

GWS

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To Members of the United Secretariat

March 29, 1979

Dear Comrades,

Attached is the draft resolution on Iran to be discussed and voted on at the March 31-April 4 meeting of the United Secretariat.

Comradely,

Stateman, Duret

Adopted

## Draft Resolution on Iran

The overthrow of the "Shah of Shahs, the Light of the Aryans" and his hated totalitarian regime in one of the most powerful and sustained mass mobilizations in history has deep significance for the workers and toiling masses the world over.

The shah's regime appeared to be impregnable. Washington had built up his army into the fifth strongest in the world. The CIA helped construct SAVAK into a massive secret police network and torture machine whose tentacles reached into every factory, office, university, and neighborhood, and among the oppressed nationalities. Right to the bitter end, every imperialist power supported the Peacock Throne against the Iranian people. Moscow and Peking, each seeking "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, added their support, with Moscow recognizing Khomeini only when it became apparent that the shah was finished. Finally, the shah had control of billions of dollars in oil money and was promising rapid economic and social progress.

The Iranian masses overcame all these obstacles by relying on the immense power of the millions when they mobilize in united action. The toiling people throughout the world can identify with the proletarian methods of struggle--mass demonstrations, general strike, and appeals to the soldiers, mass insurrection--that were vividly displayed on international TV broadcasts. It was this power of the masses that disintegrated the apparently invulnerable power of the shah. If it can be done in Iran, it can be done anywhere.

The experiences of the masses with the dictatorship led wider and wider layers to come to the conclusion that the regime could not be reformed but had to be eliminated.

In the last analysis, the shah's tyranny rested not on its repressive apparatus but on the illusion among the masses that they had to bow to the regime. Once the vast majority of society had shed that illusion through months of determined and self-sacrificing struggle, no amount of arms could stop them. Guns and tanks, no matter how sophisticated, are only as reliable as the hands that fire and run them. And these are the hands of workers and peasants in uniform. When the rank-and-file soldiers came over to the revolution, the resistance of elite units was

broken or neutralized, and the fate of the shah's regime was sealed.

In the course of the year-long mobilization that built up toward the February 9-12 insurrection, the working class came forward as the backbone of the struggle of the broad masses. This reflects a worldwide trend toward proletarian predominance in mass political struggles including in semicolonial countries such as Iran. The workers began to organize committees to lead their struggle; that is, to build proletarian forms of organization, which can point toward the formation of soviets.

The Iranian revolution has demonstrated the key role of democratic and anti-imperialist demands in semicolonial countries. The native Iranian capitalist class, although dominated by imperialism, is nevertheless dependent upon it. There can be no "stage" of capitalist development in Iran independent from imperialism. Neither can the national bourgeoisie carry through the democratic tasks of granting land to the peasants and the wherewithall to exploit it, freedom for the oppressed nationalities or equality for women. To win these and the other social demands of all the toilers, and to embark upon the road of economic construction free of the distortions imposed by imperialist domination, the working class and all the toilers will have to go forward to the establishment of a workers state, breaking the power of imperialism and its Iranian junior partner, and embarking upon the road of the construction of socialism. The dynamic is one of permanent revolution. If this is not done, the bourgeoisie will rebuild its severely damaged state apparatus, once again impose capitalist "law and order," and allow imperialism to reassert its domination, as happened before with the crushing of the constitutional revolution of 1906-11, and the second revolution smashed by the CIA-sponsored coup d'état of 1953. Which of these two paths will be taken will be decided in the struggle between classes over the next months and years. The workers and their allies can win if a mass revolutionary Marxist party can be built in time, in the heat of the struggle itself.

The Iranian revolution is occurring in the context of a shift in the international relationship of class forces

to the detriment of imperialism and in favor of the working class, owing to the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina and the first world-wide recession after the Second World War. While doing everything it could to prop up the shah, Washington was not able to send troops against the Iranian people, given the antiwar sentiment of the American workers, and no other imperialist power was in a position to substitute. An additional element was the possibility of Soviet counteraction. Given the fact of the long common border with the USSR, an imperialist invasion would directly threaten it. That the imperialists were not able to directly intervene to save the shah can only encourage the toiling masses everywhere.

At the same time, the Iranian revolution has dealt a new blow to imperialism, further shifting the relationship of class forces on a world scale. Imperialism counted on the shah's regime and army as a bulwark against the Arab revolution, as a protector of its interests in the oil-rich region, and as a bastion of capitalist stability in the "Northern Tier" of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan on the southern flank of the Soviet Union. The Iranian masses have shattered that bulwark and bastion. Revolutionary Iran is an example for the masses in the whole region. The ruling classes from Morocco through Egypt to Saudi Arabia, from Turkey to Pakistan, tremble at the thought of that example spreading.

The breaking of the shah's yoke has resulted in renewed struggles by Iran's oppressed nationalities for their rights. Comprising 60 percent of the population, they include Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Turkomans, and Arabs, among others. Many of these groups spill over the Iranian borders, and their renewed struggles will directly affect Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union.

The Palestinian people have been given a powerful boost. From a staunch supporter of Israel and its major oil supplier, Iran has become an antagonist of the imperialist beachhead in the Middle East, cutting off oil supplies to it.

The Iranian revolution has already had a political impact on the struggle in southern Africa, with the cutting of oil supplies

to the racist apartheid regime.

Imperialism has responded by attempting to shore up friendly regimes in the area, increasing its military presence, and seeking points of support in Iran to reverse the revolution's anti-imperialist dynamic. All the major imperialist powers have banded together to send emergency aid to the regime in Turkey, itself the scene of renewed struggle. U.S. Defense Secretary Brown toured the Arab countries and Israel during the insurrection in Iran, promising greater military aid. But as Begin pointed out, Iran has shown that no semicolonial country--including Egypt and Saudi Arabia--can play the role of stable outpost for imperialism in the area which Israel can, and Washington must rely more on imperialist Israel than ever before. Carter put the squeeze harder on Sadat to come to an agreement with Israel under terms which guarantee an Israeli buildup in face of the new situation created by the Iranian revolution. Washington is also sending military advisers to Yemen, and increasing its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the imperialist powers have come to the defense of the new capitalist regime of Mehdi Bazargan, hoping it can stem the tide of revolution so that they can reestablish their economic links and control in Iran.

#### The Failure of the White Revolution

Underlying the crisis of the Iranian monarchy was the failure of the shah's so-called White Revolution launched in 1962-63. The "agrarian reform," the industrialization projects that were given a boost in the 1970s by the rise in the price of oil, and the influx of petrodollars did not resolve any of the basic problems of underdevelopment caused by imperialist superexploitation--on the contrary, they exacerbated those problems.

The partial industrialization did not end the dependence upon imperialism, but changed its form. It was tailored to fit the needs of international imperialist monopolies, not to a balanced growth of the Iranian economy. Capital goods had to be imported from the imperialist countries; investment tended in the majority of branches towards assembly of products as part of a chain of production controlled by the monopolies. A powerful consortium

of the big oil companies controlled the marketing of Iranian oil, the "one crop" mainstay of the economy. The failure of this partial industrialization was accentuated by the context of imperialist superexploitation: the small size of the internal market, the lack of a sufficient economic infrastructure and skilled workforce.

The "agrarian reform" destroyed the traditional agriculture of the country, not for the benefit of the peasantry, but for national and imperialist capital. Large agribusiness enterprises were established producing for export and the needs of the imperialist-dominated world market. This resulted in a terrible destruction of productive forces caused by the destruction of the traditional modes of cultivation and irrigation (the qanats). Previously an exporter of food, Iran now must import 60 percent of the food required for its internal consumption.

The agrarian reform drove millions from the land. The massive exodus from the rural areas to the cities was not accompanied by the creation of sufficient industrial jobs. This led to a monstrous growth of shantytowns in the urban centers, and the creation of a huge industrial reserve army utilized by imperialism and native capital to impose a brutal exploitation of the working class.

Sixty-three percent of the population are illiterate in a country of 34 million inhabitants. Three and a half million are unemployed out of an active population of 11 million, 54 percent of households live below the "poverty level" by Iranian standards. This is the balance sheet after fifteen years of the shah's "modernization."

The international recession and its aftermath sharpened the crisis of the Iranian economy. Inflation soared to over 30 percent per year. The prices for capital goods imported from the imperialist powers rose faster than oil prices, which were also affected by the decline of the dollar. Iran began to build up debts to the imperialists.

The monarchy's much touted "liberation" of women was also a sham. While granting women certain legal concessions from some of the barbaric laws codifying their oppression, that oppression remained basically untouched.

The oppressed nationalities were ruthlessly oppressed by the shah, denied all language and cultural rights whatsoever, and held in a second-class status compared to the Farsi-speaking Persians. Given the fact that much of the peasantry are from the oppressed nationalities, this national oppression is intertwined with the exploitation of the peasantry and the second-class status of many of the workers and urban poor forced into the cities from the countryside.

The facts refute all theories that the oil income was transforming Iran into a "subimperialism". On the contrary, the oil income sharpened the contradictions of an economy that remains under imperialist domination.

#### From the First Cracks to the Insurrection

The scandals that broke out in 1976 concerning corruption involving high figures of the regime and some of the fifty families who profited from the White Revolution, and the appearance of the first differences among those in power over what policies to adopt in face of the economic crisis, began to crack the monolithic facade of the dictatorial monarchy.

The shah's support to developing certain industries harmed sectors of the artisans. In the context of the world recession and its aftermath, the regime imposed on the merchants of the "bazaar" higher taxes, higher interest rates, and customs policies that favored the imperialists and the top fifty families, and attacked the working class through freezing wages and the imposition of a workers passport. This led to an increase of the social isolation of the monarchy, reflected in the failure of the shah's project of building a pro-monarchy political party on the basis of the White Revolution.

The year 1977 was a turning point in the crisis of the regime. Encouraged by struggles abroad centering on human rights in Iran, sectors of the intelligentsia and of the liberal bourgeois opposition of the old National Front began to mobilize publicly to demand respect for the Constitution of 1906, which was still formally in effect, and for the freedoms it guaranteed, including freedom of the press, independence of the judicial system, etc. Faced with the success of the first mass demonstrations, the

"poetry readings" which quickly turned into demonstrations against the regime, and the upsurge of the student movement, the regime decided, after getting approval from Washington, to repress the opposition currents that had appeared.

In the context of the isolation of the monarchy, the repressive offensive of the regime had the effect of extending the movement for democratic rights. A dynamic began to unfold that characterized the whole movement: repression was answered with deepening mobilization, revealing the depth of hatred for the vicious repression, oppression, and exploitation embodied in the shah's regime, as well as growing willingness to fight to the end against it.

On January 9, 1978, mass street demonstrations in the religious city of Qum protested government newspaper attacks on the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. Many were killed when police attacked. In a pattern that came to mark the protest movement, a new wave of demonstrations began forty days later, following the traditional Muslim morning periods of the third, seventh, and fortieth day after a death.

There was an uprising in the Azerbaijani city of Tabriz that involved almost the entire population. Workers, shopkeepers, the uprooted peasants who had flocked to the city, joined in. In the Tabriz uprising, we saw elements of the future development of the revolution. The slogan "death to the shah" was given massive voice for the first time. The discipline of the Tabriz garrison broke, and the army was unable to crush the masses. The city came under control of the population for a day. The shah's regime suffered a political defeat, and he was forced to remove certain officials in Azerbaijan. To regain control, he had to bring in troops from other garrisons. The Tabriz uprising also underscored the weight of the national question in the Iranian revolution. Demonstrations also took place in Shiraz and the oil city of Ahwaz, with repression leading to the next wave of demonstrations.

These demonstrations tended to be organized out of the mosques, which had been the only centers of social life not totally controlled by the regime and its police. This brought to the



fore the role of the Shi'ite hierarchy. A messianic dissident current of Islam, Shi'ism had a long tradition of intervention in political life and confrontation with the central state, as shown by the mullahs' participation in the first mobilizations against imperialist penetration at the end of the nineteenth century, their involvement in the constitutional revolution of 1906, and the support sections of them gave to the Mossadegh government.

The financial independence of Shi'ism from the state contrasts with the Sunni hierarchies of other Islamic countries. Its ties with the urban petty bourgeoisie in the bazaar was also a factor in its opposition to the regime.

The shah's regime contributed to the politicalization of the Shi'ite hierarchy through its exile of Khomeini in 1963, incessant attacks upon the hierarchy designed to reduce its influence, and attempts to gain control of it. With a large organizational network at its disposal (180,000 mullahs, 80,000 mosques, and 60,000 students in religious schools and universities), the hierarchy was also able to profit from the weakness of the bourgeois opposition, in particular that of the National Front.

As occurred in other countries with the upsurge of the colonial revolution and nationalism following the Second World War, Islam can have the meaning in the eyes of big sectors of the population of an affirmation of national cultural values and identity against the grip of imperialism.

The influence of the hierarchy in the movement is also explained by the weakness of the workers movement, and in particular by the betrayals of Stalinism. The betrayals of the Tudeh party in the second revolution, the policies of support for the shah by the Kremlin and Peking, the repression of political and religious minorities in the bureaucratized workers states, have led many combative and devoted youth, workers, and intellectuals to turn toward utopian or reformist forms of socialism in Islamic colors as put forward by the theologian Chariati or by the Mujahadeen guerrilla organization.

Undoubtedly a key factor in the way the masses looked at the Shi'ite hierarchy, however, was the role played by Khomeini. His

authority among the masses is based on the fact that he refused all compromise with the shah and the monarchy, including when National Front figures or other religious leaders were ready to make such compromises.

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As the cycle of demonstrations developed, they broadened out both geographically and socially. They spread to every corner of the country, and drew in the peasantry in the countryside who would travel to join demonstrations in the nearest city or town. The urban poor with their close ties to the workers, the bazaar merchants, students including down to grade-school level, women in historically unprecedented numbers, and the oppressed nationalities were more and more mobilized.

As the scope of the demonstrations grew, the shah clamped down martial law on Isfahan in August 1978. After a new outpouring of anti-shah demonstrations following the August 19 movie theater fire set by police provocateurs in Abadan, the shah promised to make some reforms and shuffled his cabinet. But these and other concessions only stiffened the resolve of the masses, who more and more began to demand the dismantling of the entire monarchy. In early September the protests reached new heights. Three to four million participated in demonstrations on September 4. A half million jammed Tehran's streets September 7, fraternizing with the troops.

The government responded by imposing martial law and a curfew on twelve cities. On September 8, thousands were mowed down in what came to be known as "bloody Friday."

Workers had participated as individuals in the demonstrations up to this point. In the last weeks of September the working class began to enter the battle with its own weapons and forms of organization. The first strikes prevented the regime from gaining any respite after Bloody Friday. By the fall, strikes were taking place among bank and telegraph workers, government and insurance workers, copper miners, dockers, textile workers, and workers on the railroads, post, buses, airlines, radio, and television, and newspapers. On October 31 a nationwide oil strike shook the regime.

The biggest demonstrations yet seen swept the country on November 5. The following day the shah placed Iran under military control and set up the military government of General Azhari. The repressive offensive was shattered by a work slowdown and the shutting of the bazaar. Demonstrations continued.

In the beginning of December, open strikes were relaunched, beginning in the oil industry. These strikes became in fact a revolutionary general strike against the monarchy, and signalled the final offensive against the regime.

The wave of industrialization launched in the 1960s and 1970s gave rise to a new, young working class. This new working class came from the rural areas and became concentrated geographically in cities like Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, Abadan, and Ahwaz. They form part of the urban poor, who tended to come to the cities in family units. Industrial workers today form one fourth of the active population. In addition to workers employed in industries like oil, petrochemicals, construction, steel, automobile manufacture, etc., a significant part of the working class--three out of four workers--are in enterprises of less than ten workers.

There was an outbreak of strikes in 1973-75. These were initiated over economic demands, and were limited to a few hours or one or two days duration. They did not lead to the formation of a clandestine workers movement.

In spite of the fact that the workers entered the revolutionary crisis without such a movement and without the existence of any mass workers parties, and in spite of the severe repression in the factories with SAVAK units in each factory forming yellow "unions," the strike wave was characterized by the rapidity with which it broke out and became politicized, and by the degree of organization that was achieved. The demands of the strike movement combined a call for higher wages with directly political demands for the elimination of martial law, freedom for all political prisoners, for the return of the exiles without conditions or charges, for an end to censorship in the media, and for the right to form independent unions.

In the course of these struggles, tendencies toward workers control developed. Workers in the communications industries demanded the opening of the books in order to expose corruption

and unequal contracts made with the imperialist monopolies, and employees in the central bank published a list of 144 high officials in the regime who had transferred large sums out of the country. In the oil industry, communications, and the atomic energy agency, workers demanded the departure of "foreign experts" and "real nationalization" of oil to break the grip of the imperialist oil trusts.

In all sectors, strike committees were formed to organize the struggle.

The power of the revolutionary general strike blocked all attempts by the liberal bourgeois figures in the National Front and certain religious leaders to reach a compromise with the monarchy. Key were the oil workers, who held the decisive industry in their hands. This power drew behind it the merchants of the bazaar, and other social layers. On the foundation of the general strike, the demonstrations continued to grow.

It was the relaunching of the mass offensive against the regime through the workers strikes that finally forced the bourgeois opposition and the religious hierarchy to line up behind Khomeini and his demand that the monarchy be swept away. This position, and the threat of being bypassed by the mass movement, led Khomeini to reject any compromise with Shapur Bakhtiar, the last prime minister of the shah, concerning preserving the regime of the monarchy in any form. In the eyes of the masses the Bakhtiar cabinet, the army, the SAVAK, the shah's fake parliament--all the institutions of the regime--had to go. Bakhtiar was nothing but the last bastion of the shah, backed by imperialism. (European Social Democracy also tried to refurbish Bakhtiar's image through its support.)

At the same time, even before Khomeini's return to Iran, which accelerated the disintegration of the Bakhtiar government, the bourgeois opposition figures were seeking a working agreement with the top military hierarchy in which they would announce they no longer supported the monarchy. It was this position that led Khomeini and the rest of the bourgeois opposition to refuse--even after the beginning of the armed uprising in Tehran--to call for armed insurrection against the regime.

The attempt to find such a compromise with the army brass

was shattered in the end by three factors: 1) the continued support for the institutions of the monarchy by imperialism and the major sections of the national bourgeoisie, who hoped that if the Bakhtiar regime hung tough, the mass mobilizations could eventually be demobilized; 2) the continued upsurge of the mass movement as expressed in the huge demonstrations that preceded, accompanied, and followed the return of Khomeini, and the solidarity of the general strike; 3) the beginnings of disintegration of the army under the impact of the mass mobilization.

In mid-December, when the large demonstrations of December 11-12 and the continuation of the strike movement confirmed the failure of the new repressive measures unleashed by the shah with the November 7 appointment of the military cabinet of General Azhari, the crisis began to penetrate massively into the military.

Desertions, acts of sabotage, and individual resistance took on mass proportions, and there appeared the first forms or organized struggle within certain units. There were reports of soldiers shooting back at officers who attempted to force them to attack the people.

This development accelerated with the fall of the Azhari cabinet, brought down by the total strike in oil; with the departure of the shah on an "extended vacation"; and with the inability of the Bakhtiar government to demobilize the mass movement despite the support he received from the imperialist powers, the army brass and sections of the bourgeoisie.

It was in the air force, especially among the homofars, the skilled technicians whose training and work are closest to those of the skilled industrial proletariat, that the opposition reached its highest level. In January, the struggle of the homofars extended nationwide through political hunger strikes and organized participation in the street demonstrations.

It was the resistance by the homofars to the attack carried out by the Royal Guard on February 9, 1979, that sparked the mobilization and arming of the plebeian masses in Tehran, the beginning of the victorious popular insurrection. On the second day of the battle, the general command--finding itself unable to

send the rank-and-file soldiers to crush the masses and carry out a coup d'état--began to retreat, while seeking a compromise with the liberal and religious opposition to safeguard the maximum number of units from disintegration and contagion, and save as much as possible of the institution. However, it became necessary to order the rank-and-file soldiers to go home.

A sector of the urban poor and students with weapons seized from the barracks, airmen and some other soldiers, and units from the guerrilla organizations attacked Royal Guard and SAVAK strongholds, and other holdouts of the old regime in Tehran. They were backed up by a massive defiance of the curfew by the popular masses throughout the city. The insurrection spread to the other cities, and the monarchy was destroyed throughout the country.

#### The Situation Immediately Following the Insurrection

Following the overthrow of the monarchy, the Khomeini-appointed government of Mehdi Bazargan found itself in office, trying to rebuild the army and in general restore capitalist law and order.

The masses overthrew the repressive regime almost barehanded. Much of the army was in disarray, especially in Tehran. While certain units were still intact around the country, the army could not be utilized for political reasons, and neither could the police. The workers were still on strike--including the government workers, further paralyzing the state.

Armed young people organized mainly through neighborhood committees in Tehran and other cities continued to defend the barricades set up during the insurrection to control the movement of people at night. Some of the hated mass murderers of the old regime had been captured during the insurrection; others were arrested, along with thousands of SAVAK agents, by these neighborhood guards.

The neighborhood committees were formed around the mosques at the time of the total strike of the oil workers at the end of December, often at the initiative of local religious authorities, in order to take charge of the distribution of oil and gas, and basic foods. They also organized participation in, and marshals

for, the mass demonstrations surrounding the return of Khomeini. It was natural that many of the youth, urban poor, students, and some workers organized in the marshal squads participated massively in the insurrection, despite the appeal for calm by the religious hierarchy, and after arming themselves continued to function as the armed guard of the revolution.

A week after the insurrection, the workers returned to their factories after an appeal by Khomeini. Some of the plants, especially imperialist-owned enterprises, did not reopen. Where they could the workers held assemblies in the factories and offices to discuss their demands and establish ongoing committees, either through the continuation of the strike committees or the election of new ones. In addition to economic demands, the workers discussed the need for unions, and for control over the appointment of managers. Government workers raised similar demands. Having fought so hard for democratic rights, workers demanded democracy on the job, and for a cleaning out of SAVAK agents and others connected with the old regime. Demands for opening the books to expose corrupt managers and deals favoring the imperialist monopolies were raised. This tendency towards workers control was reinforced by the flight from the country of many of those with ties to the monarchy, the sabotage of the economy by the capitalists, and by the departure of tens of thousands of "foreign experts."

Some of the rank-and-file soldiers told to go home during the insurrection became involved in the neighborhood committees. In the forefront of organization among the soldiers were the homofars, who called two demonstrations in the week following the insurrection to protest the government's appointment of top generals of the shah's army. While Bazargan was forced to retreat on some of these appointments, the homofars and other soldiers supporting them radicalized their demands in the course of this struggle, calling for the election of all officers, for political rights in the armed forces, against the domination of the armed forces by American advisers, and for keeping the civilian population armed.

In this situation of a weakening and paralysis of the state apparatus and of the upsurge of the mass movement, the potential

existed for decisive steps forward in the organization of the workers and all the toilers into councils or soviets. What was lacking was a mass revolutionary Marxist party with roots in the working class capable of giving a lead.

The Capitalist Regime Attempts to Consolidate Itself in Face of the Expectations and Mobilizations of the Masses

The character of the year-long mobilization against the shah determines the context in which the class struggle is now unfolding. The masses overthrew the regime by relying on their own power alone, which has given them a sense of their own strength. They now expect that their economic, social, and political aspirations will be met.

Compounding the situation for the procapitalist forces is the deepening economic crisis coming on top of the dislocations of the past year's mobilizations. There has been a massive flight of capital, further narrowing the internal market. The bourgeoisie, both native and imperialist, is reluctant to invest in many areas such as steel, construction, plastics, and other branches. Many workers returned to their factories to find themselves laid off or their plants closed, swelling the already bloated army of unemployed.

While offering some small concessions, such as the distribution of free medicines in some areas, the Bazargan government has told the masses that their demands cannot be met. At the same time, the government has offered low-interest loans to capitalists in an effort to get them to invest. It is possible that these funds also will actually find their way abroad instead. The shah found out that the oil revenues could not solve the crisis, and this fact is underscored in the present situation of a much reduced oil output.

In the context of the crisis of the world capitalist system, the crisis of the Iranian economy is likely to intensify. In this situation, the regime is in no position to make substantial concessions to the masses, although it is likely it will have to make some. On the contrary, it must try to drive harder against the workers and other toilers to establish the conditions for large-scale capital investment again. This will bring it into



increasing conflict with the masses, who not only have not been defeated, but are imbued with a spirit of self-confidence flowing from their successful battle against the monarchy.

In this context, the dynamic of the class struggle brings to the fore the combination of democratic and proletarian demands. After the gigantic mobilizations that overthrew the shah, the workers and toilers have begun to reorient, and here and there demands on questions such as housing, wages, the conditions of work, the labor laws, and unemployment are beginning to be raised. Consciousness of the need to continue their struggles for their demands is beginning to appear in a vanguard layer of workers. The profound social and political instability, and the potential for explosive struggles this implies, is the dominant feature of the situation.

\* The first major test between the revolution and counter-revolution came in Iranian Kurdistan around the Iranian New Year, March 21. In the course of the insurrection the Kurds became massively armed, and established Kurdish committees throughout Iranian Kurdistan. When the central government attempted to reassert its authority through the army attack in Sanandaj, the Kurdish people put up fierce resistance against the machine guns, bazookas, helicopters, and Phantom jets of the armed forces. In spite of the massacre of hundreds of Kurds, they defeated the government's attempt. In the course of the struggle, the mobilization of the Kurdish people was deepened. The credibility and authority of Khomeini and the Shi'ite hierarchy has plummeted. This is an indication of what can happen with the advance of the revolution in other areas.

The successful resistance of the Kurds has inspired other oppressed nationalities in neighboring Azerbaijan and Baluchistan. There were large solidarity demonstrations in Azerbaijan and Zahedan in Baluchistan among Kurdish residents there.

The oppressed nationalities are beginning to assert themselves now that the yoke of the hated Pahlavi dictatorship has been removed. This is true also for the Turkomans, and the Arabs in Khuzestan and the Gulf Coast, who suffer the greatest discrimination. The capitalist government, on the other hand, must try

to once again fasten that yoke of national oppression if it is to rebuild a stable central state. This means that the national question will remain explosive, and one of the key struggles in the period ahead, even if the government attempts to defuse these struggles through demagogic "autonomy" proposals within the framework of strengthening the central state's grip.

The flight of the oppressed nationalities is also intertwined with the struggles of the working class, peasantry, and agricultural workers. The mobilizations of the oppressed nationalities will have a tendency to take on more and more a class content. The relation of these national struggles to the peasantry can be seen among the Turkomans. In the wake of the insurrection, Turkoman peasants and Baluchi agricultural workers in Turkoman Sahra, the key large-scale agricultural center, have taken over hundreds of estates. Following the Kurdish success, they have seized police stations and army bases. The government has dispatched emissaries to Turkoman Sahra to try to force these peasants and agricultural workers to give the land back to the landlords, but so far have been unsuccessful.

The massive expulsion from the countryside has resulted in large concentrations of the oppressed nationalities among the masses of urban poor and workers in the cities. This is one reason why the government found it difficult to whip up Farsi chauvinism in the Persian cities during the Sanandaj events--it took the opposite course of attempting to down play them.

\* In the process of attempting to assert its authority, the capitalist regime has made a series of attacks on democratic rights.

The first problem which it attempted to grapple with was the fact that large sections of the urban population were armed. Khomeini issued an edict stating that it was a "sin" to keep the captured weapons. The regime has had a partial success in collecting the weapons by having the mosques control the arms of the neighborhood committees, although many arms remain among the people and groups such as the Feydayeen and Mujahadeen have refused to disarm.

The authority of Khomeini and of the Islamic Revolutionary

Council ground him was also used to try to stop the demonstrations of the homofars in the week following the insurrection. The undertone of redbaiting against the homofars became explicit when Khomeini banned a march by the Feydayeen and other groups in support of the demands of the homofars and of the workers for the right to elect plant and office managers. The Feydayeen, supported by other groups including the Iranian Socialist Workers Party then called a protest rally which drew some 150,000 in Tehran. Shortly thereafter, the Moslem Mujahadeen raised similar demands.

When the workers and personnel of the radio and TV first occupied the station, during the insurrection, it was utilized to help organize the fight, and began to broadcast the positions of all political groups. The Bazargan government quickly moved to appoint Ghotbzadeh head of the radio and TV, who clamped down censorship. Government intimidation and censorship has also been placed on the daily press. This control has been utilized to mount a propaganda offensive against the demands of the toiling masses and for capitalist stability.

Steps by the religious hierarchy to enforce the reactionary Islamic code against women in early March sparked the most massive demonstrations supporting the rights of women ever to occur in an Islamic country, although they represent a minority of women at present. The government was forced to temporarily retreat on the question of legally imposing restrictions on women's rights as a result of these mobilizations, but has launched a new campaign against women through mass propaganda.

Suspected SAVAK agents, top officers of the shah's army, and other figures of the old regime responsible for untold crimes who were arrested by local committees were all sent to the Islamic Revolutionary Council or similar bodies set up in different cities, known as the "Imam's Committees." Many of the SAVAKi and other agents of the shah's regime were released. Under the pressure of the masses, some of the most hated figures were executed, but after secret trials by "Islamic courts." The purpose of this secrecy, as well as the refusal of the government to open the SAVAK files to public view, is to prevent the exposure of the links between the criminals and others in the state apparatus,

including high up in the new regime, and with the capitalists and managers.

"Islamic courts" also tried people on morals charges, executing some for homosexual behavior and flogging some people for such things as adultery or drinking alcohol. While these cases have not been widespread, they represent attempts to intimidate the population. Opposition has tended to curtail such practices.

Selective repression against the left is probable in the next period. Such blows against the vanguard, however, will not be sufficient to decisively set back the toiling masses, and on this basis can be fought.

\* One of the factors which will determine future development is what happens with the committees thrown up in the course of the struggle against the monarchy. Fundamentally, the religious hierarchy, the government, and the Islamic Revolutionary Council are trying to not only reduce their social basis but to integrate them in the state apparatus. But because of their role in the mass struggle against the monarchy, they are still seen by the masses as instruments of struggle which they can utilize to fight for their demands. This contradictory dynamic is reflected in the internal contradictions within the committees.

Through the religious hierarchy and the mosques, the Islamic Revolutionary Council moved to control the neighborhood committees. Discussions in the mosques have dwindled, and with that, the base of these committees has been narrowed. At the same time, they still contain people mobilized in the course of the struggle against the shah, and reflect to a certain extent the contradictions in the society at large.

The "Imam's Committees," appointed from above, which stand over the neighborhood committees, also contain the same contradictions, but include more conscious rightist elements, including ex-SAVAK agents in many cases--a fact which has led to certain struggles to remove such agents.

The procapitalist forces also moved to try to control the workers committees through appointments to them from the "Imam's Committees." Certain weaknesses existed in the workers committees from the beginning. The council of oil workers in Ahwaz, for

example, directly represents the white collar workers, with only two or three representatives of production workers on the 120-person council. Red-baiting by the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council has had some success in limiting freedom for political tendencies and discussions within these committees, as well as blunting the demands for aspects of workers control.

Within some workers committees, figures from the old yellow "unions" tied to SAVAK have also emerged, backed by the new regime and the "Imam's Committees." These figures help back up, including with physical violence, the government's opposition to the formation of unions, under the assertion that in an "Islamic Republic," workers don't need unions. However, the desire to build unions is widespread among the workers. The opposition of the regime to their creation stems from not only the fear that they could become the basis for the building or revitalization of broad workers committees, but also by their understanding that any upturn of capitalism in this semicolonial country can only be launched on the basis of a savage superexploitation of the toilers. The construction of independent trade unions is one of the key questions of the unfolding class struggle in the present period.

Through the course of their struggle against the shah, however, the conception of organizing committees to lead their struggles has become implanted in the broad masses and the working class. We can expect that future mobilizations will see a resurgence of workers committees or others such as neighborhood committees, whether this takes the form of revitalizing the existing committees or the building of new ones.

\* The new regime must seek to rebuild the old state apparatus. That is why it is protecting SAVAK agents and trying to stop exposures of links between the shah's regime, and officials in the present regime. It is trying to give a new image to the army and police, as having changed their spots and are now on the side of the masses. It is cautiously attempting to have the police take over their "normal" functions.

As the army attack on Sanandaj demonstrates, some of the elite army units and officer corps remain intact. The regime is rebuilding the army from the top down. A large proportion of the rank and file soldiers, especially in the Tehran region where

there was the greatest dismantlement of the army and fraternization during the insurrection, have not returned to the barracks.

Part of the regime's plans to demobilize the armed youth is to incorporate them into a "National Islamic Guard," which can be utilized while the army is being rebuilt, and which would not be tainted with the mass hatred that still exists for the army.

While the regime is trying to put together the state apparatus, it is forced to attempt to control the situation through its influence over the neighborhood and workers committees. These, however, due to their potential of being utilized by the masses in any mobilization, cannot be stable bases for bourgeois rule. As soon as it can, the regime will attempt to dissolve them or absorb them completely into its own apparatus.

A key element in the regime's plans to stabilize itself is the referendum for the "Islamic Republic." The plebiscitary referendum is designed not only to limit the choices before the people to for or against the "Islamic Republic," but to block the convocation of a sovereign constituent assembly and the full debate that would entail, not only about the nature and form of the government, but about the burning social and economic questions facing the masses.

Utilizing demagogy about the "Islamic Republic," which large sectors of the masses hope will solve their problems, the pro-capitalist forces seek to impose upon the masses the framework of capitalism. They hope that a massive vote for the "Islamic Republic" will boost their authority to defend capitalism and capitalist policies against the needs and aspirations of the masses.

In addition to utilizing religion as an argument for an "Islamic Republic," the procapitalist forces have tried to justify the referendum and other steps they have taken as necessary to uproot the remnants of the monarchy and to break the grip of imperialism. In fact, they are blocking the dismantlement of the old state apparatus and paving the way for imperialism.

In this context, the campaign for an "Islamic Republic" is aimed against the left and "communism." Under this cover, the procapitalist forces have begun a campaign for "national unity"

aimed at the independent mobilizations of the workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities, and all the toiling masses.

Political debate has been curtailed in the campaign for the referendum, and threats have been made that democratic rights will be further repressed after it. Thugs have been organized to counter left demonstrations, the women's demonstrations, and to silence dissidents in some of the factories. No political parties other than the Islamic Republican Party have been recognized. There has been harassment of leftists, including militants of the Hezbe Karagane Socialist (HKS--Socialist Workers Party, Iranian section of the Fourth International), and attempts to stop the HKS from selling newspapers.

\* A central element to the ability of the procapitalist forces to advance their project is the authority of Khomeini. This authority stems from his uncompromising stand against the monarchy, and gives to Bazargan and the other bourgeois figures the mantle of the revolution. Without this mantle, they could not hope to carry out their counterrevolutionary aims.

Khomeini's authority also boosts that of the religious hierarchy as a whole, and of religion, which can be demagogically utilized to divert the masses. Nevertheless, religion alone will not be able in the long run to provide the ideological foundation for a modern capitalist state, and attempts to impose Islamic codes can backfire. In the next period Khomeini's authority will be tested against the realities of the class struggle, and can be used up if it is utilized directly against goals of the masses.

The Islamic Revolutionary Council itself stands above the government as the seat of real power. Its exact composition remains secret. Besides Khomeini and other religious leaders, indications are that it includes conservative politicians such as Ghotbzadeh and Yazdi, as well as reactionary military figures.

The Khomeini leadership would like to impose a regime under the control of the Islamic religious hierarchy, in which the role of political parties would be restricted or nonexistent. However, this project is already undermined by the social reality.

Organizations which claim allegiance to the working class are growing. The National Democratic Front of Daftery, grandson of Mossadegh, has also made gains. In broad sectors of the masses there is a profound sentiment for democracy, and even for socialism as an expression of equality and democracy (although "communism" tends to be equated with Stalinism). These sentiments can only lead to the posing of the question of the separation of the church and state.

The new regime, under the impact of the great anti-imperialist mobilization and sentiment of the masses, has taken certain anti-imperialist steps which have helped better its image in the eyes of the masses, such as the expulsion of the U.S. bases, expulsion of "foreign experts," the breaks with Israel and South Africa. While the masses will support these and similar steps the regime might take, the attempts by the regime to get the economy going again on a capitalist basis will push it to seek to reknit its ties with world imperialism.

The difficulties of the new regime in finding ways to deal with the mass upsurge has resulted in contradictory policies following one upon the other, and for evidence to appear of differences within the government, the Islamic Revolutionary Council, and between them.

The adaptations, retreats, and contradictory positions of the government vis à vis mobilizations of the masses, at the present time especially of the oppressed nationalities, indicates the government's weakness. The demagogy it uses reflects this. Its support rests in the illusions of the toiling masses in its will and capacity to satisfy their basic demands. Repressive initiatives at the present time will not be able to stabilize its base. In the course of the class struggle over the next period, the illusions of the masses are going to erode, and there can be governmental crises and sharp changes in the policy of the government, the Islamic Revolutionary Council, and in their makeup.

The Tudeh Party, the Feydayeen, and Mujahadeen

\* The Stalinist Tudeh (Masses) Party is the best organized political party in the labor movement. Today, however, it has



far fewer forces and much less prestige than it had in the period following the Second World War. The reasons for this decline in influence are the following: 1) Its responsibility for the defeats of 1945-46 in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan and in the oil strike in the south, and above all its refusal to fight the coup d'état of 1953. 2) Its support to the demands of the Kremlin bureaucracy for onerous oil concessions in 1946-47, at the moment when the anti-imperialist movement was on the rise in Iran. 3) The illusions it spread concerning the shah's reforms in 1960-63, illusions which were shattered by the reinforcement of the Pahlavi dictatorship. 4) The support by the Kremlin to the shah since 1953, which became the most glaring from January to December 1978.

In the framework of the Stalinist-Menshevik "two-stage" theory of revolution and the "peaceful coexistence" policy of the Kremlin, the Tudeh Party defended for an extended period a line of "democratization" of the monarchy. It made a turn only in August-September 1978. From this moment on, it tailed Khomeini. In no way did it intervene in the insurrection. Immediately after, it declared its support to the Bazargan government, the Islamic Revolutionary Council, and to Khomeini. It came out for the "Islamic Republic." This bowing before the capitalist government which stands for the "reconstruction of the Iranian economy" and the bourgeois state, and for the "national unity" of Iran, has resulted in the Tudeh Party keeping quiet on the economic and social demands of the masses and to avoid at the present time the struggle for the construction of the trade union movement, and to downplay the struggles of the oppressed nationalities.

\* The leadership that formed the *Jydayeen i Kalq* (Warriors of the People) came in part from the Tudeh Party and to a lesser extent from the National Front. The lessons they drew from the lack of resistance to the coup d'état of 1953, and from the fraudulent reforms of 1960-63 led them to adopt a guerrilla strategy. Under the impact of the Palestinian resistance, they began a guerrilla campaign in 1970-71. These revolutionary militants paid a very high price. They were savagely hunted down, tortured, and executed by the SAVAK and the army.

In September-October 1978, the Feydayeen experienced a resurgence. Today they have the largest audience of the groups that claim adherence to Marxism-Leninism. After their active participation in the insurrection which neither the liberal bourgeois or religious opposition figures organized, their sympathy and support broadened, including within the ranks of the workers.

After the insurrection, the Feydayeen adopted a vacillating orientation. They correctly opposed the disarmament of the people demanded by the government and Khomeini. They demanded a real purge of the army. They also joined the struggle of the Kurds. They made some correct criticisms of the maneuver of the government in holding the referendum on the Islamic Republic. However, due to their retention of certain Stalinist positions and their failure to draw any critical balance sheet of their guerrilla strategy, they show a lack of comprehension of the importance of the political independence of the working class and of the question of the class character of the government. That has led them to give critical support to the Bazargan government and to fail to expose the class content of the role being played by the religious hierarchy. Therefore they are not able to play the role they could, given their influence, to organize and politically lead the working class and its allies.

Under the impact of the unfolding revolution and the intervention of revolutionary Marxists, a process of political differentiation will certainly appear in this formation, and many will be won to consistently revolutionary politics.

\* The Mujahadeen i Kalq (Peoples Fighters) were born in the same context as the Feydayeen. In the end of the 1960s they launched their own guerrilla campaign. Their leadership came from the Iranian Liberation Movement, a religious-bourgeois opposition that came out of the old National Front.

Its ideological roots are in the "third worldist" and "anti-imperialist" interpretation of Islam. In 1975, a Maoist-Stalinist wing tried to take over the Mujahadeen through a coup, leading to a split. This Maoist-Stalinist group was forced to abandon its pretense of being the Mujahadeen during 1978. Therefore it was the current most linked to Islam which appeared in the mo-

bilizations of the autumn 1978 and in the insurrection. Because of their history as fighters against the dictatorship they have wide prestige among the masses.

Their ideological basis and their populist-nationalist orientation has led them to give critical support to the government and tailend Khomeini, even if they have made correct criticisms of the antidemocratic methods of the government. They have declared in favor of the "Islamic Republic," obscuring the capitalist nature of such a republic which is in the service of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. Unless they break with their ideological roots and their program, they will not play a role in the fight for the political independence of the toiling masses. Nevertheless, they remain an important force which can play a role in anti-imperialist mobilizations and certain social struggles, which can have an effect on them and lead sectors of them toward Marxist positions.

After decades of dictatorship and the betrayals of the Stalinists, the labor movement in Iran is politically and organizationally weak. The emergence of the Third Iranian Revolution can result in its rebuilding.

### The Road Forward

The period ahead will be one of deepening class struggle and sharp clashes as the procapitalist forces attempt to reestablish capitalist authority and solve the crisis of capitalism on the backs of the toilers.

The class struggle will unfold as a combination and interrelation between the struggles of the working class, the oppressed nationalities, peasantry, urban poor, and women, together with movements around such social questions as mass unemployment, housing and health, and the struggle for democratic rights. While there will be important advances and retreats, the decisive battles remain ahead of us.

In this situation, the biggest factor lacking for a victory of the working class and its allies is a mass revolutionary socialist working-class party that can provide the necessary leadership. The construction of such a party is the task that

the Fourth International and the Hezbe Karagane Socialist have set for themselves. Today the HKS is fighting along the following lines:

\* For the defense of all the conquests of the revolution against domestic reaction and imperialism, including the expulsion of the U.S. bases, the breaking of ties with and cutting off the oil supplies to South Africa and Israel, the cancellation of the shah's huge orders for military equipment from imperialist governments, the cancellation of the agreement to market oil through the cartel of imperialist monopolies, etc.

Return the fortune the shah has deposited in the imperialist banks and in other investments abroad. For the renunciation of the debt to the imperialist powers, who have sucked Iran's resources and the labor of her people long enough. Expropriate all imperialist property. Cancel all contracts with the imperialists which are to the detriment of the Iranian people.

For solidarity with the Palestinian revolution! Solidarity with the struggles of the toiling masses in the Mideast, the whole region, and the entire world!

\* The plebiscitary referendum on the "Islamic Republic" is an attempt to impose a capitalist government and constitution on the people from above. For the immediate convocation of a sovereign constituent assembly, free from any interference by the government or Islamic Revolutionary Council and under conditions of full political freedom to decide these and other questions facing the masses.

\* The HKS is ready to unite with all democratic forces which defend the conquests of the revolution against the attempts of the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council to impose censorship and restrict democratic rights. Full rights for all political parties, freedom of speech, the press, radio and TV, and assembly. Separation of church and state, and freedom of religion and belief in general.

\* To counter the effects of inflation and massive unemployment, the hours of work should be reduced with no loss in pay to spread the available work, and wages should rise automatically with the cost of living. Payment of all the back wages owed the

workers because of the general strike.

A vast program of public works and development of public services are urgently needed to help fight unemployment and provide the people with badly required services--from health facilities, distribution of basic foods to the undernourished, sewerage, better schools, and a campaign against illiteracy, and housing, to irrigation in the countryside.

For a comprehensive nationalized health and social security system.

\* Open the books of the enterprises to the workers and the public, so that the truth about the economy, deals with imperialism, and corruption can be known. Immediate expropriation of the properties of the shah and the royal family, of the capitalists who refuse to open their factories or who have fled. Stop the flight of capital abroad. Expropriation of the banks, oil industry, and the other key branches of the economy. For the operation of all expropriated properties under workers control.

For the formulation by the workers and peasants organizations and committees, through a broad and democratic debate, of an emergency plan to overcome the economic crisis.

\* The peasants need land, cheap credit, adequate machinery and fertilizers, and guaranteed markets for their products. They need access to irrigation. The expropriation of the banks and key industries can provide the means to meet those needs and help build the alliance between the workers and peasants.

\* Closely connected with the fight for the social needs of the peasants is the question of the liberation of the oppressed nationalities, who were in the forefront of the struggle against the shah. For the full restoration of the language and cultural rights of the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Turkomans, Arabs, and other oppressed peoples in Iran. For the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination, up to and including the right of separation.

\* Women also played a key role in the overthrow of the shah, participating in the mass demonstrations and strikes as never before in Iranian history. Against the attempts of the

government and religious hierarchy to restrict their rights. For equal wages for equal work. For adequate childcare and health facilities. For equality with men in all the organizations of the toilers and in the society as a whole.

\* Dissolve all the special repressive bodies of the old regime, including SAVAK, the Royal Guards, etc. Open the files on all their crimes against the Iranian people, to expose the real criminals. Against all attempts to reconstitute such bodies under whatever guise.

\* The government should guarantee the rights of all the organizations of the masses, including all political parties. The organizations of the masses have the right to defend themselves against thugs and ex-SAVAK agents masquerading as revolutionists.

\* For full political rights for soldiers, including freedom of speech and assembly, freedom to read all points of view, the right to join political parties, etc. The rank-and-file soldiers should elect all officers and forge links with the toilers committees to build a popular militia under the control of councils of workers, soldiers, and toilers delegates.

\* The workers in the factories and offices need democratic unions to fight for their immediate interests against the bosses. Unions should be built on an industry-wide basis, federated in a single democratic union structure, and be independent from the state. Unionization of agricultural workers, women workers, and immigrants.

\* For the revitalization and building of the workers and neighborhood committees, and for the organization of soldiers and peasants committees. In order to fight for the interests of the workers, urban poor, soldiers, peasants, and all the toilers, these committees have to be independent from the state and the religious hierarchy. They have to be run completely democratically, representative of all the toilers, elected by them and subject to their recall, with all political parties and viewpoints given equal rights.

The objective is the formation of broadly based councils or soviets of delegates from the workers, soldiers, peasant, and neighborhood committees to conduct the overall struggle for

the needs, interests, and rights of the masses.

\* In order to fight for the above and other demands, the workers will have to struggle to establish workers control over their workplaces, through the workers committees.

\* No capitalist government can meet the needs of the toiling masses. On the contrary, any such government will defend the interests of the bosses against those of the toilers. For a workers and peasants republic, a government based on broad democratic councils or soviets of the toiling masses. Such a government would mobilize the masses to expropriate the major branches of banking and industry, institute a planned economy, and open the way to socialism, breaking the power of the imperialists and their native capitalist junior partners.

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The Fourth International and the Hezbe Kargarane Socialist Party declare their readiness to join united action with other forces around all the above and other demands of the toilers.

The opposite path to the one outlined here will mean to oppose the aspirations of the workers, the oppressed nationalities, the urban poor, the peasants, the soldiers, the women-- and that will inevitably mean their demobilization. This would lead to openings for domestic reaction and imperialism to once again reassert their control, and reimpose another tyrannical regime under imperialism's thumb. The heroic battle of the Iranian toiling masses against the shah demonstrates that this is not inevitable. We face the upcoming battles of the next months and years with optimism, an optimism based on the proven courage in combat of the Iranian workers and toilers.

The HKS and the Fourth International and its sections everywhere, call upon the workers and toilers of the world to embrace the Iranian revolution as your own! Come to its defense by demanding that the imperialists keep their hands off Iran!

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