

## WORLD SCENE

## IRAN — THE PEOPLE STAND UP

One of the darkest and most barbaric regimes the world has seen has at long last bitten the dust — the Shah has fallen! "New Age", along with many millions of oppressed people in all corners of the earth, and along with world progressive opinion, welcomes this event as a great encouragement to the world's people. The tremendous mass struggles of recent weeks demonstrate yet again the truth that "where there is oppression, there is resistance, and the greater the oppression, the greater the resistance."

In the following article, we take a look at the background to the Iranian revolution, and assess what factors are likely to affect its future course.

The people and the superpowers

The most fundamental question that now has to be faced in Iran is not who is or is not a Muslim, or even who is or is not prepared to talk of socialism. The overriding question is: What forces are or are not making a stand in favour of national independence?

For it is only through getting rid of interference and control by imperialism, above all by the two superpowers, that the gains that have been made in recent weeks can be retained.

US booted out — good riddance!

The Shah's regime was created by the US, who placed it in power in 1953 when they stage-managed a coup against the nationalist regime of Mossadegh. The US and its allies, such as Britain, have kept it armed. In addition, they have done all they could to prune and shape its economy to their interests, above all as a source of oil. And they have used it as a strategic base against the extension of the influence of their rivals the Soviet social-imperialists, and against the Arab and other national movements in the area (including particularly the Palestinian resistance).

Every top-ranking army officer in the Shah's army used to be vetted by the CIA. Even administrators of factories and state farms were often retired army officers. The hated SAVAK political police penetrated every area of social life. It worked hand-in-glove with the intelligence services of the US and such US hangers-on as Israel, South Africa and Britain. It was in such ways that the US and its allies sustained a terrorist police state in Iran.

The struggle for even the most elementary democratic rights thus constantly raised the central question of opposition to superpower domination. The collapse of the senior army command has now consequently also been accompanied by a mass exodus of US military and semi-military personnel, who are scurrying out like rats deserting a sinking ship.

Eight of the most senior and most notorious and hated military top-brass have now been executed and general rejoicing, and many others are facing trial, or have been retired. It is perfectly

clear in the minds of the Iranian people that these victories against the Shah regime are inseparably bound up with their successes in the struggle against US imperialism.

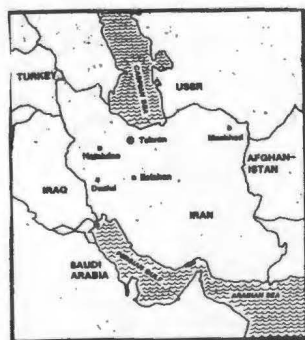
The danger from the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union has for some time been trying to elbow its way into the plunder of Iran's natural resources. It has provided Iran with useful 'aid' such as gas-pipelines (running, of course, straight into the Soviet Union!). Repayment of such 'aid' is in the form of long-term agreements for the supply of gas at very low prices (much of which is subsequently re-sold by the Soviet Union to Eastern and Western Europe at very high prices!).

Alongside such peaceful and 'friendly' methods of achieving influence, the Soviet Union is, like any imperialism, also always on the look-out for a chance to 'divide-and-rule'. There are plenty of opportunities for this in Iran, where the Shah regime's vicious national oppression, based on Farsi chauvinism, has left a legacy of bitterness among the Kurds, Baluchis and other minority nationalities in Iran.

The Soviet Union aims to take advantage of the justified resentment of these minorities, which it would dearly love to twist to its own interests. For instance, the Soviet Union aims to rig up a secessionist state of Baluchistan (comprised of territory wrested from Iran and Pakistan) under Soviet domination. Now that neighbouring Afghanistan has become a Soviet puppet, the military feasibility of such a venture is increasing day by day.

If the Soviet Union brought this off, it would at last have access to the Indian Ocean, and would thus be able to dominate the oil route that keeps the wheels of Europe turning. (And whichever of the two superpowers can dominate Europe can dominate the whole world.)



Iran and its neighbours

If the stakes are raised and an attempt is made to gobble up the whole (or at least a very large part) of Iran, then the Soviet Union has an army of invasion (including a Persian-speaking division) waiting across the vulnerable 14,000 mile Soviet-Iranian border.

The Iranian, like the Indo-Chinese and other people before them, are showing that the US giant has feet of clay. But the Soviet new Tsars are now more capable of grinding down third world countries than the waning giant of the West. In the long run, it will be in the Soviet social-imperialists that Iranian independence will face its most deadly enemy.

Standpoint of the various political forces towards the superpowers

The revolutionary religious leadership, represented above all by Ayatollah Khomeiny, has in general taken a stand against domination by either superpower. It is for this reason that it has been enjoying the support of those Iranian revolutionaries who have the firmest grasp of the need for national independence.

For, if the religious leaders are to struggle for the realisation of their ideals of a just society, then they must clear certain obstacles out of their way. And these obstacles are the same as those which lie in the way of proletarian revolutionary forces in Iran; namely, the forces of reaction aligned with the superpowers against the demands of the masses.

There are encouraging signs that the Ayatollah (whose government has announced it will supply no oil to Israel or South Africa) is making the US jumpy. One US senator, for instance, has compared the Ayatollah's book to "Mein Kampf"! Likewise the British imperialist press has sought to portray the religious revolutionaries as dark feudal forces. At the same time, the religious leaders have little cause to draw close to the Soviet Union, despite the latter's new 'support' for them (after many years of hostility).

Those nationalists who adopt a patriotic stand of a more secular kind tend to rally round the idea of 'parliamentary democracy'. These people have something to offer those in Iran who have misgivings about some of the features of a purely theocratic state.

The most consistent opponents of the superpowers and defenders of national independence are the proletarian revolutionaries organised in the Revolutionary Organisation of the Tudeh Party (Red Star) and other such Marxist-Leninist organisations (the ROTP is of course not to be confused with the revisionist Tudeh Party, Moscow's chief agent in Iran). In the long run, it will be the development of such revolutionary leadership that will be the crucial factor in the fate of the Iranian revolution.

Besides the ROTP and other such Marxist-Leninist organisations, there are many others which deserve great respect as genuine revolutionary organisations which have played a heroic role in the successful struggle against the Shah regime. For instance, the Muslim guerillas, the Mujahedeen, are, in addition to this fine record, quite clear on the danger posed by the Soviet Union.

The secular guerilla groups known as the Fedayeen share a fine record of struggle, and in general adopt an anti-revisionist stance. However, they are not clear on the imperialist nature of the Soviet threat. This political weakness could prove serious in coming months. For, while it is true that, as a long-term strategic aim, people's armed forces must be formed if the revolution is to advance, their formation must be based on sound politicisation of the masses. In addition, the call for people's armed forces must not take place in opposition to the new regime's attempts to consolidate its leadership over the armed forces.

There is a danger of ultra-left demands from the Fedayeen constituting a cover for disruption of the country's national defences against the Soviet Union at a critical juncture. Revolutionaries in Iran have the task of handling this complicated situation correctly. "New Age" hopes to give continuing coverage in future issues on the situation that is unfolding before the revolutionary left in Iran.

Current tasks

The major task now confronting the Iranian revolution is, then, the consolidation of Iran's newly-won and fragile independence, and to resist interference from both superpowers, particularly the Soviet Union.

Revolutionary work among the armed forces will continue to be very important. This is the only way to prepare to meet the danger of an attempted comeback by the overthrown reactionary forces. For until the scope for action by any remaining diehards is decisively restricted, they will continue to constitute a threat. Such people would have no hesitation in attempting to climb back to power over a million dead bodies as the armed forces in Indonesia did in 1965.

At the same time revolutionary work among the armed forces also has the task of sounding the alarm about Soviet intentions.

In this complicated struggle to safeguard national independence, the fact that the new Islamic government's position is based on mass revolutionary struggle currently provides the best insurance against its being transformed into an instrument in the intrigues of one or other superpower. The revolutionary heroism that has been displayed, and the breadth of mobilisation of the masses and their growing politicisation, along with the powerful leading role that has been played by the Iranian proletariat, make the Iranian revolution a tremendous asset to the peoples of the whole world who are fighting for freedom.

The more the masses in their millions take their life in their hands and struggle as the Iranian people are today, then the harder it will be for imperialism to stomp around the world continuing its career of oppression, creating tension and the threat of world war.