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Solidarność Counterrevolution Checked Power Bid Spiked in Poland



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Hail Rosa Luxemburg!

The present situation in Poland cries out for a revolutionary proletarian leadership to cut through the disastrous polarization between a particularly vile and utterly discredited Stalinist bureaucracy and the counterrevolutionary nationalist/clericalist Solidarność "trade union" which lines up with U.S. imperialism's bloodthirsty drive to "roll back Communism" throughout the world. The Trotskyist vanguard which must be forged to defend and extend socialized property in Poland will build on the strong traditions of Polish socialism—the party Proletariat, the SDKPiL, the early Polish Communist Party, ruthlessly purged and finally dissolved by Stalin, and above all the revolutionary heritage of Rosa Luxemburg.

It is striking that all sides in the Polish crisis are united in their silence on Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest proletarian revolutionist in Polish history. Certainly the Stalinist usurpers cannot claim Luxemburg; they have had to obscure and slander her revolutionary example for decades.

Still less will Luxemburg, a woman, a Jew and a communist, find defenders among the fans of Solidarność, a "movement" which embraces virulent anti-Semites and ultra-reactionaries. Solidarność' program is openly counter-revolutionary—for private ownership of the land, a bourgeois parliament, a dominant role for the Catholic church in government, for turning the nationalized Polish economy over to the International Monetary Fund, the bankers' cartel that starves the Chilean masses. That Solidarność, which openly spurns even the word "socialist," disdains Luxemburg and all she stands for, is fully appropriate.

Throughout her life Luxemburg fought the powerful and reactionary influence of clerical-nationalism over the Polish working class, forces which, thanks to the Stalinists, became temporarily predominant in the form of Solidarność. Thus, in 1905 she wrote:

"The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives on the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people. The clergy and parasitic capitalists hate the organized working class, conscious of its rights, which fights for the conquest of its liberties."

—"Socialism and the Churches"

The social-democratic "left" outside Poland embraces Solidarność and wants therefore to separate itself from Luxemburg. At a February 7 forum in Boston, a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) spokesman solidarized with Polish "dissident" Marta Petrusiewicz when the latter stated, "The problem with Rosa Luxemburg in Polish minds was that Rosa Luxemburg considered... that the existence of the Polish national being was not an important problem for Polish workers."

It is true that Luxemburg incorrectly opposed the right of Poland to national self-determination, for which Lenin took her to task, pointing out that socialists must support



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this basic democratic right in order to take it off the agenda and expose the underlying class conflicts which national oppression masks. Her error in his eyes lay in not taking the national question sufficiently into account, thereby rendering more difficult the exposure of nationalism as a mortal enemy of the proletariat. Needless to say it is the height of hypocrisy for the SWP and kindred anti-communists to manipulate Lenin's criticisms of Luxemburg in order to make common cause with the deadly enemies of Leninism, the Pilsudskiite reactionaries who hate everything that Lenin and Luxemburg stood for.

Despite errors on the national question (and other questions), Luxemburg was a communist and in Lenin's phrase "an eagle." Leon Trotsky summed up her historic role with these words:

"We can, with full justification, place our work for the Fourth International under the sign of the 'three L's.' that is, not only under the sign of Lenin, but also of Luxemburg and Liebknecht."

—"Luxemburg and the Fourth International,"

New International, August 1935

The Polish proletariat must recover its revolutionary heritage, the socialist heritage of Rosa Luxemburg, hated by the counterrevolutionaries (and feared by the Stalinists) as a revolutionary leader and martyr. ■

Solidarność Counterrevolution Checked

Power Bid Spiked in Poland

ADAPTED FROM *WORKERS VANGUARD*
NO. 295, 18 DECEMBER 1981

With the imposition of a "state of war" in Poland, a counterrevolutionary grab for power has been checked. Just hours before the proclamation of military rule, the clerical-nationalist leadership of Solidarność announced it was organizing a national referendum on forming an anti-Communist government and breaking the military alliance with the Soviet Union against Western imperialism. The Warsaw regime was ready to take up the challenge. The actual steps taken go far beyond those usually described as martial law, and they seem to have made considerable preparations for the crackdown. So while Reagan and Haig were chasing their Qaddafi will-o'-the-wisp, the Polish government, at what appears to have been the last possible moment to make a move based on power, launched a virtual counter coup.

The Polish Stalinists managed to pull off an effective coup d'état in their own country. Contrary to every instinct and appetite of the ruling bureaucracy, constantly seeking accommodation with imperialism, they were forced to take measures defending historic gains of the proletariat. For it must be recognized that Lech Walesa's Solidarność was moving to overthrow not merely the corrupt and discredited Stalinist regime, but social gains inherited from the Bolshevik Revolution—centrally a collectivized planned economy—which were bureaucratically extended to Poland after the Red Army liberated the country from Nazi occupation. That is why this Polish "free trade union" is supported by the forces of imperialist reaction—from Wall Street to the Common Market and the Vatican—and why Ronald Reagan declared that the Polish crisis represented "the beginning of the end of Communism."

With such inflammatory statements, the U.S. imperialist chief sought to provoke a bloodbath in Poland, in order to fuel his anti-Soviet war drive to a white heat. It is in the interests of the working class, in Poland and internationally, that the present suppression of Solidarity's counterrevolution remain "cold"—that is, without bloodshed. The Polish workers must be warned that strikes, protests and other acts of defiance against the martial law would only play into the hands of reactionary adventurers. Massive violence would lead either to the reimposition of a Stalinist totalitarian police state, crushing the workers movement for years, or the victory of capitalist counterrevolution, a world-historic defeat for the socialist cause. Trotskyists seek above all to maintain a relatively open situation, so that a process of recrystallization can begin to take place to forge a proletarian and internationalist vanguard.

If the present crackdown restores something like the tenuous social equilibrium which existed in Poland before the Gdansk strikes last August—a tacit understanding that if the people left the government alone, the government would leave the people alone—conditions will be opened again for the crystallization of a Leninist-Trotskyist party.

Especially in a country as historically evolved as Poland, the proletariat has the capacity to recognize its own historic interests, given time and a relatively open political situation. There must be elements—outside Solidarność, within Solidarność, in the Communist party—with genuinely socialist impulses which have been smothered by the particular confrontation that has dominated Poland over the last year. They must be won to the program of defending proletarian state power against the kind of clerical-nationalist mobilization that brought Poland to the brink of counterrevolution, while fighting for a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Solidarność Bids for Power

At its first national congress, held in Gdansk in September, Solidarność consolidated around a program of open counterrevolution. Its appeal for "free trade unions" in the Soviet bloc, long a central slogan for Cold War anti-Communism, was a deliberate provocation to Moscow. Behind its call for "free elections" to the Sejm (parliament) was the program of "Western-style democracy"—that is, capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government. To underscore their ties to the West, Solidarność even demanded that Poland join the world bankers' cartel, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and invited to its congress Lane Kirkland, the hardline Cold Warrior head of the American AFL-CIO, and notorious CIA operative Irving Brown, chief of the AFL-CIO's European operations.

Certainly the mass of deluded workers in Solidarność did not and do not consciously seek the chronic unemployment, wage gouging and deterioration of safety

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International Spartacist tendency combats imperialist Cold War campaign over Poland: (above left) demonstration in New York by the SL/U.S.; (above right) Ligue trotskyste de France in Paris; (right) Trotzkiistische Liga Deutschlands in Frankfurt, West Germany.

conditions that capitalism would bring. If the IMF ever got its hands firmly around the neck of the Polish economy, the workers would soon hanker after the "good old days" under Gomulka and Gierek. It would presage the reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis, and set the stage fairly directly for a nuclear Third World War, one way or another. In keeping with the Catholic spirit of Solidarność, one can say: "Forgive them father, for they know not what they do."

In their own way the Stalinists recognized that Solidarność was bent on a final confrontation, but nonetheless they temporized. Negotiations between Jaruzelski and Walesa finally broke down centrally over Solidarność' demand for free elections to local government bodies. Under existing conditions in Poland, this would have meant placing governmental power at the base of society in the hands of anti-Communist nationalists such as the neo-Pilsudskiite and anti-Semitic Confederation for an Independent Poland.

The event which led directly to the crackdown was Solidarity's attempt to organize the firefighter cadets in Warsaw, a group whose legal status (as throughout Europe) is similar to that of the police. This was one remove away from organizing in the armed forces and militia. The night after police dispersed the cadets' sit-in on December 2, the Solidarność leadership met in Radom in a closed meeting where they made plans for a counterrevolutionary seizure of power. The head of the powerful Warsaw region, Zbigniew Bujak, declared that "the government should be finally overthrown" and proposed the organization of a Solidarność militia for that purpose. Someone turned the tapes of this meeting over to the government, which repeatedly played them on state radio. Many Poles were no doubt shocked, especially at the duplicity of the

"moderate" Walesa who told his colleagues to keep saying, "we love you socialism," while plotting the government's overthrow.

With their secret plans exposed, the Solidarność leadership made an open bid for power, announcing a national referendum for the establishment of a temporary government and "free elections." Hours later the regime struck back, declaring a "state of war" under a Military Council of National Salvation. A thousand Solidarność leaders were reportedly detained and, as a sop, five former Communist party leaders arrested—ex-party leader Edward Gierek and his close associates. While General Jaruzelski, the prime minister and party leader, insists this is not an army takeover, there is here a disturbing element of military bonapartism. In this there is perhaps a concession to anti-Communist nationalism. While the Stalinist party is utterly discredited, the army retains a certain popular authority as the embodiment of the national state, supposedly above politics. The Stalinists only make hypocritical reference to socialist forms, the acknowledgment that vice gives to virtue. But compared to the naked armed fist, those forms are important.

Imperialism Rallies to Solidarność

"Free trade unions" and "free elections" for Poland have become key slogans in Reagan's Cold War II, and the imposition of martial law will certainly be used to fuel the anti-Soviet war drive, especially in West Europe. In France, in particular, mass pro-Solidarność demonstrations have been held, led by Socialist Party notables, producing a "holy union" running from the fascists, royalists and Gaullists to social democrats and Stalinophobic fake-Trotskyists like the OCI and LCR. In the U.S., imperialist war criminal Henry Kissinger, a man directly

responsible for the murder of millions of defenseless Vietnamese, condemns the crackdown on Solidarność as "a very grave offense against human freedom." When Kissinger speaks of "freedom" he means freedom to exploit the workers and peasants of the world, a "freedom" maintained by mass terror.

In the name of countering "the export of revolution" to El Salvador, American war materiel and Green Berets are propping up a kill-crazed junta. The racist apartheid South African regime becomes a central part of the "free world" in attacking Angola with Israeli-supplied weapons. In Afghanistan, the CIA arms Islamic reactionaries fighting along the southern border of the USSR to maintain feudal and pre-feudal slavery. Washington's ally China constantly menaces Vietnam, which heroically fought U.S. imperialist barbarism for decades. But it is in Poland that Reagan sees the best possibility to realize his counterrevolutionary designs against the Soviet Union by "rolling back" the postwar social and economic gains in East Europe. The seizure of power by Solidarność would mean a victory for Wall Street and the Pentagon, for the Common Market and the IMF, for bloody Latin American dictators and South African racists. The creation of a "free world" Poland on the western borders of the USSR would bring much closer the dreadful prospect of anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust.

With the crackdown against Solidarność by the Polish army, U.S. imperialism's plans for a "free world" Poland, or at least of a bloody battle between the Soviet military and the Polish masses, have been frustrated. Reagan has lashed out with economic sanctions against the Poles and Russians. As long as the West Europeans and Japanese don't follow suit—and they almost certainly won't—these sanctions will end up hurting the American capitalists more than the Russians. But regardless of the quantitative effect of Reagan's actions, all class-conscious workers must oppose this imperialist economic warfare against the Soviet Union. Down with the anti-Soviet sanctions!

The Bankruptcy of Liberal Stalinism

If today much of the Polish working class looks to Western imperialism for salvation, this is not simply a



Ullstein Bilderdienst
Rosa Luxemburg, Poland's greatest contributor to the international workers movement.

response to the terror of the Stalin period which gradually trailed off into abuse and mismanagement under Gomulka and then Gierk. An earlier crime of Stalinism destroyed the important traditions of international communism in Poland. Thousands of Polish Communist militants who fled to the USSR from the fascistic dictatorship of Pilsudski were killed in the purges of the late '30s. The Polish Communist Party itself was officially liquidated, and then Nazi occupation finished the job of beheading the Polish proletariat, especially its important Jewish component. The post-1945 ruling bureaucracy was, therefore, largely constructed from purely careerist elements who lacked even the degenerated Communist traditions of the old Stalinists.

The present crisis is, above all, a reaction to the bankruptcy of liberal Stalinism. When in 1956 Wladyslaw Gomulka came to power in the wake of the Poznan

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uprising, he promised the widest workers democracy. Then he turned and suppressed the workers councils and leftist intellectuals who had supported him against the hardline Stalinists, while at the same time strengthening the position of the Catholic church and the smallholding peasantry. When Gierek replaced Gomulka after the 1970 Baltic coast workers' uprising, he promised unparalleled prosperity. Then he ruinously mortgaged Poland's wealth to Western bankers and also ruinously subsidized the landowning peasants. So after this repeated experience, when the Polish workers rose again in the summer of 1980 they now looked to the powerful Catholic church opposition and nationalist dissidents, behind whom stands Western imperialism. For a year the clerical-reactionary leadership of Solidarność around Lech Walesa stopped short of calling for the overthrow of the official "Communist" system (a bureaucratically deformed workers state) and its replacement with (bourgeois) "democracy." Now the mask has fallen.

What Next in Poland?

The Warsaw regime's preventive coup is for now effective. When martial law was declared, Solidarność activists at large agitated for a general strike. While news reports from Poland have been scanty, strikes appear to have been limited to particular Solidarność strongholds and there seems to be little serious active resistance to the martial law. It remains possible, especially given the desperate economic conditions, that anti-Communist agitators in and around Solidarność could provoke mass protests which could escalate into violence and even civil war. Under these conditions Soviet military intervention could well be the only available means to suppress counterrevolution. But it is by far in the best interests of the working class that Solidarity's counterrevolutionary bid for power be pushed aside as quietly, quickly and bloodlessly as possible.

In the course of heading off the bid for power by capitalist-restorationist elements, a number of Solidarność leaders have been arrested. The right to strike and protest have been suspended, a curfew imposed, Poland's borders sealed, telephone and telegraph communications interrupted or cut off. As the immediate counterrevolutionary threat passes, these martial law measures must be ended, including release of the Solidarność leaders. A Trotskyist vanguard seeks to defeat them *politically*, by mobilizing the Polish working class in its true class interests.

For Trotskyists, the current Polish crisis powerfully reaffirms the need for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies, particularly brittle in East Europe. In its scale and *form*, the social mobilization around Solidarność demonstrates the power of the working class to take control of society. Yet coming under the influence of the Catholic church and the leadership of neo-Pilsudskiite nationalists and pro-Western social democrats, the social *content* of Solidarność is profoundly *anti*-proletarian. A proletarian-internationalist workers movement in Poland can be rebuilt only under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard with a program of revolutionary unity between the Polish and Russian workers. This unity, necessarily directed against the Stalinist bureaucracies, is key to defense of the collectivized economies and the gains of October. ■

Friends of Lech Walesa, Inc.

So Lech Walesa is *Time* magazine's "man of the year." But it's the story behind "the man of the year" story that's most interesting. A letter from the publisher says the piece was based on "several sessions between Walesa and *Time* this year, including a question-and-answer breakfast for the *Time* Newstour in October at Charles de Gaulle airport outside Paris." But there was more to this tête-à-tête than *Time* lets on. For meeting with Walesa along with the *Time* editor at that October 18 breakfast in a posh airport restaurant were a host of top American corporate executives.

Not a word was breathed about this get-together between the leader of Polish Solidarność and leading Western capitalists until two months later, *after* the crackdown which checked Solidarność' counterrevolutionary bid for power. Then the well-informed French muckraking weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* (16 December 1981) published an account, entitled "A Wink from the Americans," which noted the secretive arrangements:

"Early in the morning their [Solidarność delegation] bus takes the *autoroute du Nord*, but barely outside of Paris it takes the cutoff leading to Roissy airport. Arriving at their destination, the Polish unionists reach Maxim's, an airport restaurant deserted at that hour. It's 8:30 a.m. In front of the restaurant, a cordon of CRS riot police. Inside, at the tables laid for breakfast, 20-odd Americans receive Walesa and his friends.

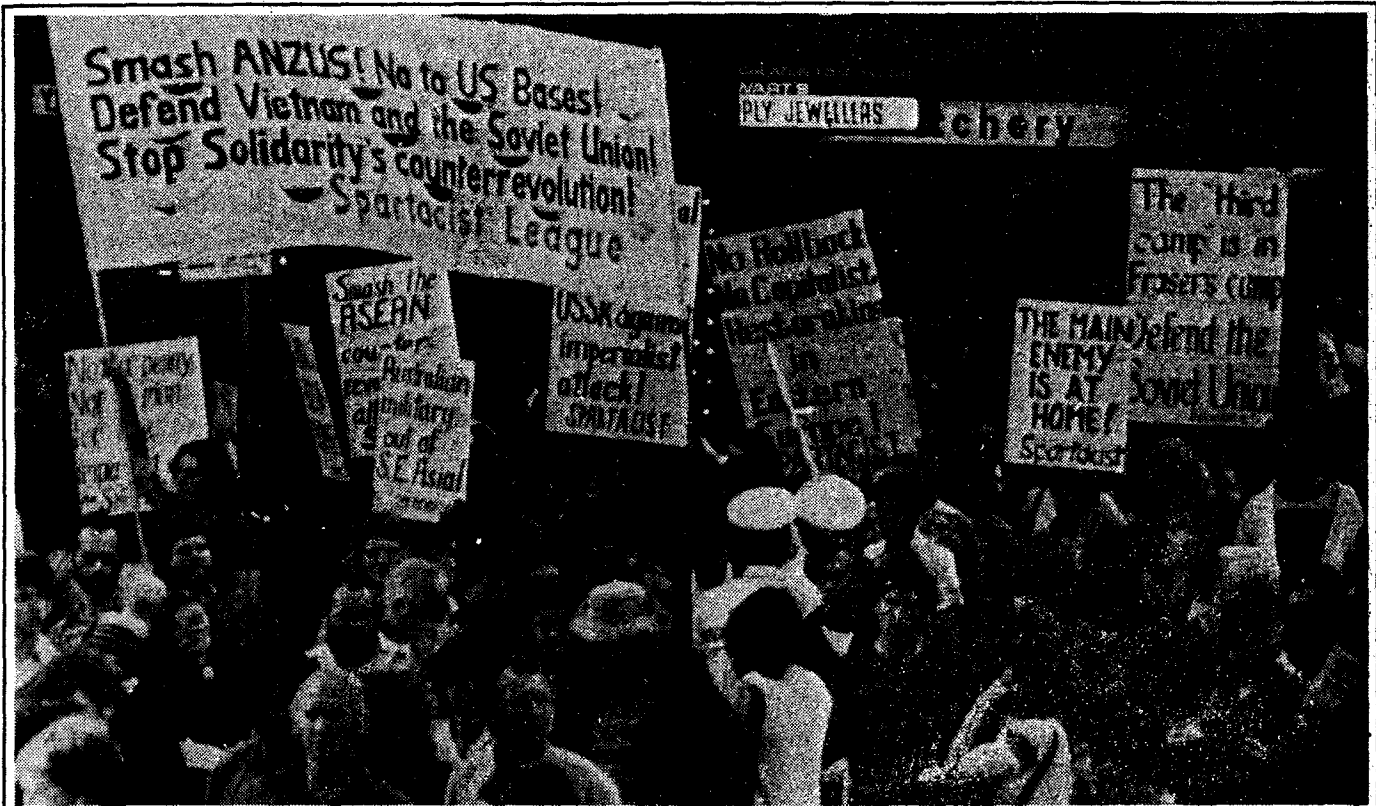
Discretion and Mum's the Word

"These businessmen arrived two hours earlier, by a special airplane.... Here's some wonderful dirty laundry—expensive, too. Philip Caldwell, president of Ford; Robert Tirby, president of Westinghouse; David Lewis, ditto for General Dynamics... and Thomas Watson, an IBM bigwig. Plus a TWA VIP and several potentates of only slightly lesser importance, banking and life-insurance chairmen....

"All this crowd for Lech Walesa, considered a veritable head of a shadow government. The introductions are rapid and discussion begins. A system of simultaneous translation is in place, proof that on the American side in any case the interview was not totally improvised."

Among the questions asked by these hard-headed captains of industry and high finance: "Are you prepared to give up your Saturdays off?" "Is it the end of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Poland?"

For Trotskyists it did not take these spectacular revelations to show what the pope's little Polish "freedom fighter" was up to. Already at the time of its first congress last September, when Solidarność took up the Cold War battle cries of "free trade unions" and "free elections," inviting such "free trade unionists" as long-time CIA agent Irving Brown, we warned "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" So when Walesa visited Paris in October to conspire with America's capitalists, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France demonstrated, denouncing Solidarność as a company union for Western imperialism.



Australasian Spartacist

Melbourne, 20 November 1981—SL/ANZ contingent in antiwar demonstration denounces social-democratic pacifism and "little Australia" nationalism.

Australian Spartacist League Conference

The Main Enemy Is At Home!

We reprint below an article, which originally appeared in Australasian Spartacist (No. 90, Summer 1981/82), on a recent conference of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ). This conference marked a critically important struggle against tendencies within the organization to succumb to the increasing pressures of Cold War anti-Sovietism. This manifested itself most clearly in an unwillingness to direct the main fire at the Australian bourgeoisie's alliance with U.S. imperialism and at the "little Australia" nationalism of the social-democratic Labor Party (ALP).

Reagan's drive to war against the Soviet Union has taken centre stage in world politics, increasingly dominating and conditioning all significant local and regional conflicts from Central America to Indochina to the African continent. Reagan and Haig openly threaten nuclear war in Europe; the present "negotiation" proposals are aimed to defuse the West European "peace" movements while plans go ahead to deploy Pershing II and Cruise missiles targeted at Moscow. In this context, the impact of the anti-Soviet war drive in this country, the role of the Australian bourgeoisie as servile junior partner to Washington and the related tasks of Australian communists were the subject of a thorough and intense discussion at a recent national

conference of the SL/ANZ.

The conference noted that the Australian bourgeoisie is an enthusiastic junior partner in Washington's anti-Soviet war drive. Ever since Afghanistan [Conservative prime minister] Malcolm Fraser has been pounding the anti-Soviet war drums in concert with first Carter and now Reagan, most recently committing troops for the U.S. military bridgehead in the Sinai. Both the Liberal/National Country Party coalition and the ALP "opposition" defend the ANZUS [the 1951 Australia-New Zealand-U.S. tripartite treaty] alliance and the presence of U.S. military bases in Australia, strategic components of U.S. global war plans in the Asian region and its appetite to militarily dominate the Indian Ocean.

It was stressed that our program of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist restoration is a program of action—the decisive criteria that separates genuine revolutionists from all shades of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world. As a resolution from the conference pointed out:

"For Australian revolutionists the concrete expression of defence of the Soviet Union and Vietnam is a relentless struggle against the Australian bourgeoisie and its

continued on next page

reformist allies. Australia and New Zealand are the main bastion and most craven allies of US imperialism in Southeast Asia, and as such are strategic components of US imperialism's international military deployment aimed against the Soviet Union and Vietnam. This is the critical significance of the Pine Gap/Alice Springs CIA spy satellite tracking station, the B52 bases in Darwin, the Omega communication network for US submarines carrying nuclear warheads aimed at the Soviet Union as well as the US military base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and the attempt by the US to acquire Trincomalee as a military base in Sri Lanka. Australia is the junior partner and military agent of US imperialism in this area. For the Australian section as for all sections of the IS the main enemy is at home. Opposition to these bases is the concrete expression of defence of the USSR and Vietnam in this region."

At the conference itself the perspectives outlined were rejected by some in the organisation who in the previous period had resisted such a course. Adapting to the profoundly social-democratic view that the "Russian question" is not fundamental to Australia, they denied the strategic necessity for Australian communists to struggle against their own bourgeoisie in fighting to defend the workers states.

We have noted the rightward flight of our reformist and centrist "Trotskyist" opponents internationally toward liquidation into mainstream social democracy, deserting any pretence to uphold the Trotskyist position of unconditional defence of the USSR against imperialist attack or internal counterrevolution. It began in earnest over Afghanistan, where the Eurocommunist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the anti-Soviet, "third camp" International Socialists (IS) quickly joined with the chorus of imperialist anti-Soviet hysteria. And now groups like the IS, CPA and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) parrot imperialist "democracy versus totalitarianism" cold war rhetoric as a screen for their fulsome support to pro-imperialist counterrevolution in Poland. Today intransigent defence of the gains of October is exclusive property of the international Spartacist tendency.

However, our party is not immune to the intensifying anti-Communist pressures of this period. We have had our share of "nervous Nellies," quitters who give up fighting against the stream of social-democratic anti-Sovietism to either drop out or actively join it. An example of the latter course was Dawn McEwan, a five-year member whose search for a "third camp" in this period of intense anti-Soviet militarism led her straight to the social-democratic SWP. Along with Wall Street and the Pentagon the SWP has enlisted as "the most consistent" supporters of counterrevolution in Poland. McEwan's comment is indeed telling: "The SL increasingly looks at all political movements and developments through the prism of United States versus the Soviet Union. They are very close to a 'two camp' theory" (*Direct Action*, 10 June 1981). In fact it is the SWP who pose the alternatives in Poland as either accommodation with the Stalinist bureaucracy or social-democratic accommodation with the imperialist bourgeoisie. Naturally, they opt for the latter.

The reformists assert national parochialism as a virtue, claiming that Australian capitalism can escape "superpower rivalry," be "non-aligned" and "independent" of its U.S. patron. But the ALP can never fundamentally challenge the ANZUS alliance or the U.S. military spy

bases. Australia is a small, vulnerable imperialist power and white outpost in Asia. The interests of "national defence" against Asia overlap with the Australian bourgeoisie's necessary junior partner role to U.S. imperialism and its anti-Soviet war plans in this region. As the [former ALP prime minister] Whitlam sacking showed, even toying with "independence" where strategic spy stations such as Pine Gap are concerned will bring the CIA down on your head.

Defence of Vietnam, the Soviet Union Begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia and Trincomalee!

When the Reagan administration made El Salvador the "front line" in their stepped-up war drive with the intention of sending a "bloody message" to Moscow, we raised the slogan "Defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador." As noted at the conference, in this region Australian communists have a special responsibility to defend Vietnam and the Soviet Union from the U.S. imperialist build-up stretching from Australia to Diego Garcia to the hoped-for naval base at Trincomalee. For Trotskyists it should be axiomatic that defence of the workers states begins in revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie. To deny that defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union has any concrete applicability in Australia and this region is tantamount to abandoning defence of the workers states, except in a purely literary fashion. Such a hollow and sterile "defencism," is a standard formula for "friends of socialism" in left Laborite circles and necessarily hides openly class collaborationist appetites.

The conference brought into sharp focus the question of genuine internationalism, and the necessity for and tasks of an international democratic-centralist world party. As the conference resolution explained:

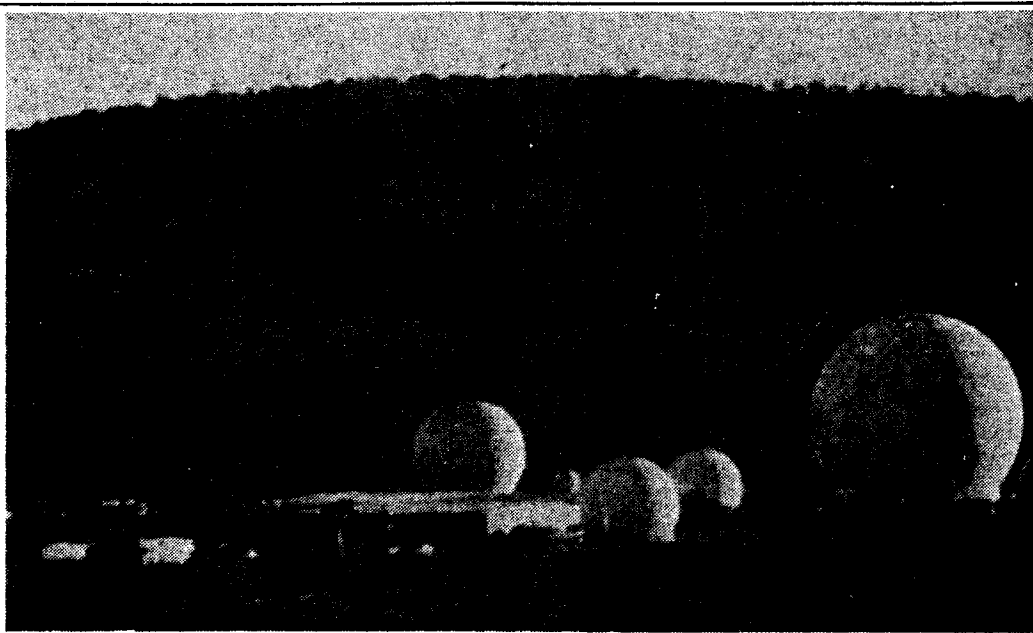
"The proletariat needs an international party to unify the class across the national boundaries that divide it, a party bound together by a common program and democratic-centralist discipline. Through our national sections, we work a division of labour, struggling to lead the workers against their respective national bourgeoisies. Without the guidance and scrutiny of an international party, a nationally isolated section will inevitably succumb to the pressures of its own bourgeoisie."

Leninism is rooted in the necessity for continual internal struggle on an international scale to maintain and extend the communist program, including if necessary factional struggle. Particularly in this isolated and self-indulgently parochial country repudiation of the need for constant struggle and an international perspective as the necessary means for political self-correction inevitably means a political drift into adaptation to "little Australian" social-democratic nationalism with its pervasive white racist and brutally chauvinist trappings.

The Workers Have No Country

The conference noted the particular responsibility we have as proletarian internationalists to combat deeply-rooted white Australian racism as a precondition to forging international unity with the workers and oppressed masses of Asia. The ALP is the party of Australian nationalism par excellence. "White Australia" racism has always been one of its principal ideological pillars and remains so despite the liberal cosmetics of the Whitlam

Australia provides key facilities for imperialist anti-Soviet war drive, such as Alice Springs/Pine Gap CIA spy satellite tracking station.



period. Exclusion of cheap Asian labour is the basis of the social-democratic dream of bringing prosperity to its white Australian working class base through indigenous capitalist ownership and exploitation of Australia's natural resources. The deadly fear of the massively exploited, starving masses of Asia in their hundreds of millions to the north has similarities with apartheid South Africa, except here the racial threat to white supremacy is external. White racism is a critical part of that Australian "national character," so dear to the hearts of Laborite nationalists, which is not only white racist, but proud of its parochial philistinism and brutally male chauvinist—a glorification of the culture of "white pigs." The communist vanguard must incessantly root out and combat this to implement its internationalist and socialist program, along with its accompanying values, in the Australian proletariat.

After the Maoist victory in China in 1949, white racism was overlain by fear of revolutionary ferment in Asia; the

"yellow peril" became the "red menace," which receded somewhat following the slaughter of the Indonesian PKI in 1965 and the stabilisation of Southeast Asia. But the bourgeoisie and its labour lieutenants' need for "national defence" against Asian communism mean that "independence" from its U.S. imperialist patron is not an option. The nationalists' attempts to maintain Australia as a privileged white outpost against Asia must be mercilessly combatted; it is completely counterposed to our program of a racially integrated Australia, part of socialist Asia.

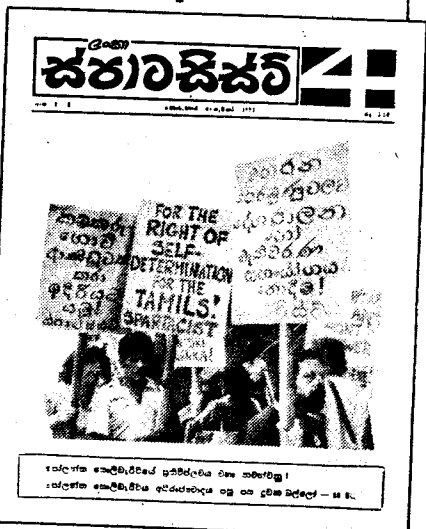
The partial tradition of international solidarity with revolutionary struggle in Asia in the Australian working class is of entirely foreign origin, imported by our revolutionary predecessors, the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World and the Communist International. Following the Fourth Congress with the Stalinist degeneration of the CI, the CPA later on descended to the vilest anti-Japanese racism in World War II, to which the small Trotskyist forces presented the only internationalist opposition. Because [today] the Australian left is tied to Laborism as though by an umbilical cord, opposition to white Australia nationalism and its manifestations like protectionism, immigration restrictions, etc., remains a dead letter. Today it is the unique task of the SL to combat Australian nationalism and white racism within the working class.

The conference represented both an important reaffirmation and deepening of understanding of the fundamentals of Trotskyism. It brought forward a whole layer of comrades who are anxious to shoulder greater responsibility and who richly grasp the necessity for a hard, programmatically-defined nucleus of the future Australian section of a reborn Fourth International. We now look towards recruiting from the significant layer of radical youth and trade unionists in this country who are open to a militant communist opposition.

Defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia and Trincomalee! Down with Australian jackal imperialism—the main enemy is at home! Forward to workers revolutions in Australia and throughout Asia! ■

Greetings to Lanka Spartacist!

No. 1-2
November-
December 1981
(in Sinhala)



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From British Spartacist Tasks and Perspectives

Revolutionaries and the Labour Party

We reprint below the section "The SL/B and the Labour Party" from the document *Tasks and Perspectives* adopted by the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B) at its seventh national conference in September 1981. The Labour Party is the historic mass party of the British proletariat. There can be no proletarian socialist revolution in Britain without breaking the mass of active, class-conscious workers from Labourite reformism. Therefore correct tactics toward the Labour Party and interventions in its internal struggles are of decisive importance for the development of a revolutionary vanguard party in Britain.

During the past period the Labour Party has been overtaken by a sense of change and crisis. With the significant right-wing split in early 1981, leading to the formation of the Social Democratic Party, and the aggressive "leftist" campaign of Tony Benn, Labour is increasingly viewed as a "radical" party rather than her majesty's loyal opposition as of yore. The successes of the Social Democratic/Liberal bloc in recent by-elections and public opinion polls are aggravating the internal tensions within the Labour Party, pointing toward further hemorrhaging of its parliamentary component. It is in the interest of the revolutionary vanguard to deepen this split, thus in the sequel to make it possible to better destroy working-class illusions in left Labourism.

The contest for deputy party leader last September between Benn and Denis Healey was regarded by the Labourite masses as a clear-cut, left-right fight for the future direction of the party, possibly even more clear-cut than the clash between Aneurin Bevan and Hugh Gaitskell in the 1950s. The renewed anti-Soviet Cold War drive headed by American imperialism, in the context of the steep decline of British capitalism, has led to a sharp polarization in the Labour Party. Healey is a representative *par excellence* of the Cold War/NATO/CIA Labourite establishment, many of whose leading figures have decamped to the Social Democratic Party. Early in his career, right after the war, he was a CIA-connected operator in East Europe. As chancellor of the exchequer in the previous Labour government, Healey was the man directly responsible for grinding down the working class, albeit within the limits of social-democratic reformism. Benn, however, is not a radical socialist but rather a "little Englander" (against the Common Market, for unilateral nuclear disarmament) with a thin leftist veneer. Moreover, given the opportunity to administer the British bourgeois state, Benn would undoubtedly abandon "little England" pacifism just as Bevan made his peace with the Party leadership and denounced the unilateralists. We follow Lenin in seeking to put those with socialist pretensions, such as Benn's, in power in the party and in the government

while unceasingly warning, at every step, that they are traitors and will betray—thus to win over their worker-militant followers as these hard truths are brought home to them.

In part tailing the masses and in part sharing their illusions, Britain's myriad fake-Trotskyist groups have recently effectively liquidated themselves into the Labour Party, where they vie with one another as the best Bennites. Even more so than before, British centrism stands as an obstacle to breaking the working class from social-democratic ideology and winning them to communism. That is the task to which the Spartacist League/Britain is dedicated and it is for this reason, and this reason only, that we seek the defeat of Denis Healey as Labourite chieftain.

15. The Labour Party is a *bourgeois workers* party. Its formation at the beginning of the century was a deformed and organisational expression of independent political action by the working class separate from the open capitalist parties. The Labour Party has always been saddled with a pro-bourgeois leadership with a maximum programme of parliamentary reform. We seek to exacerbate the contradictions between the aspirations and objective interests of the working class base, centrally organised in the trade unions, and the policies and actions of the social-patriotic leadership. We wish to win the base to our programme and to the building of a Marxist party in *counterposition* to the Labour Party, in the course of mobilising for class struggle and through the exposure of Labour treachery by the communist vanguard. Within this strategic perspective, various tactical options are open to an intelligent revolutionary organisation, to be employed according to the circumstances. At all times we maintain strict *programmatic* independence from *all* wings of the Labour bureaucracy.

16. Given its organic base in the trade unions, ultimately Labour cannot be split without a successful political struggle against the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy. This demands the construction of a revolutionary opposition within the trade unions, in the aim of transforming them into instruments of revolutionary class struggle, not of class collaboration—as they are under their present, reformist leadership. The OROs' [ostensible revolutionary organisations] enthusiastic plunge into the constituency parties reflects their incapacity to confront the Labour bureaucracy where the power really lies, in the trade unions.

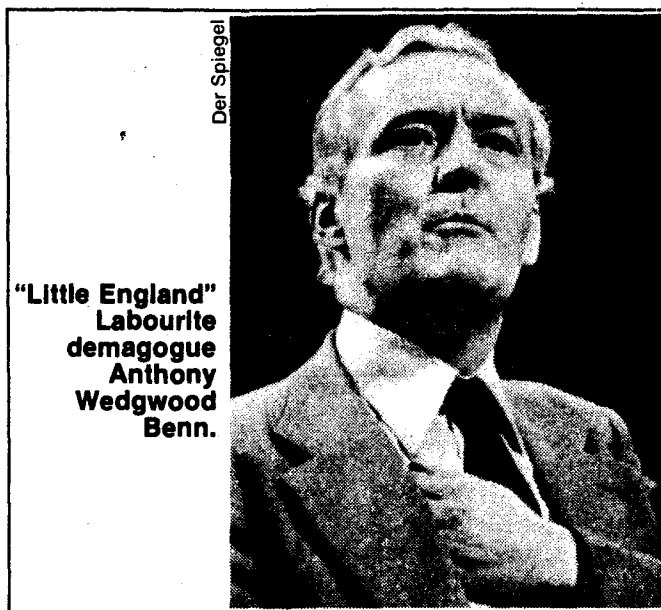
17. If the Labour Party runs in parliamentary elections independently of the bourgeois parties and is not decisively identified with openly anti-working-class or pro-

imperialist policies (i.e., if a vote for Labour can be an electoral expression of a policy of class against class), it may well be advantageous for revolutionaries to extend *critical support*. We do this as a means of gaining an audience among the working-class supporters of Labour, by uniting with them to put Labour in power to test in practice which programme will actually defend the interests of the proletariat, at all times warning of the inevitable betrayals and counterposing our programme for proletarian power. The tactic of critical support is not counterposed to, and indeed presupposes, standing open communist candidates against Labour, resources permitting. Critical support is an important tactical weapon in the struggle to destroy Labour's influence over the proletariat. We must guard against tendencies, exhibited within the organisation, to view it either lightmindedly or moralistically.

18. Our understanding of the Trotskyist tactic of entrisism derives largely from the experience of the International Communist League of the 1930s (American Socialist Party, [French] SFIO). The purpose of such an entry is to win over a current breaking from reformism in the direction of class-struggle politics within the reformist party. Thus a full-scale Trotskyist entry policy presupposes the existence of such a current, and the necessity for revolutionaries to propagandise their full programme. In addition, entry without a cohesively organised Marxist nucleus with effective authoritative leadership or outside the discipline of an international tendency is very likely suicidal, given the enormous deforming pressures exerted on a small group by a mass workers party and its leadership.

There are two historical strategic deviations from Marxism on the question of entry: a) the Oehlerite absolute equation of political independence with organisational independence at all levels of development of the vanguard, which is in the long run a recipe for self-isolation; b) the Pabloite policy of deep entry, which rests on the dilution and adaptation of the programme to the point where it becomes sufficiently palatable to the reformist bureaucracy for them to tolerate a long-term entry.

19. As a matter of course all eligible supporters of *Spartacist Britain* are members of the Labour Party. This should be a normal part of our local work, enabling us to keep a close eye on developments within the Labour Party. Thus far we have failed to carry out this work at all



Der Spiegel

**"Little England"
Labourite
demagogue
Anthony
Wedgwood
Benn.**

consistently, which has eroded our already slight appreciation of the actual developments in the Labour Party. In addition, we see the possibility in this period of intervening in Labour Party branches dominated by centrist OROs and particularly the LPYS [Labour Party Young Socialists], which has always been a playground for the far left and is more distant from the nerve centres of the bureaucracy. Such interventions carry with them the danger of being seen as raids, which may accrue short-term results, but can have the long-term effect of anti-Spartacist inoculations for the local or even national bureaucracy.

Recent developments in the Labour Party

20. The history of the SL/B has been one of sharp tactical counterposition to the Labour Party. We withdrew critical support in November 1976, when we saw parliamentary by-elections as an effective referendum on the Social Contract. That stance was reinforced by the Lib/Lab pact and the strikebreaking general election of March 1979. In the recent by-election in Warrington, we again refused to extend critical support, in part because of a lack of compelling evidence that at the base the Labour leadership was not still identified with those policies, and because of Labour's self-identification with Thatcher's murderous intransigence against the Republican hunger strikers. Nevertheless, the situation in the Labour Party today is very different from the declining days of the Callaghan government.

21. The previous leadership of Callaghan and Healey was almost totally discredited, not just with individual trade union and Labour Party members, but also with the trade union bureaucrats, who had tried and failed to hold the ranks in line with the dictates of the Social Contract administration. At another level, the old leadership was not much use even potentially for the bourgeoisie. A future Labour government, it is clear, would need new faces to put over whatever rehash of austerity is necessary.

Without the support of the trade union leaders, who have always really called the shots, Callaghan was finished. In his place came the ex-left geriatric, Foot, a caretaker bonaparte chosen to mediate between the two warring

continued on next page

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bureaucratic camps. The right wing's strongest base, the Parliamentary Labour Party, has lost some of its extraordinary privileges at the last two Labour Party conferences, strengthening the hand of the constituency parties (which are dominated by Benn supporters) and the trade unions. In response the extreme rightists have split to form the Social Democratic Party, whose alliance with the Liberals could well deprive Labour of its hoped-for general election victory.

22. It is typical for Labour to refurbish its left credentials when in opposition. The depth of the recent schism and the factional dispute, however, reflects a divergence in policies with the onset of a renewed period of Cold War, as well as the constraints imposed upon the ability of the reformists to manoeuvre by the dire state of the British capitalist economy. But Benn's candidacy is not a reflection of significant motion to the left impelled by a wave of militant class struggle at the base. Indeed, the Bennites' exclusive preoccupation with capturing the Labour Party machine in order to achieve advantage in the electoral/parliamentary sphere, highlighted by Benn's refusal to utter a word of support for significant industrial struggles and his explicit opposition to industrial action to bring down the Tories, may well lead to a steady growth of disillusioned followers.

23. The bureaucratic left has strengthened its position considerably. The posture and image of the Labour Party has shifted to the left; the membership certainly believes that the party has in reality moved to the left. The individual membership, which has fallen ever since 1951, reputedly rose last year by 80,000. These circumstances have produced a turn by most of the OROs towards the Labour Party, whether through direct entry or through support from the outside for Benn's campaign for deputy

leader. Such support for "left" bureaucrats, traditional within the British left and exemplified by the SLL/WSL [Socialist Labour League/Workers Socialist League] slogan of "Make the lefts fight," is premised on seeing the left/right division, which has no significant programmatic aspect, as the central contradiction in the Labour Party. Extending critical support to one side in an election within the workers movement must be predicated on a break with class-collaborationist politics on some decisive question.

24. Like all reformist bureaucrats on the make and on the outs, Benn is wringing out the democracy issue in an attempt to build a base for his leadership challenge. It is no accident that Benn has repeatedly welcomed the far left to join the Labour Party—he knows how valuable the relatively disciplined activism of an I-CL [International-Communist League] can be in helping with the donkey work for his campaigns. Of course Benn *exploits* the rank-and-file backlash against the architects of the Social Contract in the process, and presents a carefully tailored leftist *image*. But in all fundamental programmatic respects, Benn stands completely within the framework of British social democracy—pro-NATO anti-Sovietism, social chauvinism in Ireland, autarkic deflation coupled with wage control, class-collaborationist "participation," parliamentarism. He has never repudiated his career as the longest serving Labour cabinet member. We do not give support of any kind to Benn's campaign for deputy leadership. If and when Benn gains office we stand to gain greatly if we have made a reputation as his militant opponents, however much hostility this may engender in the present period of feverish hopes.

25. Given our size, and the sharp counterposition over this question between us and almost all of our opponents, it

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is most tactically advantageous for us at this point to maintain a posture of "throwing bricks at the Labour Party." This means a sharp, aggressive counterposition to the Labour Party which will mark us out as a real alternative for elements on the left who choke on entrism/Benn-tailing, as well as a pole of attraction for youth coming into politics who are repulsed by Labour reformism.

26. *This does not mean ignoring the Labour Party*, which has all too much been our de facto policy recently. Our tactical posture must be flexible, but always within the framework of an aggressive, interventionist approach. We must keep abreast of events, to produce intelligent, forceful propaganda about new developments in the Labour Party. Furthermore, we must be prepared to shift our tactics if the situation changes. The internal life of the Labour Party is far more lively and politically riven than it has been at any time since the Gaitskell/Bevan days. Whether or not Benn wins, the development of a centrist current is not to be ruled out. We must pay particular attention to the Labour Party Young Socialists, whose Militant cadres are not the most flexible and lively of reformists. In any case, our regroupment orientation dictates an increased concentration of sales and interventions in the Labour Party milieu, since most of our ostensibly Trotskyist competitors will be found there.

27. In order to highlight the programmatic bankruptcy of the Bennites, and of the OROs which support him, we offer a point-by-point programmatic counterposition to Benn's programme on the key questions:

A) To the sham of unilateral nuclear disarmament we counterpose the call, **Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!** Cutting the arms budget means supporting an arms budget—not a penny, not a man for the imperialist army!

B) Against Benn's historical support to the PTA [Prevention of Terrorism Act], his refusal to defend the Republican victims of imperialist repression in Northern Ireland, his pro-imperialist proposal for UN troops to

replace British troops, we say: **No "democratic" imperialist schemes—Troops out of Ireland now! Free the Republican prisoners! Smash the PTA! For British trade union action against the occupation of Northern Ireland—black [boycott] all military transport to Ireland! For the formation of anti-sectarian workers militias against imperialist rampage and indiscriminate terror, Orange and Green! Unambiguous defence of the IRA and INLA [Irish National Liberation Army] against the British army but not an ounce of political support to Green nationalism! For an Irish workers republic in a Socialist Federation of the British Isles!**

C) Benn supports import controls and bourgeois immigration controls—chauvinist/racist poison which divides the workers. No to import controls—protectionist trade war paves the way to nuclear war! Full citizenship rights for Britain's blacks and all foreign workers! **Smash racial discrimination in hiring, housing and education! The only way to defeat fascism, to crush outbreaks of racist attacks, to defend against cop rampage is through the fight for union/black defence guards.**

D) Benn wants the workers to wait for 1984, for a "new" Labour government to dole out the reactionary schemes of autarkic reflation of the Alternative Economic Strategy. Now is the time to roll back the Tory attacks and the legacy of Labour with a unified classwide counteroffensive which mobilises the combined social power of the miners, the dockers, steel workers and railwaymen against the jobs slaughter and hemorrhaging social services, for worksharing with no loss of pay, for a sliding scale of wages to match inflation, for the restoration and improvement of social services. Against the endless subsidisation of failed industries with the workers' tax money, we offer a realistic programme: five-year plans on the basis of a reorganisation of the economy through the expropriation of the industrialists and the bankers, as part of an international socialist division of labour through a worldwide struggle for proletarian rule. ■

Iran...

(continued from page 24)

president of Khomeini's gruesome Islamic Republic. Until his downfall last June Bani-Sadr loyally served his imam and the cause of Persian Shi'ite chauvinism—witness his genocidal campaign against the Kurds, the reactionary territorial war with Iraq and the terror against the left through "Islamifying" the universities. Today the Mujahedin/Bani-Sadr opposition looks to "moderate" elements in the shah's old officer corps, repelled by Khomeini's medievalism.

The populist Fedayeen have now split into a pro-Khomeini Majority and a left Minority which, however, has dropped its criticism of Bani-Sadr in order to tail the Mujahedin. The other main anti-Khomeini left group, Peykar, calls for a "People's Democratic Republic" not proletarian class rule. Over and over again Iran's leftists have chased after a "progressive" bourgeoisie, their executioners of tomorrow. Thus, the theoretical forerunner of the Fedayeen, Bizhan Jazani, espoused a cruder and more opportunist version of the "two-stage revolution" than that traditionally held by Tudeh.

The weak native bourgeoisies of the East are simultaneously dependent on imperialism and on the old, semi-feudal social order. As Trotsky declared in 1928: "...the further east we go, the lower and viler becomes the bourgeoisie, the greater the tasks that fall upon the proletariat" (*The Third International After Lenin*). Even the deformed social revolutions in China, Vietnam and Cuba showed that in the epoch of imperialism the bourgeois-democratic tasks require as their *prerequisite* the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. This was demonstrated most graphically in the Russian Revolution where the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution were not addressed until the dictatorship of the proletariat was established. This is the heart of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The entire history of modern Iran shows clearly that in the epoch of imperialism there is no progressive bourgeoisie. Every time the democratic transformation of Iranian society was posed—by the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909, the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic of 1946

and especially the Mossadeq National Front government of 1951-1953—the political awakening of the plebeian masses drove the bourgeoisie into the camp of imperialism and reaction. For advocates of the "two-stage revolution" the Mossadeq experience is of particular importance for it represented a sustained two-year confrontation with British and then world imperialism over the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Yet despite the broad popularity of the takeover of foreign oil interests, the CIA-backed military/clerical coup which overthrew Mossadeq in August 1953 was met with no mass resistance. The "first stage" of Mossadeq paved the way not to socialist revolution but to the shah's return to power and the creation of one of the most repressive police states in the colonial world.

Due to its tepid opposition to the shah after the 1953 coup, the National Front lost much of its political authority. The advocates of the "two-stage revolution" in Iran could find no "bourgeois-democratic" alternative to the National Front from which to launch the "first stage." Instead they turned to that pillar of the old feudal order, the Shi'ite clergy. Looking for the Persian Kerensky they ended up tailing the Persian Black Hundreds.

From the Constitutional Revolution to the Gilan "Soviet Republic"

Probably in no other country of the East has the prospect and dynamic of proletarian revolution been more directly linked to the Russian Bolshevik Revolution than in Iran. Even in its 1905 "dress rehearsal" the Russian Revolution stirred a massive response in its southern neighbor. Though class relations were fundamentally less developed in the Persian empire, with the proletariat insignificant, the Constitutional Revolution had an even more sweeping, nationwide character than the corresponding events in Russia. The Constitutional Revolution was dominated by the rich merchants and Shi'ite high clergy (ulema) who sought to defend their privileges and monopoly of commerce against both the throne and British imperialism. In the resulting Constitution, suffrage was subject to substantial property qualifications, women were excluded from the vote and the ulema retained veto power over all laws.

Yet the revolution unleashed a mass plebeian uprising

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centered in Tabriz, the capital of Iranian Azerbaijan. This Turkic-speaking nation, divided between the Russian and Persian empires, was the transmission belt for revolutionary movements from the proletarian centers of the Russian Caucasus, especially Baku and the surrounding oil fields, into Persia.

Originating among Persian migrant workers in the Caucasus, an Iranian Social Democratic Party played an active role in the Constitutional Revolution. This was not really a Marxist party, but it was strongly democratic and secular. Its program resembled the "minimum program" of European and Russian Social Democracy at the time: defense of the Constitution, equal voting rights for all, land to the tiller, freedom of speech, assembly and religion, the right to strike and the eight-hour day, compulsory education, etc.

To defend even the limited Constitution against the monarchy, the merchants and ulema had to appeal to the plebeian masses who in Tabriz were formed into armed militias. When the shah threatened to disarm these militias, the entire city responded with a 30-day general strike. When the shah's army then attacked Tabriz, the Social Democratic Party organized Georgian, Armenian and Russian volunteers tempered in the Russian Revolution of 1905, who proved decisive in the victory of the Constitutional forces in the civil war.

The Constitutional movement was suppressed not only by the tsarist Russian troops sent in 1909, but it was also betrayed by the very forces that had initiated it, the merchants and ulema who realized they had unleashed social forces that could sweep them away along with the crumbling Qajar dynasty. Thus, in 1909 they formed a coalition government with representatives of the monarchy.

These counterrevolutionary developments demoralized elements of the Social Democratic leadership, which moved rightward, symbolically changing the party's name to Democratic Party. The 1917 Russian February Revolution precipitated a left split by disgruntled party members in Baku, who formed the Adalat (Justice) Party under the leadership of Jafar Pishevari and Sultan Zadeh. By the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution this party had more than 6,000 members in the Caucasus and Turkestan.

With the overthrow of Russian tsarism the already fragile Qajar dynasty completely lost control of northern Iran. The British army moved in to restore some semblance of authority and to aid the White armies against the Bolshevik government. But when the Whites were decisively beaten by the Red Army in the beginning of 1920, the British were forced to withdraw.

During this period provincial movements against the British imperialist presence spread across Iran, especially its northernmost province of Gilan. There a turbaned theological student and veteran of the Constitutional Revolution, Kuchek Khan, led a pan-Turkish and pan-Islamic nationalist movement called Jangali. The Adalat Party sent a strong force to fight alongside the Jangali nationalists against the British. Kuchek at first welcomed the arrival of the Russian Red Army in May 1920 and with its aid established a Gilan "Soviet Republic" as a coalition government with Adalat. The Jangali leader sent greetings to Lenin solidarizing with the "ideal system" of the Communist International.



Lenin at Second Comintern Congress (above) warned against giving a "communist coloring" to bourgeois-democratic liberation movements ... such as that led by Islamic nationalist Kuchek Khan (right) during the 1920-21 Gilan "Soviet Republic."

With the establishment of the Gilan "Soviet Republic," Adalat held a congress officially transforming itself into the Communist Party of Persia (PCP). At this congress Sultan Zadeh expressed his forebodings that the precarious alliance between the Communists and a religious/nationalist movement based on local landlords, merchants and Islamic clergy would never work.

The establishment of the Gilan "Soviet Republic" and PCP took place on the very eve of the Second Congress of the Communist International. These developments in northern Iran provided a laboratory condition for the discussion of the national and colonial questions, especially on the relationship between "bourgeois-democratic movements" and nascent Communist parties in backward countries. It was almost as if he had Gilan in mind when, in his "Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" (June 1920), Lenin demanded:

"... a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in the colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations."

—*Collected Works*, Volume 31 (1966)

(This passage is extremely relevant in examining present-day Iranian left-wing groups like the Fedayeen and Peykar, which are *at best* bourgeois-democratic liberation tendencies in "communist colouring.")

Lenin's algebraic formulation for supporting bourgeois-nationalist movements in order to build Communist parties

continued on next page

capable of struggling against them was not fully grasped by PCP leader Sultan Zadeh. Nevertheless, by looking at Lenin's "Theses" through the lens of the Constitutional Revolution and fifteen years of cowardice and betrayal by Iranian bourgeois-democratic movements, Zadeh provided a cautionary warning that was to prove prescient, and not only for Iran:

"The point in the Theses that provides for the support of the bourgeois-democratic movement in the backward countries can, it seems to me, only have reference to those countries in which this movement is in its very early stages. If one were to try to proceed according to the Theses in countries which already have ten or more years of experience, or in those where the movement has already had power, it would mean driving the masses into the arms of the counter-revolution. The task is to create and maintain a purely communist movement in opposition to the bourgeois-democratic one."

—Second Congress of the Communist International (London, 1977)

The debate on bourgeois-democratic liberation movements received an immediate testing in the political microcosm of the Gilan "Soviet Republic." By the fall of 1920 the coalition between the Jangali nationalists and the Communists effectively disintegrated, despite the latter's attempts to patch it up over the course of the next year. Stalinist accounts of the collapse of the Gilan "Soviet Republic" blame Sultan Zadeh's "ultraleftism" and even "Trotskyism." Zadeh did pursue policies that hastened the demise of the PCP-Jangali alliance, including radical agrarian measures and an anti-religious campaign involving the closing of mosques and forcible unveiling of women. But the uneasy alliance would not have survived long no matter what policies the PCP pursued. And with the Red Army's withdrawal in September 1921, Kuchek launched a campaign of terrorism and guerrilla war against the Communists. Shortly thereafter what remained of the Gilan "Soviet Republic" fell to the forces of the central government under its new leader, Reza Khan.

The Gilan experience defined the *limitations* in which Communists could assist bourgeois-democratic and revolutionary-nationalist movements. The *military* united front between Adalat and Jangali was clearly principled and efficacious. It diverted the British from aiding the

Whites, paved the way for the withdrawal of the imperialist armed forces and helped establish a bridgehead for the Bolshevik Revolution to extend itself to Iran. But without the perspective of a nationwide insurrection the Communist capture of power in one isolated province was viable only as long as it was backed by the Red Army. The *political* alliance between the PCP and Jangali in forming a common government was disastrous, for once the British occupation forces were removed, their programs were shown to be entirely incompatible.

World War II: Revolution and Counterrevolution

In the anarchic conditions of 1921 a Russian Cossack adventurer, Reza Khan, encouraged by the British, staged a military coup in Teheran. A few years later he put an end to the shadowy Qajar monarchy and proclaimed himself the shah, founder of the new Pahlavi dynasty.

Contrary to many accounts, the PCP was not reduced to insignificance after the fall of the Gilan "Soviet Republic" and consolidation of a new central state power. The Communists redirected their efforts toward Iran's fledgling proletariat, and not without success. In 1929, for example, veteran Communist organizers led a general strike in the oil fields of Khuzistan. In the 1930s increasing repression caused the PCP to lose its identity as a distinct organization, but illegal Communist-led unions continued to function and wage militant strikes. Basing itself on earlier PCP work, Tudeh was formed in late 1941 centrally by a group of left-wing intellectuals, the so-called "53," who were steeled in Reza Khan's prisons in the 1930s.

With the relative liberalization after the British forced the pro-German Reza Khan to abdicate in favor of his son and the Soviet army's occupation of north Iran, Tudeh grew phenomenally. By 1944 it had 25,000 members. It established a Central Council of the United Trade Unions of Iran (CCUTU) which by 1946 claimed 186 affiliated unions with 400,000 members. Tudeh's strength was concentrated in north Iran since it consciously discouraged organization in the British-occupied south, especially the volatile Khuzistan oil fields, as part of Stalin's subordination and suppression of class struggle in the "democratic"

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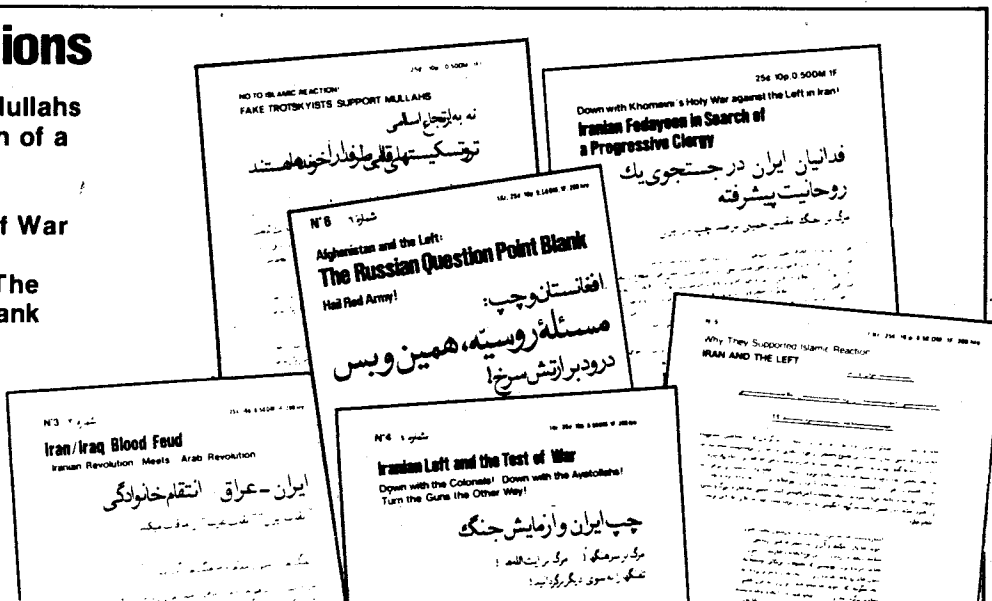
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imperialist countries and their colonies in World War II.

Nonetheless, there is no question that by the end of World War II Iran reached a pre-revolutionary situation in which Tudeh could have taken power. The CCUTU was effectively a government in north Iran—collecting taxes, providing police and judicial functions, issuing travel permits, etc. Further, the Soviet presence provided an enormous impetus to social upheaval. But the Red Army that entered Iran in 1941 was not the revolutionary army of Lenin and Trotsky, and Tudeh was not a revolutionary party. In addition to direct questions of military security, Stalin's policy toward Iran during this period centered on wresting from its government oil and gas concessions similar to those held by British imperialism.

As a pressure tactic to achieve that end, in late 1945 Stalin helped establish a "Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan" with Jafar Pishevari as its prime minister. Although a founder of Iranian Communism, Pishevari had over the years become simply an Azerbaijani nationalist with close ties to the old order. When Tudeh and CCUTU leaders entered his newly formed Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, this became a popular front *par excellence* extending from mullahs and tribal chiefs to Stalinist labor organizers.

During its one year of existence the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan carried out significant social reforms as well as establishing national rights. For the first time in Iran's history, women were granted the right to vote, and the eight-hour day was instituted along with labor and social insurance. However, to maintain the broad class-collaborationist character of the Democratic Republic, agrarian reform was extremely limited. The peasantry proved more radical than the nationalist/Stalinist regime. In many areas peasants, contrary to government decisions, ceased to pay the landlord's share of the crop; in others they divided up land not covered by the land reform law. The Democratic Republic so betrayed the hopes that it had awakened among the peasants that many greeted the return of the Iranian army and the collapse of the Pishevari regime with enthusiasm!

The Kremlin did not want a social revolution in Azerbaijan on its southern border. Social revolution in Azerbaijan would pose pointblank the question of political power in Teheran, thereby disrupting Stalin's game plan for "peaceful coexistence" with Anglo-American imperialism after the war. Furthermore, social revolution in Azerbaijan would pose the question of self-determination within the USSR. Should not a socialist Iranian Azerbaijan be united with Soviet Azerbaijan? From the standpoint of "socialism in one country" the sovereignty of Iran, including the subjugation of its minority nations, was precious to Stalin and directly related to preserving the territorial boundaries of the old tsarist empire.

Azerbaijan was but one pawn to pressure Teheran to grant the Soviet Union oil concessions. The enormous social weight of the Tudeh party was another source of pressure Stalin manipulated. Azerbaijan was to be bartered for a supposedly pro-Soviet regime in Teheran. Stalin chose for "friend of the Soviet Union" the notorious Qavam, gravedigger of the Constitutional Revolution! Qavam became prime minister in January 1946 and a few months later negotiated an agreement for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in exchange for a joint Iran-Soviet oil



Illustrated London News
Teheran, 1951—Tudeh-led mass mobilizations were key in bringing bourgeois nationalist Mohammad Mossadeq to power.

company. An unwritten clause in that agreement was that Tudeh would use its great authority in the proletariat to enforce class peace, and that clause was soon activated.

On the heels of a successful strike by refinery and oil field workers in Khuzistan, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) tried to whip up the traditional antagonism between the more backward, unskilled Arab workers and Persian workers in order to break the pro-Tudeh unions. In self-defense the CCUTU called a general strike in mid-July. After bloody street fighting between Arabs and non-Arabs, Tudeh militias took over the key city of Abadan. At this point at Qavam's urging Tudeh dispatched its general secretary and the CCUTU's first secretary to Abadan to call off the strike even though the workers' demands had not been met.

One week later, as a reward for this class treachery, Qavam brought three Tudeh members into his cabinet. But a scant two months later this "friend of the Soviet Union" purged his Tudeh ministers and moved against their trade-union base. When the CCUTU responded with a one-day general protest strike, Qavam had hundreds of its activists arrested, its headquarters occupied and its paper banned. (For a detailed account of this period, see Ervand Abrahamian, *Social Bases of Iranian Politics: The Tudeh Party, 1941-1953* [1969].)

Having broken the power of the Stalinists in the capital, Qavam launched an invasion of Azerbaijan. Pishevari, perhaps acting on Stalin's counsel, surrendered power without a fight. After one year of existence the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, which had produced such great expectations on the part of the toiling masses in this oppressed nation and throughout the Iranian "prisonhouse of peoples," collapsed, a sacrifice on the altar of Stalin's

continued on next page

counterrevolutionary *realpolitik* of "socialism in one country."

Mossadeq, Bourgeois Nationalism and Tudeh

In 1946 Tudeh threw away a revolutionary opportunity. Yet history would give this undeserving party a new lease on life and a second chance. Even after the debacle of participating in the Qavam government, the Soviet withdrawal and cowardly collapse of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the mass of the Iranian proletariat continued to view Tudeh as *its* party. In 1950 the *New York Herald Tribune* reported that over a third of the Iranian population "either favor the local communist party or prefer it to the ruling oligarchy." Soon the oil nationalization crisis under the regime of Mohammad Mossadeq would again create the opportunity to overthrow that ruling oligarchy.

The oil crisis began in 1949 when opposition led by Mossadeq developed in the Majlis (parliament) to a new agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Mossadeq did not at this time advocate an Iranian takeover of foreign oil, but simply more favorable royalty terms. However, in response to British intransigence, by early 1951 he went beyond demanding a 50-50 split and called for outright nationalization.

Mossadeq was anything but a radical populist. He was an extremely wealthy landowner and member of the Iranian aristocracy related to the old Qajar dynasty. A prominent figure in Iranian politics since the Constitutional Revolution, he was 70 when he became prime minister in 1951. His scorn of the Pahlavi monarchy was not that of a democrat but that of a hereditary nobleman toward a bonapartist upstart. Mossadeq was no "friend of the Soviet Union" and indeed had been in the forefront of Majlis opposition to an Iran-Soviet oil company. Now he sought to enlist the support of American imperialism against British oil interests. Under the prime ministership of this hero of Iranian bourgeois nationalism, the U.S. military mission expanded and U.S. military aid was stepped up.

Mossadeq rose to power in the same period as Nehru, Sukarno and Nasser. The bloodletting of the imperialist adversaries in World War II provided an opening for the colonial masses to rise up and make a bid for national independence. Through the naiveté and opportunism of the nationalist leaderships, these movements frequently saw in the United States an ally against the older colonial powers like Britain, France and Holland.

Mossadeq's National Front, however, was *not* a mass nationalist movement on the order of the Indian Congress Party or Argentine Peronism. Formed in 1949 as a bloc of Majlis delegates, the National Front was thoroughly bourgeois if not aristocratic in composition. It was also composed of two distinct and potentially antagonistic wings. A secular wing rested on Western-oriented and Western-educated technocrats, professionals and civil servants. Representative of this tendency was the engineer Mehdi Bazargan, Mossadeq's minister of education and later for a short time Khomeini's prime minister. The National Front also contained a religious wing, led by ayatollah Kashani, based on the theology students and mullahs of the mosques and the merchants, craftsmen and traders of the bazaar. Over a third of the original National Front delegation in the Majlis were mullahs. The National Front was thus an unstable bloc of the traditional clerical-dominated bourgeoisie of the bazaar and the modern state-subsidized technocratic bourgeoisie. These were temporarily united by their opposition to the British, the demand for the AIOC's nationalization and hostility to the shah's administration. The National Front was not republican (at no time did Mossadeq demand the abolition of the monarchy). And both its engineers and its mullahs assiduously courted American imperialism.

Initially Tudeh did *not* rally to Mossadeq and his campaign for the nationalization of the AIOC (later a cause for numerous *mea culpas* for "leftist sectarianism"). The rise of the National Front coincided with the height of the Cold War polarization between Washington and Moscow. In this global context the Kremlin and its Iranian followers viewed Mossadeq's nationalization campaign as an instrument of U.S. imperialism in its rivalry with the British. Half a year after Mossadeq took office, one Tudeh paper summed up the party's attitude toward the new regime:

"Dr. Mossadeq and his friends in the so-called National Front are dancing to the tune of imperialistic America. They have no other intention but to arrange a quick victory for the American oil-eaters in their campaign against imperialistic Britain."

—quoted in Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (1964)

But despite the Stalinists' initial hostility to the National Front, the latter depended on Tudeh for the mass mobilizations which put it in power and kept it there over two years. For the toiling masses followed only Tudeh and they followed the bourgeoisie only when Tudeh followed the bourgeoisie. While Mossadeq was speechifying in the Majlis, Tudeh was forced by its combative proletarian base to lead huge strikes and demonstrations which demanded oil nationalization. In March 1951 the firing of 500 textile workers led to a strike of 10,000, closing down the mills of Isfahan, a strike which raised the call for oil nationalization as well as immediate economic demands. The following month, in the face of martial law, Abadan was paralyzed by a general strike. Both these strikes involved bloody clashes with the army.

Frightened by this wave of proletarian militancy, the shah appointed Mossadeq prime minister on April 28 and the AIOC was nationalized in May. In response, the world oil cartel refused to buy now state-owned Iranian oil, thereby depriving the country of its main source of export earnings. Mossadeq's stream of appeals to the Truman and

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August, 1953: Mullah-led thugs in Teheran (right) spearheaded CIA-backed royalist/military coup which overthrew Mossadeq (below).



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Der Spiegel

then Eisenhower administrations were of no avail in overcoming the Seven Sisters' boycott, which gradually strangled the economy.

Despite Mossadeq's pro-American proclivities, it was the duty of revolutionaries to defend the nationalization of the AIOC against imperialist retaliation just as Trotsky supported the more radical expropriation of British oil interests in Mexico by the militant nationalist Lazaro Cardenas in the late 1930s. An independent proletarian class policy would defend these anti-imperialist acts without giving an iota of political support to the bourgeois nationalist, i.e., anti-working class, regimes which carry them out.

Apart from nationalizing oil Mossadeq instituted no significant reforms. His electoral law strengthened the influence of the ulema and refused to give women the vote. To favor the bazaar and Islamic hierarchy he reduced taxes on small capital and banned alcohol. His "land reform" consisted of a modest ceiling on rents and resembled the bogus "land reforms" common to U.S.-backed Latin American juntas.

At the same time, the wave of proletarian radicalism which had propelled the National Front into power did not subside. Mossadeq's attempt to suppress this with his "social stabilization" law banning strikes only drove more workers over to Tudeh. The growing influence of Tudeh under the National Front regime convinced U.S. imperialism that no matter how pro-American Mossadeq was

personally, he was not sufficiently ruthless and reactionary to deal with "the communist menace."

Because Mossadeq did not touch the barbaric, feudal social relations in the countryside, the landlords, tribal chiefs and provincial mullahs returned to the Majlis in the spring 1952 elections right-wing opponents of the National Front. Mossadeq suspended these elections halfway through, throwing the country into a parliamentary crisis. Realizing he would have to rely on the Tudeh-led working masses or on the army to remain in power, Mossadeq made a bid to win away the loyalty of the armed forces from the shah and demanded the ministry of war portfolio. When the shah refused, Mossadeq resigned in protest and the shah appointed as prime minister the old reactionary Qavam. By this time Tudeh had decided to throw in its lot with the National Front. Qavam held office but four days before a Tudeh-led mass strike in Teheran forced the shah and Majlis to recall Mossadeq.

Mossadeq returned to office determined to assume sweeping powers, bring the army under his control and curb the authority of the shah. He took over the war ministry, purged some officers, transferred 10,000 soldiers to the gendarmerie over which he had more formal control, cut the royal family's budget and ordered the shah's powerful and sinister sister, Princess Ashraf, to stay abroad. Liberal opinion spoke of Iran's transition to a "constitutional monarchy."

Although Mossadeq was far less radical than Allende, events in Iran during 1953 resembled the last days of the Unidad Popular in Chile in 1973. The international oil boycott pushed the bourgeoisie and sections of the petty bourgeoisie into opposition to Mossadeq while deteriorating economic conditions drove the plebeian masses into desperation. With the acute class polarization ayatollah Kashani and his followers split from the National Front and went over to the royalist opposition. Kashani stormed out of the Majlis demanding that Mossadeq be hanged. On the left, the influence of Tudeh continued to grow apace. On the anniversary of the July 1952 general strike Tudeh demonstrations outnumbered those of the National Front by a factor of 10 or 15 to one.

On August 13 the shah announced that Mossadeq was to be replaced by the American-backed general Zahedi and two days later he ordered the arrest of the National Front leader. The Imperial Guard attacked Mossadeq's home only to be overwhelmed and disarmed by loyal army units. At this point the shah fled to Rome.

On August 16 Tudeh brought tens of thousands of its supporters into the streets in defense of Mossadeq. The pro-Tudeh demonstrators pulled down statues of the shah and demanded an end to the monarchy. Almost every observer at the time commented that Tudeh could have taken power that day. But the Stalinists looked to Mossadeq to carry through the "democratic revolution." Instead Mossadeq called on the army to crack down on Tudeh. Sepehr Zabih, at the time of the coup the London *Times* correspondent in Teheran, writes:

"Refusing the Communists' demand for armed resistance to the counterrevolution, it [the National Front government] instead ordered the army to repress the Tudeh rioters in the capital city. In the course of doing so, the army turned against the government, thus playing the decisive

continued on next page

part in the day-long rioting and bloodshed which ended with royalist-military victory."

—*The Communist Movement in Iran* (1966)

A key figure in this royalist-military victory was general Fazlollah Zahedi. Like Chile's Pinochet, Zahedi was considered by the Mossadeq forces a "constitutional" officer and even close enough to the National Front to be included in its first cabinet and made head of the "loyal" gendarmerie. Yet by mid-1952 he was working closely with American military advisers and the CIA plotting Mossadeq's overthrow.

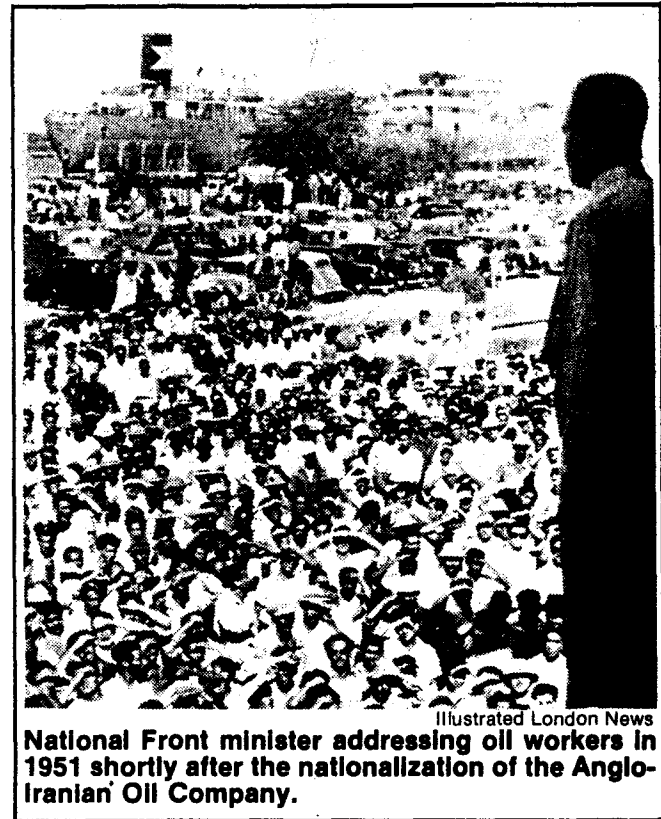
But the army acted only *after* pro-shah demonstrators had taken over the streets of Teheran on the morning of August 19. This demonstration was mobilized by ayatollah Kashani and his network of young clerical-fascist thugs, the chaqu keshan. Richard Cottam, who served two years as "political officer" in the U.S. embassy in Iran, observed: "The mob that appeared from the slums of South Teheran on August 19, 1953, and presented the rightist Army generals with victory over Mossadeq were mullah- and chaqu keshan-led" (*Nationalism in Iran*). Today the fake-leftists who fabricate a "progressive, anti-imperialist Shi'ite clergy" remain silent on the role of the mullahs and chaqu keshan in the overthrow of Mossadeq. And today the opportunism of Tudeh has led it to fight side by side with the hezbollahi, the progeny of the chaqu keshan, in defense of a bloody reactionary theocracy.

From Mossadeq to Khomeini: Search for a "Progressive" Bourgeoisie

Once again as in 1946 Tudeh with the social resources sufficient to crush reaction and lead the proletariat to power instead went down to ignominious defeat without a fight. But unlike the period after 1946 Tudeh would not now have the chance to recoup. 19 August 1953 would mark the beginning of a savage police state that would systematically and ruthlessly crush Tudeh as a mass party, rendering it a deeply underground and impotent force for nearly two decades.

Party membership declined from 25,000 to less than 4,000 by January 1954. So demoralized was the party that leading cadre defected to the shah's administration and secret police. As a consequence a secret military organization of more than 600 officers was discovered. Instead of using this strategically placed network for intelligence and to prepare a proletarian insurrection, Tudeh was lulled into the belief it could win over the bulk of the shah's officers. Not only did Tudeh lack an appetite for independent political power, it lacked even the instinct for self-preservation.

The long-term effect on Tudeh of the August 1953 coup was to deepen the party's opportunism, paving the way for it to become shock troops for Shi'ite clerical reaction. In 1960 it demanded "a regime of national democracy representing... the workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie (tradesmen and shopkeepers), intellectuals, civil servants and the national capitalists." The major spokesman for this line was central committee secretary Nureddin Kianuri who in 1976 argued for an alliance with "social forces in Iran, which, though far removed from the left, even from anything democratic, are eager to see the present regime done away with" ("Alignment of Class Forces at the Democratic Stage of the Revolution," *World Marxist*



Illustrated London News
National Front minister addressing oil workers in 1951 shortly after the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

Review, February 1976). In January 1979 on the eve of the mullahs' conquest of power, Kianuri was elevated to general secretary declaring support for Khomeini's Revolutionary Council and the complete compatibility of his party's program with the ayatollah's action program.

Tudeh's support to the "national" bourgeoisie was part and parcel of the Kremlin's global policy. But in Iran the Kremlin extended the "national" bourgeoisie to include the shah himself! When the shah visited Moscow in 1965, as a token of friendship Tudeh militants in exile were repatriated to Iran to be executed! Along with the blood of Tudeh the shah returned to Teheran with the promise of significant Soviet economic aid.

The criminal opportunism of Tudeh and the Kremlin generated a series of splits in the 1960s in the direction of Maoism and Third Worldist guerrillaism. While more militant than the reformist Tudeh, these tendencies largely consisted of petty-bourgeois intellectuals and embraced an essentially populist outlook. Perhaps the most important split from Tudeh was led by Bizhan Jazani in 1963. His group was one of the founding components in 1971 of the Organization of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas or Fedayeen. A man of political integrity, courage and talent, Jazani was arrested after the August 1953 coup and spent much of the rest of his life in the shah's jails and torture chambers, where he was murdered in 1975. Even in the SAVAK's dungeons he was a prolific writer.

There he wrote what is probably the only honest account of Tudeh produced by the Iranian left, *The History of Contemporary Iran*. With Maoist and other pro-Stalin groups in mind, Jazani observed that they "close their eyes to such errors committed not only in Iran but in many other parts of the world in the 1940s; they have no criticisms to make about the policies adopted by the Russians under

Stalin's leadership." Of course, Stalin's crimes were not mere "errors" and they did not begin in the 1940s, but Jazani at least poses the decisive historical and programmatic questions for revolutionaries.

Yet Jazani demonstrates how little he actually broke with the Stalinist outlook when he deals with the Mossadeq period. He commends Mossadeq's pro-American policies as wise statesmanship and criticizes Tudeh's often bloody, militant anti-American demonstrations as a "fundamental error of judgement." The fact that Tudeh's warnings about the nefarious role of U.S. imperialism—whatever their opportunist motivations—were completely confirmed in 1953 is lost on Jazani. For Jazani and the Fedayeen today, whether in regard to U.S. imperialism in the early 1950s or Khomeini in 1978-79, those who warn the masses of a lethal danger in order to prepare them for combat are condemned as "sectarians" and "adventurers." Critical analysis is reserved for funeral orations over the victims.

During the Mossadeq period thousands of workers flocked into Tudeh and its trade-union organizations precisely under the illusion that Tudeh was the party of the Russian Revolution and would provide a socialist solution to the massive contradictions of Iranian society. But Jazani is so committed to two-stage revolution he is incapable of comprehending these popular socialist aspirations even though he was an active Tudeh supporter in the early 1950s. He actually praises the international oil boycott and Mossadeq's "economy without oil" for fostering "the unprecedented growth of the national bourgeoisie." This petty-bourgeois nationalist infatuation with national economic autarky goes so far as to acclaim the fact that "workshop production and traditional industries also grew at an enormous rate." By "traditional industries" Jazani means those backbreaking manual trades, like carpet weaving, performed by young girls 12 to 14 hours a day in dark mud huts. Here we see a tendency on the Iranian left, in response to the shah's ostentatious "Westernization," to glorify the traditional, backward aspects of Iran's social life. This tendency culminated in support to the reactionary utopianism of the Islamic Republic.

Jazani presents many telling criticisms of Tudeh's cowardly capitulation in August 1953, concentrating on its lack of military preparedness. But these military criticisms are made from a strategic political perspective far to the right of Tudeh's policies in the early 1950s. As is the case with many Latin American guerrillaists, Jazani combines an "armed struggle" perspective with a deeply opportunist program fully in the tradition of Stalinist class collaborationism.

In another work, written in 1973, Jazani carried the methodology of two-stage revolution to the same treacherous conclusion as the consummate Tudeh opportunist Kianuri. He maintained that "the principle contradiction" was between the shah and "the anti-dictatorship forces" regardless of their class character and political program:

"We must use the intellectuals, the petit-bourgeoisie, together with any other anti-dictatorship elements, be they progressive or reactionary, for the mobilisation of the toiling masses, namely, the main force for a people's democratic revolution." [our emphasis]

—Iran... *The Socio-Economic Analysis of a Dependent Capitalist State*

In the "Islamic revolution" it was the reactionary Shi'ite clergy which "used" the Fedayeen and other left groups to

replace the shah's dictatorship with a theocratic dictatorship just as bloody and oppressive. The Fedayeen with their stagist methodology ended up fighting to bring to power the "new shah," the imam Khomeini.

The Fedayeen had its origins in Tudeh Stalinism from which it never really broke. Iran's other large organization which played a major role in the shah's downfall, the Mujahedin, had its origins in the religious wing of the National Front. A core of clerical and religiously devout middle-class elements, led by Mehdi Bazargan and ayatollah Taleqani, remained loyal to Mossadeq after the 1953 coup. To bridge the gap between the secular middle-class base of the bazaar and mosque, Bazargan and Taleqani founded the Liberation Movement of Iran in 1961.

The Mujahedin was formed out of the Liberation Movement during the 1963 crisis generated by the shah's assault on Shi'ite clerical privilege, a crisis which involved mass mullah-led mobilizations followed by bloody suppressions by the shah's army and the exile of ayatollah Khomeini. The founding cadre of the Mujahedin were mainly graduates of the technical facilities of Teheran

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University. They were the sons of mullahs, bazaar merchants and traders, exclusively Shi'ite and Persian and exclusively men whereas the Fedayeen were of a more secular background, included religious and national minorities and a substantial number of women. Despite these significant social differences, over time the two anti-shah guerrillaist groups underwent a certain ideological convergence around a vague nationalist populism.

The impact of the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions led the sons of mullahs and bazaar merchants in the Mujahedin to an intense debate over Marxism in the early 1970s. In May 1975 a majority of the leadership in Teheran voted to declare the organization "Marxist-Leninist." This transformation was described in a letter by Mujtabi Taleqani, one of the leaders at the time, to his father, ayatollah Taleqani:

"Before I used to think that those who believed in historical materialism could not possibly make the supreme sacrifice since they had no faith in the afterlife. Now I know that the highest sacrifice anyone can make is to die for the liberation of the working class."

—quoted in Ervand Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," *MERIP Reports* No. 86, March/April 1980

However, the wing of the Islamic Mujahedin which remained anti-Marxist and anti-proletarian grew rapidly into a mass movement while the "Marxist" Mujahedin evolved into the far smaller Maoist-Stalinist Peykar. Peykar was and remains an extremely contradictory organization. On the one hand, it is the only group on the Iranian left to have a revolutionary *defeatist* position on the Iran-Iraq war, indicating some anti-chauvinist impulses. But it is also the most virulently anti-Soviet group on the Iranian left and so has a line on Afghanistan indistinguishable from the CIA and Khomeini.

While they claim to be "Marxist," the Fedayeen and Peykar stand much closer to the *narodnik* populist tradition of nineteenth-century Russia. Genuine revolutionaries can be won from their ranks but only through the kind of uncompromising political struggle that Lenin waged against similar formations.

How Khomeini Came to Power

Why was the enormous hatred for the shah, brought to white heat by years of savage repression and conspicuous corruption combined with megalomaniacal self-deification, channeled into the deeply repressive institutions of the Shi'ite clergy? There are two reasons, one related to the objective development of Iranian society under the shah, the other to the subjective factor, namely, the bankruptcy of all the other oppositions—the bourgeois nationalists, Tudeh Stalinists and petty-bourgeois guerrillaists.

While Reza Pahlavi was returned to power in 1953 with the backing of the mosque and bazaar, he saw these institutions as deeply embedded obstacles in his drive for an autocratic and modern capitalist state. His answer to the bazaar was to build shopping centers and establish a modern banking system which drove the traditional middle class into a frenzy without ameliorating the condition of the proletariat and urban poor. Despite these incursions on its economic power, the bazaar still accounted for a third of Iran's imports and two-thirds of its retail trade in the late 1970s. Bazaar capital was thus able to finance the

country's 180,000 mullahs, one for every 200 persons. At the same time, the shah's agrarian reform drove thousands of dispossessed peasants into the slums and shanty towns of the major cities. These dispossessed became a fertile recruiting ground for the Islamic opposition.

For with the destruction of Tudeh as a mass party, there was no other mass organized opposition to the shah. The old men of the National Front became human relics, incapable of recruiting the younger generation to their cause. Given the Majlis cretinism of Tudeh and the National Front, the children of Mossadeq's supporters sought to emulate the guerrilla war strategy of Mao and Castro. But populist armed struggle, which ignored the question of which *class* will hold power and how that class will be mobilized and led, only allowed anti-proletarian and anti-democratic forces to reap the rewards of their heroism.

As long as the shah jailed, tortured and murdered Tudeh militants and even National Front leaders, the Shi'ite clergy raised not a peep of protest. The Islamic (Khomeinist) opposition dates from the 1963 "White Revolution" when the shah began to make inroads into the mullahs' endowments and property and its control over law and social mores. Then the mullahs organized huge protests against including mosque land under the agrarian reform laws and extending Majlis suffrage to women. Given the savagery of the shah's terror, the bankruptcy of the weak nationalist bourgeoisie and the treachery of Tudeh, the Shi'ite clergy developed into the only effective nationwide opposition. It was the force which linked together a population dispersed over mountain ranges and deserts in a thousand tiny villages.

The post-1973 oil boom fueled the migration of millions of peasants to the cities to look for work, creating a huge population of semi-proletarianized and semi-lumpenized shanty-town dwellers who never broke their ties with the mosque. When the oil boom burst in the late '70s unemployment skyrocketed, creating a mass base of discontent easily exploited by the mullahs and financed by the bazaaris. Each brutal repression by the shah's army of the massive Khomeinist protests only magnified their forces.

The dramatic confrontations between the mullah-led crowds and the shah's hated armed forces during 1978 finally shook awake Iran's slumbering yet powerful

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proletariat. In the fall of 1978 the strategic core of that proletariat—the oil workers—went into action. By late October oil output had fallen from 5,700 to 1,700 barrels a day. Big wage settlements did nothing to stem the strike wave extending throughout the private and government sectors, paralyzing the economy and becoming explicitly political. While the Iranian left sought to *subordinate* these strikes to the Khomeinist mobilization, revolutionaries would have struggled for an *independent* class perspective.

When the Spartacist tendency pointed to a revolutionary *proletarian* alternative to clerical reaction in the anti-shah mobilizations of 1978, this expressed the real possibilities of class struggle at that time. It was above all the mass militant strikes that sounded the death knell of the Peacock Throne, not the hundreds of martyrs who died for Allah. What was lacking was a Leninist vanguard party to lead the Iranian working class to power. And without an independent political leadership the working-class struggles of late 1978 only served as a battering ram to bring to power the deeply anti-proletarian Shi'ite clergy.

For Permanent Revolution in Iran

The Spartacist tendency has emphasized the similarities between Iran and tsarist Russia, both multi-national states with narrowly based and unstable ruling classes and with enormous social contradictions between a technologically advanced industrial sector and a countryside stamped in the middle ages. In Iran today, as in the Russian Caucasus in the early twentieth century, peasants plow fields with oxen under the shadow of huge oil rigs. Neither bourgeois nationalists of the National Front type nor Tudeh Stalinists nor petty-bourgeois guerrillaists can solve the fundamental democratic questions posed by Iran's combined and uneven development, questions centering around the peasantry, the nationalities and women.

Iran's peasantry, spread out over innumerable tiny villages, still constitutes over 50 percent of the population. This vast social force will be led either by the bourgeoisie, principally operating through the Shi'ite clergy, or by the industrial proletariat which stands for the program of "land to the tiller." Tudeh has never addressed the peasant

question except in the most abstract terms. And during the Stalinists' brief stint in power in the 1946 Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, they were seen by the peasants as allies of the landlords. The National Front was a party of landlords. Indeed Mossadeq's agrarian reform was less radical than the shah's. Only the proletariat can stand as champion of the poor peasantry and rural proletariat, for only it dares to challenge the old property relations.

In Iran the national minorities constitute a majority of the population as they did in tsarist Russia. On the national question Iran's pseudo-democrats (not to speak of pseudo-Leninists) of "two-stage revolution" have been either chauvinists or political cowards. Tudeh and the National Front have historically been Persian chauvinists who called on the central government in Teheran, whether of Mossadeq or a favorite of the shah, to trample on the rights of the minority nationalities. The national minorities, like the peasantry, can be an enormous reserve for social revolution only if the proletarian vanguard champions their rights, including the right to a *separate state*. The Iranian left tries to cover its Persian chauvinism with talk of "autonomy." Only the Spartacist tendency consistently upholds the elementary democratic right of self-determination in the Persian "prison house of peoples."

No other democratic question is more decisive in the East than the woman question. The "traditional industries," like carpet weaving, praised by Jazani, exploit little girls, destroying their youth and breaking their health. They grow old and die before the prime of their womanhood. In Iran as throughout the Islamic East the symbol of the enslavement of women is the veil. And it was in defense of the veil, perhaps above all else, that Khomeini rose up against the shah's cosmetic "Westernization." Thousands of secularized Iranian women who courageously took arms against the shah's dictatorship are now being forced back into the veil! The fundamental property transformation in the countryside as well as the cities, enforced by the proletarian dictatorship, is the precondition to break the heavy and brutal chains which enslave women in Iran.

The Soviet intervention in neighboring Afghanistan poses a crucial test for the Iranian left. Afghanistan embodies all of the backward wretchedness of Iran—the tyranny of the landlords, khans, money lenders and mullahs—but without the internal social resources (i.e., a modern industrial proletariat) for its own emancipation. The Red Army intervention not only poses the military defense of the social gains of the October Revolution against an imperialist-backed counterrevolution on the southern border of the USSR. It also poses the extension of those gains to the oppressed Afghan peoples. The crime of the Kremlin bureaucrats would be to capitulate to world imperialism (as Stalin did in Azerbaijan in 1946) and withdraw the Red Army, thereby turning Afghanistan over to the tribal chiefs, the CIA and Khomeini and his ilk.

In the epoch of imperialism the democratic tasks of the emancipation of oppressed nations, enslaved women and exploited peasantry can be resolved only with the proletariat in power. Only through the merging of the struggle for proletarian power in the West and East, the vision of Lenin's Third International and Trotsky's Fourth International, can imperialist domination be shattered once and for all. ■

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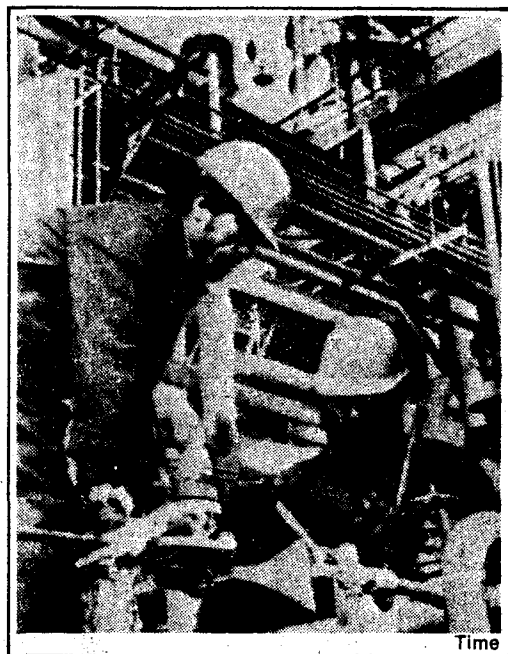
From Mossadeq's National Front to Khomeini's Reaction

Iran and Permanent Revolution

The bloody dictatorship of Shi'ite ayatollahs in Iran is teaching the oppressed masses daily what the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) warned from the inception of the "Islamic Revolution": Khomeini in power would be no less reactionary than the shah. When the shah's Peacock Throne crumbled in late 1978 and it was clear that Iran's powerful Islamic clergy would attempt to capture power, the iSt was unique in demanding: "Down with the Shah—Down with the Mullahs! For Workers Revolution in Iran!" At the time self-styled Iranian leftists abroad denounced that slogan as manufactured by the CIA and SAVAK and attempted to break up our public meetings on Iran, chanting "Long Live Khomeini!" Now that Khomeini has "rewarded" thousands of Iranian leftists for their support with jail, torture and execution, the very same Iranians who once attacked our meetings now attack Iranian embassies chanting "Death to Khomeini!" and "Khomeini Is Another Shah!"

Under the gun of Islamic clerical reaction the Iranian left has been forced to debate and reconsider their programs and perspectives. Those Iranian leftists who want to find the path to socialist revolution must *reject* the "two-stage revolution," the programmatic basis for their support to Khomeini, which today leads many to embrace Bani-Sadr. This dogma starts from the incontestable premise that in backward countries like Iran, whose economic and social development has been retarded by imperialist enslavement, the historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in West Europe, especially agrarian revolution and national independence and integration, remain on the agenda. From this is drawn the utterly false conclusion that there must be a "first stage" in which the colonial bourgeoisie (or its alleged "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" component) carries out the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Socialist revolution is indefinitely postponed and the proletariat subordinated to the "progressive" bourgeoisie. The "two-stage revolution" dogma has beheaded the working class from China in 1926-1927 to Chile in 1970-1973 to Iran today.

Historically the main exponent of the "two-stage"



Time



AP
Only the revolutionary proletariat can liberate Iran from Islamic obscurantism and medieval backwardness.

dogma in Iran has been the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh party, since its inception in World War II the mass party of the Iranian proletariat. Today Tudeh continues to give such groveling support to Khomeini that its cadre are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the murderous pasdaran and fascist thugs of the hezbollahi in killing leftists. Yet while excoriating the Tudeh for this treachery, Khomeini's leftist opponents, principally the Fedayeen Minority and Maoist/Stalinist Peykar, still adhere to the "two-stage" methodology.

Now many of these leftists look toward the Mujahedin/Bani-Sadr oppositional bloc as the new "first stage." Openly repudiating Marxism and class struggle, the Mujahedin espouse the Islamic road to a utopian society. Seeking a more "democratic" Islamic Republic they have turned to none other than Bani-Sadr, the ayatollah's secular front man for more than two decades and later

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