants and workers. For example, in 1904 the peasants of Gouchan in the northeast who could not afford to pay their taxes to the shah's appointees were forced to collect the money by selling their daughters to the nearby tribes. Agricultural production declined; tens of thousands left home for neighboring countries in search of work. The number of workers from Iran who went to the Baku oil fields reached ten thousand.

Opposition newspapers began to appear in Calcutta, Cairo, Istanbul, Baku, and London presenting political ideas and solutions to the country's problems. Even revolutionary social democracy found some adherents. At the same time, the arbitrary arrests of the oppositionists and their executions by the shah's regime was also in full force.

Another source of discontent was the hoarding of grain by the landowners, who were courtiers, *ulema* and merchants. The country's industrial development was blocked by the powerful foreign capitalists. And so Iran's possessing classes purchased land. Whole villages were owned by absentee landowners—who would hoard the grain so that they could sell it later for a higher price. This caused the price of bread to go up, making life more miserable for the poor. In 1898 a *mullah* (low clergy), a newcomer to Tabriz, started preaching against these grain hoarders in the mosques. This led to an uprising of the poor, who stormed the houses of the rich and looted them. But the hoarding of the grain continued. This situation was one of the causes of the revolution.

The defeat suffered by the Czar in the war with Japan and the 1905 revolution in Russia helped to regenerate the revolutionary movement in Iran. The price of sugar had escalated. According to the merchants this was the result of the 1905 revolution in Russia, from which the sugar was imported. The shah's autocracy, fearful of a mass rebellion, tried to solve the problem by forcing the merchants to lower their prices. In Tehran, the city's governor, as a matter of course, had some of the merchants whipped. This began a protest movement led by the merchants and the *uleman*. The demand for justice and the creation of a House of Justice evolved into the demand for a constitution and a *Majles* (parliament).

The working class at that time was extremely small, and therefore had very little weight in determining the course of struggle. The leadership remained in the hands of the *ulema* and the bourgeoisie (mainly merchants). Nevertheless, the plebian masses came out in spontaneous mass demonstrations. These demonstrations differed from the method the *ulema* and the bourgeoisie used. The latter appealed to the monarchy to reform the state. Whenever pressure increased or the shah disappointed them, the *ulema* chose to take sanctuary in mosques and



"Whole villages were owned by absentee landowners—who would hoard the grain. . . ."

in holy shrines outside the city. The bourgeoisie locked up the bazaar and looked to the imperialist powers, at that point to the British, for salvation.

In July 1906, the *ulema* leadership, in protest against autocracy, went to the holy shrine of Gom, outside the city, to take sanctuary. The merchants went to the British Embassy. At first fifty merchants took sanctuary in the embassy, but rapidly different strata of small shopkeepers were attracted to the sanctuary and within three days there were 13,000 men camping out in the embassy grounds. Meanwhile, in adjoining streets demonstrations took place. Women also participated in these demonstrations. In some cases the shah's soldiers also joined demonstrations. The demand was for a constitution. The shah, under the pressure of the British, issued a decree proclaiming the country a constitutional monarchy and calling for elections to the first *Majles*. The *Majles* was to draft a constitution. But in his proclamation the shah had not mentioned the word "nation" and instead had singled out the possessing classes, granting them the right to vote. The peasants and plebian masses of the cities were excluded from the electoral process. When the shah's decree appeared in the wall posters, the people of Teheran tore them down. They demanded that the word nation be specifically used in the decree and that the nation be given the right to vote. Through these demonstrations they won their demand.

People all over the country viewed the change to a constitutional form of government as a major victory. In this struggle (1906-1909) class conflicts reflected themselves. The bourgeoisie moved quickly to the camp of the counter-revolutionary aristocracy. The masses were the most consistent defenders of democracy and a non-secular constitution.

An alternate leadership, in opposition to the bourgeois Teheran leadership, developed in Tabriz, center of the Turkish-speaking province of Azerbaijan. This leadership was forged through the efforts of a small nucleus of an Iranian social democratic organization—later to be known as *Markaze Gheibi* (Underground Center).

Azerbaijanis and Fars (Persians) were the most devel-

oped of the nationalities in Iran. Azerbaijan, with its proximity to Turkey and the Caucuses, and with its proletarian center in Baku—also Turkish speaking—was politically more advanced. Many Azerbaijanis went to work in Baku oil fields and there they were introduced to the revolutionary ideas of social democracy. Despite the absence of a sizable working class on a national scale, the proletariat intervened in the revolution via the nucleus of *Markaze Gheibi* (M. Gh.)

In Tabriz, an *Anjoman* (a council) composed of *ulema*, merchants, and the elected representatives of petty owners and craftsmen appeared for the first time. The *Anjoman* started with supervising the elections of the delegates to *Majles* in Teheran and published the first constitutionalist paper in the country. M. Gh. intervened in this development, and through the *Anjoman* organized a militia, called *Mujahedeen* or *Fedayeen*. At the outset the crown prince Mohammad Ali—who resided in Tabriz—ordered the *Anjoman* to be dismantled. The leaders of the *Anjoman*, who belonged to the possessing classes, accepted the order and disbanded. But the *Mujahedeen* resisted, and held an armed demonstration. They won, and the *Anjoman* was saved.

The further evolution of the *Anjomans* and *Mujahedeen* signaled the development of dual power in Tabriz. Anjomans began to supervise the distribution of bread in the city, to administer justice, and later on took over the military defense of the city. Armed *Mujahedeen* attracted the plebians in increasing numbers, and formed the most militant and advanced section of the revolution. This brought them into conflict with the bourgeois, and land-owning, elements of the *Anjoman*. Early in 1907 the *Mujahedeen* expelled Haji Hassan Mujtahed, a land-owner and one of the leading *ulema*, because he was implicated in an attack that the government made upon the peasants of a near-by village.

This kind of decisive action on the side of the toiling masses brought in more radical elements to the leadership of the *Anjoman*.

But the virtual absence of a working class on a national scale prevented its assumption of leadership of

this nationalist movement; bourgeois influence remained strong on the leadership. As the elements of this leadership retreated under the pressure of the monarchy, or turned against the *Anjoman* as the revolution unfolded, the *Mujahedeen* became the best fighters in defense of the *Anjoman*. The small nucleus of social democratic M. Gh. intervened in this way not only in Tabriz, but through Tabriz established the framework for an alternate leadership on a national scale for the revolution.

Following the formation of the *Anjoman* and *Majahedeen* in Tabriz, these organs appeared in other cities and towns. The Teheran leadership resisted giving them recognition—they said they did not want "violence"—but eventually under the pressure of mass demonstrations the *Majles* accepted the formation of local *Anjomans* as an integral part of the constitutional regime. These *Anjomans* came to represent the organs of self-rule for the nationalities. In Azerbaijan they united to form the *Majles Melli* (national parliament). The Teheran bourgeois leadership did not welcome this development. Its insistence on including the Islamic *Shiah* sect as the official religion of the country did not help to win over the Kurds and Baluchis, who adhered to the *Sunni* sect of Islam, to revolution. They also discouraged the women, who had on numerous occasions participated in the struggle.

The year 1907 was marked by numerous political confrontations between the monarchy and the revolution. The first part of the year was a period of retreat for the monarchy. Mass mobilizations in Tabriz, followed by demonstrations in other towns, forced the hesitating *Majles* to ratify a bourgeois democratic constitution, over the

## **Tabriz followed the example of the soviets of workers in Russia . . .**

objections of the monarchy and some sections of the *ulema*. They also forced the government to dismiss such foreign agents as Neus from the directorship of the country's customs office. The monarchy's practice of handing over land and taxation privileges to its appointees in the provinces was outlawed. Functions of the central state were being taken over by the *Anjomans*. The Tabriz *Anjoman* extracted from the reluctant *Majles* the right to arm and defend the city in the face of the central government's inability to fend off the raid that one of the tribes had earlier made. This legalization of the armed struggle enabled the M. Gh. to turn the whole city into a military training ground. Every day after political agitation by *Mashroote* (constitutionalist) speakers and songs by schoolchildren—on themes of freedom, independence, unity of Iran—the *Mujahedeen* marched off for military training. Other towns, especially the ones in the north, followed the example of Tabriz. And Tabriz followed the example of the soviets of workers in Russia.

On the anniversary of the shah's constitutional decree a victory celebration in Teheran attracted half a million people. But this was to be a turning point. The mounting mass movement accelerated the backward retreat of the Teheran leadership. The frightened bourgeoisie tried to contain the masses, and the counterrevolution went on the offensive. It mobilized the courtiers, their servants and thousands of other parasites around the court. The shah had stopped paying the salaries of those serving in the *Majles*, claiming that they had reduced the court budget. With the help of the *ulema* who had defected to

the monarchy the counterrevolution counterposed the Islamic religion to *Mashroote* and nationalism.

The 1907 treaty between Britain and Russia, dividing the country and making it virtually a colony of the two powers, was announced on August 3. This announcement boosted the morale of the counterrevolutionary forces. In December a mass counterrevolutionary camp-in was organized in the central square of Teheran around the slogan of "Islam, not *Mashroote*." It threatened the existence of the *Majles*.

Tabriz took the lead in mobilizing the whole country in defense of the revolution. The Tabriz *Mujahedeen* declared, "if *Mashroote* is endangered we will separate Azerbaijan from Iran." Armed detachments began to move on Teheran. The shah retreated and asked his followers to end their camp-in. But in the following six months the shah continued with his counterrevolutionary thrusts, each time retreating under the pressure of mass mobilizations. Azerbaijani soldiers in Teheran were ordered by the Tabriz *Anjoman* not to obey orders that were against *Mashroote* and *Majles*. But the Teheran leadership did not take advantage of these mobilizations: it discouraged the *Mujahedeen* in Teheran from mobilizing to defend the *Majles* and it relied on the shah's promises. The shah used the time to his advantage.

The Iranian army had become unreliable. Under the advice of the imperialist powers the shah consented to use the Czar's infamous cossacks' brigade, which had been stationed in Teheran for some years at the service of the court. In 3 Teer of 1908 they struck. The *Majles* was bombarded, revolutionary *Mashroote* leaders were arrested and executed, the constitution was annulled. The revolution was suppressed everywhere except in a section of Tabriz.

In Tabriz, under the leadership of Sattar-khan, a plebian *Mujaheed*, resistance developed. The shah organized all the armies he could and sent them against Tabriz. They cut the food supplies to the city, and tried to starve the population. Tabriz was surrounded for eleven months, but the resistance was not broken! Revolutionary working-class fighters, veterans of the 1905 revolution came from as far as the Caucuses to join the revolution. They brought their political and military ammunition with them. They set up workshops to build hand grenades, a weapon which was unfamiliar to the shah's soldiers.

As the shah's invading armies were defeated in Tabriz, the resistance grew and spread to other parts of the country. The *Mujahedeen* appeared again in other cities, especially in the north. Those counterrevolutionary elements which had aligned themselves with the shah abandoned him, and some even voiced their support for *Mashroote*. Armed detachments began to organize, and to move onto Teheran.

Fearing a victorious revolution on their southern borders, the Czarist army entered Azerbaijan in April 1909 and started to dismantle the organs of revolution, massacring the militants in Azerbaijan. The *Mujahedeen* either perished in unequal fights with the Russians or were forced to flee from the city. The Russian army hanged the leaders of the revolution in the public square.

The armed detachments composed of *Mujahedeen* from the north and tribal elements from the south were on the move to Teheran before the Russians entered Azerbaijan. They continued on, but with diminished momentum, and with the aristocratic and tribal heads gaining control of the leadership. When they entered Teheran the shah fled to the Russian Embassy, and was automatically dethroned.

Teheran was not occupied by the Russians. But under the tutelage of the Russian and British representatives, and independently of the *Anjomans* or *Mujahedeen*, the bourgeoisie joined with the aristocracy, courtiers, land-owners and some tribal heads to form a coalition government. It installed the son of the deposed king as the new monarch, and declared itself a constitutional government based on a written constitution. With the Russian army's intervention, and suffocation of Azerbaijan, the national bourgeoisie were able to betray the revolution with impunity.

The new government turned around and suppressed the *Anjomans* and *Mujahedeen*. In one of the armed conflicts between the *Mujahedeen* and the forces of the new regime Sattar-khan was fatally wounded. The liberal bourgeoisie thus differentiated itself from the plebian masses whose fighting spirit Sattar-khan—an illiterate Azerbaijani who could not speak Persian—represented. The man in charge of this military counterrevolution was Gavam, a cousin of Mossadegh. Over the years both men have played important roles in Iranian bourgeois politics.

Soon after the central government was appointing the very same men who had served the old shah as the governors and heads of departments in Azerbaijan. These were the very same individuals who had attempted to crush the Tabriz resistance but returned to Teheran humiliated in their defeat. Now, using the Russian boot as well as the method of coopting the revolution, they found success at last.

The national bourgeoisie who began its political career with begging for a constitution at the British Embassy, took fright at the mass nationalist movement, drew back, and ended up suppressing the revolutionary organs of the revolution in alliance with the old possessing classes. It succeeded because this time the Russian troops fully crushed the revolutionary nucleus of social democratic leadership in Azerbaijan.

The formation of the coalition government in Teheran assured ascendancy of the Persian bourgeoisie above the bourgeoisie of the other nationalities. In the defeat of the revolution on the one hand, and the weakening of the monarchy on the other, the Persian bourgeoisie found a privileged position for itself. As the Persian bourgeoisie bowed meekly to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and sought to form an economic base for itself, the bourgeoisie of Azerbaijan bowed meekly to the Persian bourgeoisie. During the rise of the first revolution both bourgeoisies had united to oppose the revolutionary movement, both feared the rise of the downtrodden, and both opposed the guns in the hands of the *Mujahedeen*, who increasingly came from the ranks of the toilers. Both bourgeoisies had interest in the land, and were consequently opposed to the emancipation of the peasantry. As far back as 1906, when the social democratic Underground Center M. Gh. proposed a land reform program in the Tabriz *Anjoman*, these same bourgeois elements vetoed the essential measure. Although the Tabriz resistance did receive help from the peasantry during the 1908 resistance, the absence of a working class on a national scale prevented the development of a strong force that would fight for the implementation of a land distribution program, and would win the peasantry to the revolution on a massive scale.

The first Iranian revolution took on the form of a nationalist movement, and developed to an extent that it posed the question of state power in the interests of the nascent proletariat and its allies among the rural poor and urban plebian masses. The frightened possessing

classes in the country, as well as the imperialist powers, intervened to crush the revolution. Yet the revolution made impressive gains, such as the introduction of a bourgeois democratic constitution, and it went as far as smashing the shah militarily. Its defeat meant the defeat of the toilers and the oppressed masses, whose development for liberation expressed itself in the nationalist movement. The revolution's political base was Tabriz, in the Azerbaijani region, its most militant leaders were members

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### The revolution's most militant leaders were members of Iran's oppressed nationalities . . .

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of Iran's oppressed nationalities, and it projected itself as a force for dramatically changing the lot of all oppressed peoples. But these forms of nationalism were to unfold differently in the 1940s.

The Bolshevik Revolution had a significant impact on Iran. Trotsky, then Commissar of Foreign Affairs, declared in 1918 that the Bolshevik government unilaterally annulled all the treaties that Czarist Russia had imposed on Iran, and ordered the evacuation of the country by the Russian troops. This act of revolutionary honesty eliminated the yoke of Russian imperialism with one swoop from Iran, and gained the sympathy of the people.

British imperialism moved in to fill the vacuum. They negotiated a secret treaty in 1919 with the central government, which in effect made the country a colony. Only a mass nationalist movement forced the government to annul the 1919 treaty.

Local uprisings against the central government took place in Azerbaijan and Khorasan. A republic was even established in Gilan. The creation of this republic was fostered by the presence of the Red Army, which entered Gilan temporarily while chasing British and white Russian troops. The Gilan Republic was called a soviet republic (in imitation of the republics of the Soviet Union) but there were antagonistic class forces in its leadership. The newly formed Communist Party of Iran tried to share power with a petty-bourgeois leadership; it proved to be catastrophic.

All of these uprisings proved short lived. They also lacked the mass character of the *Mashroote* revolution. The central government was able—often using the traditional despotic methods—to assassinate the leaders. The defeat of Iran's first revolution also lead to the destruction of the *Anjomans* and *Mujahedeen*. The M. Gh. was wiped out, and the young Communist Party was unable to develop a transitional program. These uprisings had a spontaneous character; they had no time to develop a mass base or their own armies, such as the *Mujahedeen* had done. Furthermore, having gone through a revolution, a counterrevolution and a world war, the people were exhausted and confused. During these events foreign troops occupied the country at will, parts of the country became battlegrounds of the Turkish, Russian and British armies, and tribal wars and plunderings continued. But civil war in Russia prevented the workers there from giving significant aid. And the revolution needed time.

British imperialism, in order to prevent the extension of the October Revolution throughout Iran, the Arab world, and the Indian subcontinent began to reverse its policy of favoring a weak Iranian government to one of promoting a strong, centralized state. The Brit-

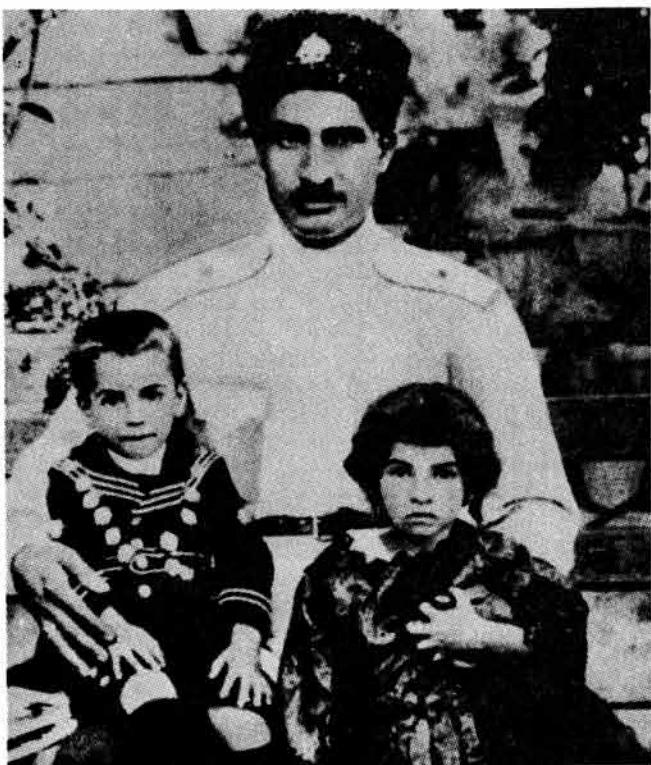
ish sought to use their foothold in Iran to build a base against the Soviet Union, and to do this it needed a more efficient method of exploiting the resources of the country (e. g., oil). Ever since the national bourgeoisie appealed to them from the yard of their Teheran Embassy in 1906, the British had favored a parliamentary system in Iran. From the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the British began to oppose the parliament. They also came to oppose the tendency to decentralized rule of local tribal chieftans whom they had earlier patronized as a part of their divide-and-rule policy. A faithful servant of the shahs and imperialism, General Hassan Arfa wrote in his autobiography, *Under Five Shahs*:

"Then occurred the unforeseen events of 1920—the reappearance of Russia under the guise of the Soviet Union as a great power on Iran's northern frontiers and the quasi-general opposition of the Iranian Nation to the [1919] treaty; the last fact precluding any possibility of having it ratified by any Majles. On the other hand it was obvious that if Iran was abandoned to its own devices, without money or military force and with a weak Central Government, it would become the prey of anarchic forces represented by well-armed predatory tribes and leftist revolutionary elements, and would drift towards Bolshevism and eventually become engulfed in the wave of the Communist advance towards India and the Arab Middle East.

"These considerations led Lord Curzon—whose hands the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, had left free in this matter—envision the coming to power in Iran of a strong Government, friendly to Great Britain but not compromised by the 1919 treaty negotiations, which could be helped to apply piecemeal certain of the stipulations of the treaty after they had been watered down."

General Arfa then describes in detail how the British imperialists proceeded to implement Lord Curzon's plan.

As a part of the British plan for Iran's centralized state



Der Spiegel

Reza Shah in 1921, with present shah on knee.

in 1920 they engineered a coup d'état, replacing the old dynasty with the Reza shah, the current shah's father. The first task in the program of the Reza shah and his imperialist benefactors was the effective subjugation of all other nationalities to the Persians—something that the Persian national bourgeoisie had tried, but been incapable of carrying through. They accomplished this task through the organization of a modern army. Of course, the resistance was stiff and it was not accomplished all at once. The army resorted to massacres. Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis and many tribes of the country were thus subdued. The liberal bourgeoisie applauded all this, but as the victory was assured, the Reza shah turned on them and threw them out of the coalition government.

This ended the period of bourgeois democracy—which had co-existed with Asiatic despotism since the first revolution. Basic freedoms were denied, trade unions were outlawed, the Communist Party was declared illegal. This process facilitated the penetration of the imperialist goods and capital, as well as the plunder of oil resources.

During the twenty-year dictatorship of Reza shah the oppression of the nationalities took varying forms. On one hand the Azerbaijanis were to be assimilated into the Persians—they were told that their language was not really Turkish, but Persian. Possessing classes of Azerbaijan found no difficulty in yielding to such a policy, in fact they welcomed it. On the other hand the Arab population of the country, with their ties to the Arab world and its culture, could not possibly be hoped to be assimilated. The name of the oil-rich province where they resided was changed from Arabistan to Khusistan, an old Persian name. They were discriminated in their own province and the towns were Persianized. General Arfa considered this one of the accomplishments of the Reza shah period. After making a military tour of the province in 1942, he made the following observation about Ahavaz, an old Arab city: "This town had also improved very much since 1936, when I had last seen it. There were many wide asphalted avenues and squares planted with palm trees, and it had lost its Arab character, through the immigration of many Isfahanis." (Isfahan is a central Persian city.)

After the Second World War the nationalism of the oppressed became once more a revolutionary sword that threw the country into a pre-revolutionary situation. Unlike the first revolution—in which the Iranian nationalist movement was combined with the struggles of the nationalities for self-determination—this time the two became separate. First came the movement of the oppressed nationalities for self-determination, which culminated in the creation of workers and farmers governments in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in 1945-46. Then, four years later, came the Iranian nationalist movement for the nationalization of the oil industry.

National oppression served the imperialists' interests. It was a tool to open up the country to more thorough imperialist penetration. At the same time the economic development within these areas was retarded by comparison to that of the Persian areas. The illegality of the nationalities' written languages caused their cultural stagnation, and the resulting illiteracy hurt workers the most. They became the least skilled and lowest paid of the working class. The differentiation increased as the number of modern factories for consumer goods increased, and the oil industry in the south expanded.

The twenty-year rule of the Reza shah consolidated

and legalized national oppression. At the same time the privileges that were granted to the Persian nation at the expense of the oppressed nationalities brought forth Persian chauvinism. The Persian bourgeoisie, which had earlier developed the ideology that the Persian culture and language was superior, now implemented their ideology. The culture of the Persian nationality was elevated and counterposed to the culture of the other nationalities, very much as Russian chauvinism had been used to suppress the variety of nationalities which made up the Czar's kingdom. The culture and the language of the non-Persians were henceforth seen as "alien" elements.

Allied troops entered the country in 1941. Reza shah—who had been flirting with the Germans—went into exile and his son, the present shah, came to the throne. A period of bourgeois democracy opened, and political life was rejuvenated. Political prisoners were freed; the working class entered national politics as a militant force.

A heterogeneous group, consisting of ex-members of the then defunct Communist Party, social democrats and liberals, formed the pro-Soviet Tudeh [Mass] Party based on a minimum reformist program. Being the only party on the left, it attracted large numbers of intellectuals and workers, and became a mass party. The Tudeh Party was not the political and organizational continuity of

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### **The reformist program of the Tudeh Party failed to attract some old communists . . .**

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the Iranian Communist Party, whose leaders, living in exile in the Soviet Union, had perished under Stalin in the thirties. Iran's Communist Party had been thus destroyed.

The reformist program of Tudeh Party failed to attract some of the old communists. In particular, Jafar Peeshavari, who had been a leader of the Communist Party, and had been freed from the shah's prison in 1941, did not join Tudeh. He remained independent until 1944, when he organized the Ferge Democrat (Democratic League) in Azerbaijan. The program of the Ferge was an Azerbaijani nationalist program. It called for national autonomy within Iran, including the right to a separate armed force, the revival of Anjomans, and the legalization of the Turkish language in Azerbaijan. The Tudeh Party had refused to raise the latter demand. Ferge attracted Tudeh members in Azerbaijan until the latter dissolved its branches, and Ferge became the only political tendency with a base in the working class in Azerbaijan. This was a significant development, because ever since the fall of Reza shah, workers and peasants' struggles were on the rise in Iran, especially in Azerbaijan.

The Ferge program did not call for a socialist revolution. But workers and peasants, as well as the ruling class itself, viewed it as a bolshevik organization. Its central leadership was working class, under the influence of Stalinism. Ferge declared itself a multi-class organization based on a minimum program. This was also true of the Tudeh Party. The fundamental difference between the two was that Ferge had a nationalist program.

In its struggle to fulfill its program Ferge came into conflict with the shah's state machinery. Ferge organized *Anjoman* and *Fedayeen*, in the tradition of the first revolution. These were primarily composed of workers and peasants. Three months after its founding Ferge started an insurrection which led to the collapse of the shah's

army—without any major battles—in Azerbaijan on December 12, 1944. The *Fedayeen* took over Azerbaijan and a workers and farmers government was established under the leadership of Peeshavari.

Ferge's rapid success in gaining the leadership of the Azerbaijani revolutionary movement was due primarily to three factors: the emergence of the working class in Azerbaijan, the presence of the Soviet troops there because of the war, and the anti-nationalist character of the possessing class of Azerbaijan, i.e., their refusal to struggle against the Persian domination and the imperialists.

When Ferge took power it instituted labor laws beneficial to the workers. It distributed the lands of big absentee landlords, without compensation. It introduced universal suffrage for both men and women. It took steps to revive the culture and language of Azerbaijan, introducing textbooks in the native Turkish language. All these reforms were being carried out for the first time. Of course, the influence of the Soviet system and the links with Soviet Azerbaijan facilitated the process.

Two months after the victorious insurrection in Azerbaijan, the shah's garrison in Kurdistan was disarmed and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan declared a Kurdish republic under the leadership of Gazi Mohammad. Later Mustafa Barzani came with his tribe from Iraq and joined the republic. The first step in the aspiration of the Kurdish people for national independence became realized.

The example of the Azerbaijan and Kurdish uprisings began to spread. Peasants and workers movements engulfed the whole country, sparking movements among other nationalities, especially the Arabs. The workers movement witnessed sharp and militant struggles. The Tudeh Party became a major obstacle in those struggles. Its class-collaborationist program led to the defeat of strikes, and consequent demoralization.

In August 1946 the papers reported a spontaneous strike involving 100,000 workers in the oil-rich province of Khusistan. The workers demanded an end to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's continual interference in the internal affairs of the country, and also demanded the dismissal of the governor of the province. This strike, the largest in the history of the country, directly posed the question of who shall rule, and opposed the workers to both imperialism and their own bourgeoisie. The fight for national liberation went hand in hand with opposition to the shah. They were asserting their right to dismiss—and consequently to appoint—administrators. The workers were showing their deep opposition to homegrown oppression as well as foreign domination.

These developments were all the more significant because after the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan uprisings the shah's prime minister took office on the basis of a demagogic, but leftist-sounding program. His program included a platform of "friendship" with the Soviet Union. As a consequence, the Tudeh Party leadership, which was in the forefront of the Iranian workers movement, joined with the government in opposing the uprisings of the workers, unemployed and peasants. The government sent the army to crush the striking oil workers—opening fire on the workers, killing 49 and wounding hundreds. But the strike continued until Tudeh leaders went from Teheran and used their authority to break the strike. After this exhibition of their counterrevolutionary capacity, the Tudeh Party was given three portfolios in Gavam's government. With their help the popular front government defused the class struggle in the rest of the country, isolating Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Meanwhile the shah made preparations to move

against those revolutions. Earlier events had paved the way, and they had obtained Stalin's agreement before the Soviet troops left Iran.

During the Second World War Soviet troops had occupied the northern section of Iran. But Stalin did not see these troops as a mechanism to help the growth of the revolutionary forces within Iran. Instead he pursued a strategy of using their presence in order to pressure Iran to form a joint oil company to exploit the unexploited oil resources in the northern part of the country. The Tudeh Party used its influence within the mass movement to lobby for it both within and outside the *Majles*. In fact this was the object of the first public demonstration that the Tudeh Party organized.

People viewed the Soviet demand for the oil agreement as they had viewed the British oil concessions obtained early in the century. It went against their national aspirations. Mossadegh, then a deputy in the *Majles*, introduced a bill in 1949 prohibiting the government from negotiating any new oil concessions so long as foreign troops were still present in the country.

In 1946, in order to defeat the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan revolutions Gavam then dangled the oil concession in front of the shortsighted eyes of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The deal was made and publicly announced that after the departure of the Soviet troops the government would propose

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### **In the spring of 1946 the class struggle was on the rise throughout the country . . .**

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that the *Majles* ratify the oil agreement. Another clause in the agreement stated both governments agreed that the Azerbaijan "problem" would be solved peacefully, according to the "Iranian laws." This meant Stalin had assured the shah that not only would he refuse to defend the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan revolutions against attack, but he would also strongly counsel the Azerbaijan leadership to capitulate. Soviet troops departed in June 1946.

The shah and his ministers ruled out direct military intervention by the shah's troops because they were well aware of the ineffectiveness of their army in a revolutionary war. The history of the Tabriz resistance and the fate of a shah forty years earlier were well known. Furthermore, in the spring of 1946 the class struggle was on the rise throughout the country. Any military move by the government would certainly spark a civil war in the entire country. So they waited it out and worked to defuse the class struggle. And within this strategy Stalin and the Tudeh Party, which followed Stalin's political leadership, became accomplices.

By fall of 1946 the shah's government felt that the balance of the class forces had begun to shift in its favor. They began to move against the cadres of the Tudeh Party, intimidating and imprisoning the most militant elements. Still later they forced the three Tudeh ministers to resign from the government.

By November the military began to move against Azerbaijan. They used the pretext that to carry out the elections for the new *Majles*—which were to ratify the oil agreement with the Soviet Union—the army had to be present in all provinces of the country. The Ferge agreed. But when the army moved to the border town, Zanjan, the landlords and the bourgeois elements came along and began victimizing the workers and peasants, and mas-

sacrificing the *Fedayeen*. The news caused a reaction throughout Azerbaijan, and a mass mobilization for defense began.

In Azerbaijan the mass movement in opposition to the shah's invasion included workers, peasants and women. They held rallies in towns and villages in the name of defense of their homeland, Azerbaijan. That nationalist slogan meant the defense of the social gains already achieved. They wanted to be armed and to join the militia. Women's declarations pointed to the oppression of women throughout Iran. The Azerbaijan women saw their fight as a fight for the liberation of all women in Iran. There was confidence that the defeat of the shah's military would bring the liberation of all Iran. Jafar Peeshavari, leader of the Azerbaijan Ferge, in speech after speech, reiterated the will of Azerbaijan to fight the shah's army and to defeat the shah as had the forces of the first revolution. These mass mobilizations continued through early December 1946 and the shah's army did not advance any further than Zanjan. On December 11, workers unions joined the Ferge in a call for a revolutionary war. On December 12 a sharp and sudden turn of policy came.

Ferge's newspaper appeared with the startling statement that the people should "welcome" the shah's army into Azerbaijan! Ferge commanders were ordered to surrender to the shah's officers and the mobilization for defense was halted. No formal body of Ferge ever made the decision to capitulate, and Peeshavari's name did not even appear in the December 12 statement. Orders for the capitulation had come from Stalin. Stalin, using the authority of the Bolshevik Revolution, and his agents, succeeded in disrupting the internal life of the Ferge and imposed his bureaucratic will on Azerbaijan. Ironically, December 12 was the first anniversary of the Ferge insurrection. On that day the planned celebrations turned into the massacre of the most militant workers and peasants.

Later, when they started to burn the Turkish language books and the executions became legal, imprisonment and exile of the militant Azerbaijani became widespread. The re-imposition of bourgeois rule took the form of fierce national oppression. And so the shah, with the help of Stalin, succeeded in dismantling the revolutionary government in Azerbaijan.

The fate of Kurdistan was essentially no different. After the fall of Azerbaijan, the Kurdish republic was completely isolated. It quickly fell. There was, however, one exception. The Barzani tribe did not surrender, but retreated to Iraq. But the British puppet regime opposed their entry there. Then, under the leadership of Mullah Mustafa, they fought their way back through Iran, and through the regiments of the shah's army to the Soviet Union. This heroic fight kept Kurdish nationalism aflame among the Kurdish people of Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. More than a decade later, when the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown, the government invited them to come back to Iraq and live. The Kurdish people, living as an oppressed nationality in these several countries, are continuing their fight for full self-determination.

The defeat of the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan revolutions resulted in demoralization and confusion, enabling the central government to consolidate its rule. The number of working class strikes dropped to almost zero. The elections were rigged and the new *Majles* refused to ratify the oil agreement that Gavam had worked out with Stalin. By 1948 the Tudeh Party was declared illegal. Imperialist economic, military, and political penetration intensified. For the first time American advisors came to reorganize and re-equip the shah's army. The liberal

bourgeoisie, having served its usefulness, was again thrown out of the government.

The defeat of the oppressed nationalities strengthened Persian chauvinism, and the intimidation and discrimination against the other nationalities became widespread. All over the country schools were forced to use *only* Persian textbooks, and were instructed to speak Persian exclusively in the classrooms. The psychological oppression resulting from being forced to learn a foreign language without first mastering one's native language was a deliberate and calculated attempt to destroy the nationalist identity and to suffocate any nationalist cultural development. It was an attempt to prevent any challenge to the authority of the centralized bourgeois state. And it was most damaging to the working class of the oppressed nationalities. The implications of this policy, including the relative increase of illiteracy, pushed those workers to the lowest levels of economic life. To the Persian ruling class, the call for freedom of languages became identified with communism—with some justification. Such a call became a *form* of the class struggle.

The defeat that the revolutionary movement suffered in 1946 was overcome within four years. Once again the revolutionary movement appeared as a nationalist movement, this time as an all-Iranian nationalist movement, similar to the antitobacco movement which arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As before, the movement was in opposition to the much-hated British imperialism. Leadership of this movement fell into the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie, by default. Those sympathetic to Stalinism had discredited themselves by insisting that the northern oil concession be handed over to the Soviet Union. They had no program relating to the nationalist movement, except a tendency to downgrade it. The defeat in 1946 isolated them, demoralized the cadre, and enabled the regime to suppress the Tudeh Party. Incapable of evaluating their defeats, they were not even capable of organizing a movement to defend their own democratic rights.

Despite the victory that it had scored against the revolution, the regime was not able to consolidate itself. In opposition to the course that the regime was following, a movement began for political democracy—one of the unsatisfied demands of the first revolution. Each small gain in this sphere widened the movement, and soon other demands were posed, deepening the struggle.

This national liberation movement crystallized around the slogan of the nationalization of oil. Nationalization meant the expulsion of the British interests as well as breaking the chain of economic and political oppression which they imposed. As the movement progressed, the monarchy, as the native base of imperialism, became threatened. The country's class structure was threatened by the democratic demand of the masses.

All these struggles, starting with the one for political democracy and the struggle for the nationalization of oil, coincided with the immediate and historic struggles of the proletariat. While there was no objective basis for the national bourgeoisie to assume leadership of the movement, there were subjective factors: the lack of a bolshevik party and the previous Stalinist betrayal. On the other hand, Mohammad Mossadegh, a liberal bourgeois politician, had, over the years, gained a reputation as a nationalist leader who fought for democracy and defended the interests of the Iranian people. When the movement revived in the early 1950s Mossadegh and his co-thinkers were looked to for leadership. The national bourgeoisie feared the independent mobilizations of the masses. But



Kurdish leader Barzani.

Syagma

even the timid fight around democratic demands which the bourgeoisie was prepared to lead lept over the narrow barriers of reformism.

Mossadegh's first major political move was to lead a procession of notables to the shah's palace to seek sanctuary there and to ask the government to pledge nonintervention in the coming *Majles* elections. Mossadegh was thus following in the tradition of his bourgeois forerunners who went, in the early twentieth century, to the British Embassy to ask for their intercession on the question of an Iranian constitution. Mossadegh's procession to the shah's palace gave birth to the Jebhe Melli (National Front), a loose liberal bourgeois formation.

Under mass pressure the regime annulled the rigged election, and, in the new elections, Mossadegh and some others from Jebhe Melli were elected to the *Majles*. The masses viewed this as a victory, and it, in turn, helped the growth of the opposition movement.

Within two years the movement developed to such a scale that the massive demonstrations for the nationalization of oil forced the generally reactionary *Majles* to ratify Mossadegh's bill for nationalization. This was seen as a victory by the masses against national oppression—it inspired them. Almost immediately after this the oil workers went on strike over economic demands. The spectre of the combined national liberation struggle and the struggle of the proletariat so frightened the regime that they felt compelled to bring Mossadegh forward as the new prime minister. Mossadegh, whose Jebhe Melli group in the *Majles* was a tiny minority—and always at odds with the others—was elected to premiership with a unanimous vote. The shah promptly and formally endorsed the decision.

Mossadegh's rise to the head of the state was viewed by the masses as a victory. They saw this government as their own, and went to sacrifice their lives for it when it came under attack. When the imperialists imposed a blockade on the marketing and sale of the nationalized oil, the masses understood the source of the economic scarcity imposed by the blockade, and accepted it as a part of the national struggle. This blockade lasted for two years.

The major confrontation took place in July 1952, when the shah appointed Gavam once again as the new prime minister, in order to "solve" the oil "crisis." Mossadegh resigned and chose to react by merely staying at home. Jebhe Melli deputies likewise refrained from calling on the

masses to defend their government. Instead they engaged in parliamentary maneuvers, with occasional visits to the shah, trying to persuade him to change his mind by warning him about the possibility of revolution.

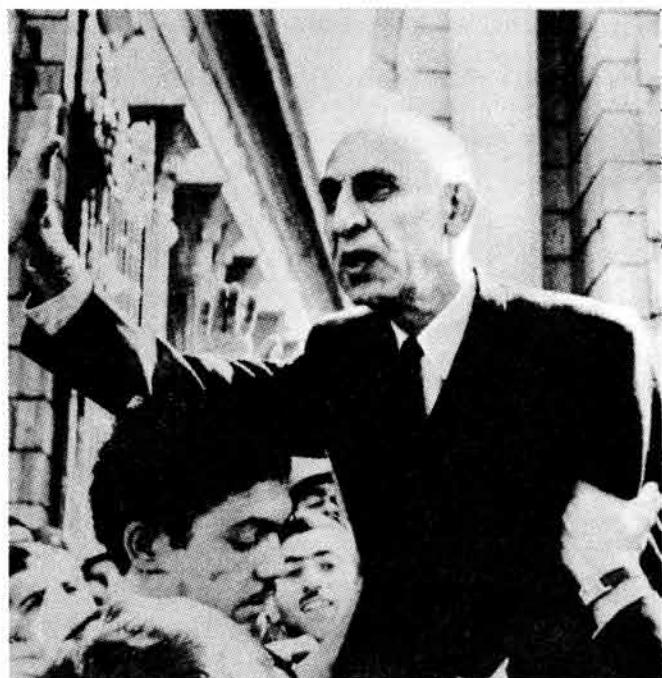
But, on the other hand, people started going into the streets from the moment Mossadegh resigned, demanding his reinstatement. After four days of such political agitation all over the country, the major confrontation took place in Teheran on the 30th of Teer (July 1952). Unarmed masses confronted the army. Hundreds were killed, but the persistence of the people affected the army. Military discipline began to crack and even some of the officers joined the demonstrating population. The shah retreated, Gavam was dumped, and Mossadegh reinstated as prime minister. For a few days the police did not dare to show up in town, and such things as directing traffic were taken over by the youth. In embryonic form the *Anjomans* began to appear in some districts. With proper leadership a situation of dual power might have begun to develop. However, this development was frustrated by the Jebhe Melli leadership. They told people to go to their homes and, later, used the police to forcibly disperse those who stayed. Thus Mossadegh the "democrat" revealed just how far his belief in democracy would stretch.

Mossadegh's overthrow took place in August 1953, thirteen months after the 30th of Teer uprising. The conduct of the national bourgeois leadership has proved to the masses that the bourgeois government was not their government. After having sacrificed so much for it, the masses were unwilling to give their lives in order that the same police, military, landowners and capitalists rule over them. When the CIA-engineered coup came in 1953 the masses did not pour into the streets to defend Mossadegh. And no other party existed to organize and lead the masses against the reaction, as the Bolsheviks had fought against Kornilov during the Kerensky government in Russia in 1917. On the day of the coup people looked to the Tudeh Party to call them into action and Tudeh militants waited for the orders from the central committee. But the orders never came.

The Tudeh Party, while still an illegal organization, was able to operate more or less openly because of the generally democratic atmosphere that the movement had created. But from the inception of the struggle for the nationalization of oil, it had taken an ultraleft, sectarian attitude toward the movement. Its ultraleftism was partly due to the turn the Soviet bureaucracy had taken in reaction to the initiation of the cold war by American imperialism. It was also a cover for their opposition to the nationalist movement, and for their betrayal of the 1946 revolution. They called Mossadegh an agent of American imperialism, and concluded that a movement under such leadership could not be progressive. They identified the leadership with the *movement* and abstained from the struggle when the movement for the nationalization of the oil industry developed. The Tudeh Party taught its cadre that nationalism in the colonial world was a reactionary phenomenon. They called for "internationalism."

They continued to tie themselves to the narrow interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy. They did not call for the nationalization of *all* Iranian oil, but simply that under the domination of Britain, in the south. They were aware of Stalin's continuing interest in the northern oil, and wanted to reserve it for him. Their opposition to the nationalist movement was thus a recognition of the anti-bureaucratic edge of that movement.

The Tudeh Party's refusal to support the nationalist movement, which was making strikes against the imperial-



Der Spiegel

Mohammed Mossadegh before his overthrow.

ist interests in the country, precluded the possibility of their coming to the leadership. It also significantly undermined the development of the struggle, as the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to victoriously lead the national liberation struggle became increasingly clear, the other alternative—a working class leadership—became so much more obvious. Especially after the 30th of Teer, young students and workers began to look toward and join, the Tudeh Party under the mistaken assumption that it was a revolutionary working-class party. Under the pressure of the masses, the leadership changed its line and gave verbal support to the nationalization of oil throughout the *entire* country. Tudeh militants participated in specific actions. But the leadership developed no transitional program relating the ongoing struggle to the struggle for the socialist revolution.

The party was unable to see that the class struggle was presenting itself in the form of a nationalist struggle. Consequently, when the struggle of workers as workers began to develop, the Tudeh Party had no perspective of how to link up these two aspects of the class struggle. They kept the struggle artificially separated, thus preventing the possibility of the proletariat from exposing and discrediting the bourgeois leadership in the nationalist movement and winning the leadership for the working class forces. The Tudeh Party did not fight for, or even propose, a program for the emancipation of the peasantry. Wherever the peasants started to radicalize, the leadership of the Tudeh Party opposed it. The same was true in the case of the oppressed nationalities.

The August 1953 defeat, just like the December 1946 defeat, was inflicted upon the revolution without a battle. The gains of the revolution were once again wiped out. The shah's military dictatorship consolidated itself and the revolutionists were imprisoned or executed by the thousands. The constitution was trampled upon, workers organizations were eliminated, and the oil was, in effect, denationalized and parceled out among the various imperialist powers, with the U.S. monopolies getting the lion's share. □