



Ledru/Sygma

## No to Khomeini's Islamic Reaction— For Workers Revolution in Iran!

# Shah's Death Agony

JANUARY 2—The slogan increasingly heard in the streets of Teheran is, "Victory is near!" After more than a year of massive demonstrations led by the religious opposition, bitter street fighting and a powerful strike movement, and at the cost of thousands of dead, the brutal dictator who calls himself the "Light of the Aryans" seems to be nearing the end of his rope. The military government which assumed power in November has failed to carry out its assigned task of suppressing the anti-shah upsurge. This had become clear by the religious holidays of Moharram, which became the occasion for mammoth demonstrations on December 10 and 11 that the regime found it impossible to prevent.

The shah continues to maintain that he will not step down, but no one believes him. To prove that he had not yet followed his relatives into exile in the U.S., the shah allowed reporters into the Niavarab Palace on January 1—on the condition that they ask him no questions. But to a photographer's inquiry about his plans for a possible "vacation"

the shah responded, "I would love to if the situation permits." However, displaying the paralyzed rigidity characteristic of embattled autocracies from Louis XVI to the Romanovs, the shah refuses to abdicate. While one attempt after another to entice opposition politicians into a "government of national conciliation" fails, events are heading toward a violent confrontation between the masses and the regime. All eyes are now turned on the army.

Practically helpless to alter the course of events within Iran, the U.S. has dispatched a carrier taskforce from the Philippines to the Persian Gulf. This potential "show of force," a replay of 19th-century gunboat diplomacy, is a direct challenge to the Soviet Union, which has warned against U.S. intervention. It is as yet unclear just how far the U.S. government is prepared to go but the American left and labor movement must not permit any imperialist adventures in Iran under the guise of the "protection of American citizens."

The complete failure of the shah's martial law regime to quell the national

uprising has forced him to turn to the last resort urged on him by an increasingly desperate U.S. imperialism. This is the so-called "Spanish solution" in which a new civilian government would take charge, transforming the absolute monarchy into a constitutional one. But Iran is not Spain and every oppositionist knows that whatever the constitutional form, as long as the shah remains in the country it will remain a bonapartist dictatorship as he continues to wield the real power through the army.

This is why Shahpur Bakhtiar, the long-time member of the bourgeois liberal National Front opposition named by the shah to head the new government, has found no one willing to enter his proposed cabinet. Despite Bakhtiar's questionable claim that he has the shah's promise to turn over control of the army, leave the country temporarily, abolish the secret police and place the monarchy in the hands of a regency council, politicians like Karim Sanjabi, head of the National Front, remain unconvinced. Sanjabi continues to abide by Muslim patriarch Ruhollah

Khomeini's injunction that nothing less than the shah's abdication is acceptable.

The Iranian masses are in the streets, engaging in bloody confrontations with the shah's army. In the latest incident, demonstrators served up popular justice to three agents of the hated SAVAK secret police in the northeastern city of Meshed, stabbing them several times before hanging them up by the heels to bleed to death in front of a major hospital. Troops arriving on the scene shot into the crowd, killing many. In all, oppositionists estimate that 700 protesters were killed in Meshed over the weekend of December 30-31.

But the millions of anti-shah workers and peasants, instead of relying on their own independent strength to settle accounts with the murderous Pahlavi dynasty, continue to follow the lead of the mullahs, the rank and file of the reactionary landholding Islamic clergy. The goal of the fundamentalist Muslim leaders is clear: the creation of an "Islamic Republic," which is to say a dictatorship of the clerical hierarchy. Such a regime would merely replace the exploitation and oppression of the shah's dictatorship with an even more reactionary theocratic government looking back for its inspiration to the "golden age" of the seventh century.

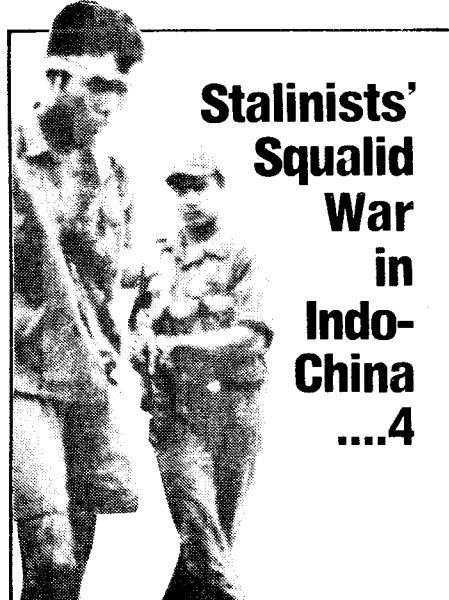
### Fissures in the Army

The growing divisions within the military give particular urgency to U.S. imperialism's desperate attempts to resolve the crisis. At long last the insulation of the ranks of the army from the protests is eroding. Hundreds of soldiers are deserting in Qum and Meshed, often turning their weapons over to anti-shah insurgents. According to the *New York Times* (19 December), "Indeed, one reason the Government pulled its troops off the streets last weekend rather than try to stop religious

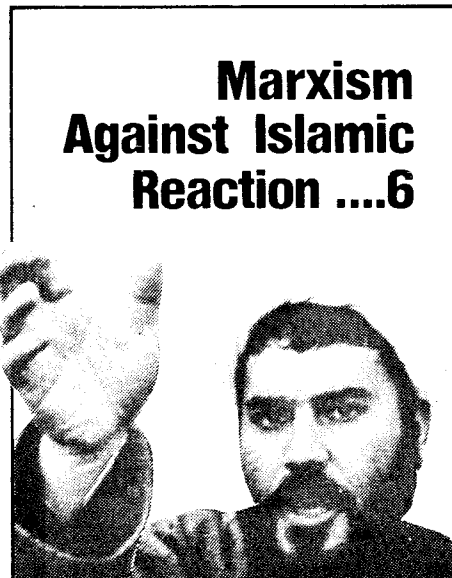
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## Reformists Weep for Strikebreaker Moscone

In the days following the mass suicide/murder in Jonestown, as the media spewed out reams of homilies about cultland California, San Francisco reeled under the impact of another hometown shocker. Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were gunned down in their offices by a crazed ex-cop and former supervisor, Dan White. In a rising chorus assorted preachers and politicians, windbags and scribblers joined in handwringing sermonizing against "irrational hatred and violence." On the night of the double murder, 30,000 San Franciscans communed in a pray-in for decency, led by Joan Baez singing "Kumbaya" and "Amazing Grace."

The bizarre deaths of more than 900 People's Temple followers in far-off Guyana were bad enough, especially as Moscone had appointed Jim Jones S.F. housing commissioner not so long ago, but the in-house assassination at City Hall was positively

unnerving for California Democrats. It's at such moments that the liberals assert their claim to "respect human life," always in the service of the status quo. If Jonestown seemed too outlandish, the Moscone/Milk assassinations were made to order for their hysterical bathos. Here was the Kennedy assassination writ small; all liberal goodness and tolerance on one side, reaction and social malignancy on the other.

The Democrats have done their best to make political hay out of the S.F. assassinations. The victims were the "friend of labor" and the uncloseted gay "progressive" on the city council; the assassin is an out-and-out anti-homosexual bigot. White's election leaflets proclaimed, "I'm not going to be forced out of San Francisco by splinter groups of radicals, social deviates and incorrigibles." You see, for liberals murder is not respectable unless it is done on a mass scale, by raining bombs over Vietnam or aiding the



Jim Jones (left) shakes hands with Moscone.

terror regime of a Pinochet in Chile or the shah of Iran. And predictably the pundits of bourgeois "decency" were joined by their reformist copy boys in the workers movement.

On the day of the murders the San Francisco county committee of the Communist Party (CP) quickly

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## Jim Jones and M. Varga

The Jonestown mass suicide/murder threw a spotlight on cultism and some found the glare quite uncomfortable. The Black Panthers said the People's Temple was a CIA counterinsurgency plot. Lynn Marcus' Labor Committee provocateurs rushed to publish documentary "evidence" that Kissinger, Timothy Leary and the London banks were behind the whole thing. And the infallibly paranoid Healyite Workers League saw a government cover-up and demanded a state investigation of Jim Jones.

But credit for the strangest reaction of all goes to the circle of American supporters of Michel Varga, the highly dubious Hungarian emigré who after appealing in the late 1950's to the U.S. State Department to fund his activities now parades around as self-proclaimed leader of the "reconstructed" Fourth International. The group's paper, misnamed *Truth*, was particularly enraged by our article in *WV* No. 220 (1 December), which the Vargaites term "the ravings of a lunatic, a piece of clinical psychopathology" for which "a straight-jacket would be too good a punishment" (*Truth*, 8 December).

But why is "Truth, Inc." so wrought up about Jonestown? Evidently they have a bad case of cultism on the brain. Elsewhere in the same issue the Vargaites



Michel Varga

Jaume Mor

take violent exception to the SWP's simple-minded "socialist analysis" of Jonestown. The *Militant* (8 December) article read like a parody of Marxism, saying in essence that it was capitalism that spiked the

Kool-Aid. With equally illuminating insight the SWP explained that a mass-murdering cultist is not the Marxist idea of leadership. "The program of Marxism is not to 'follow the leader,' but to inspire the masses... to take their destiny into their own hands," observed the *Militant* sagely.

Ho hum, right? But the Vargaites were hit where it hurts. Indignantly, *Truth* responds: "The Socialist Workers Party which claims our banner of Trotskyism is supporting this attack on revolutionary leadership." We rub our eyes and read the passage again. Yes indeed, according to them the bourgeois media barrage on Jonestown is trying to tell the workers that, "This is what you get for following 'leaders'—above all those who call themselves 'Leninists'." "It is not leadership, but in defense of which class," says *Truth*, labelling the crazed Jim Jones "a lackey of the Democratic Party."

The Vargaites' bizarre response demonstrates a view of leadership which links them to all the Gerry Healys, Lyn Marcuses... and Jim Jones. With a sort of cultist solidarity they see any attack on cultism as an injury to all. In their own minds, they see Jim Jones and Michel Varga as brothers under the skin. And obviously they are. ■

## Letters

### Healy's Goat

Editorial Board  
*Workers Vanguard*

Dear Comrades,

In your enjoyable recent article on the SWP ["Spartacist League Gets SWP's Goat," *WV* No. 221, 15 December 1978], you pointed out how the SWP deliberately evades discussing "the things that really get the SWP's goat" when they attack the SL. In particular, you noted the SL's work in the trade unions, the recent Marjorie Stamberg State Assembly election campaign in New York and the competition between the SWP and SL to win over left-wingers breaking with the Socialist Party (the former Debs Caucus). I wonder why you failed to give your publications a share of the credit. For example, *WV*'s coverage of the election debate over Crown Heights ["Class Struggle or Race War?," *WV* No. 218, 3 November 1978] or *Women and Revolution*'s scathing review of Evelyn Reed's *Women's Evolution* ["Evelyn Reed Savages Early Man," *W&R* No. 17, Summer 1978] certainly must have provoked some uneasiness in SWP circles.

Also I think you miss a bet when you argue against the SWP's capitulation to the Iranian mullahs without making the obvious analogy to the Healyite tendency's prostration before Qaddafi's Muslim clericalist "socialist paradise" in Libya. In both cases, the opportunists grotesquely capitulate to reactionary anti-working-class leaders using as an excuse "anti-imperialism." It would certainly get the goat of the sober, ultra-respectable SWP to be compared to the frenzied sectarian Healyites, but the SWP's support to a "revolution" led by a privileged religious caste with a program of returning to the 7th century is surely as

grotesque politically as the Healyites' praise of their favorite "progressive" egomaniac.

Communist greetings,  
L.G.

\* \* \* \* \*

*WV replies:* L. G. raises an interesting point in likening Khomeini to Qaddafi. Certainly the Healyites' capitulation (fully shared by the SWP) to the "Arab Revolution" rhetoric paved the way for a deal with the Libyan dictator. Hailing as a "revolution" something which had nothing to do with social transformation or even democratic struggle within the Arab countries but meant merely a "holy war" against a foreign enemy was no less cynical than the SWP's present attempt to transform Muslim clerical reactionaries (like supporting Southern Baptist fundamentalist preachers in this country) into "progressives" by a stroke of the pen. But the SWP's support to the mullah-led movement is consistent with its politics of tailing "masses in motion" whatever their leadership or program, whereas there is a bizarre element in the Healyites' press agency for Qaddafi. An example of the difference is that nobody has suggested the SWP is receiving any *quid pro quo* for its services to the mullahs. ■

### More on Jonestown

Palo Alto, California  
December 7, 1978

To the Editor:

In *WV* No. 220, December 1, 1978, p. 11, "Get the Witchhunters, Not the Witches," you write: "To hell with the cults. Let them kill themselves if that is their

desire." Though you are clearly correct in showing that the FBI, or any branch of the U.S. government, is not to be called upon to stop and prevent cults and their destructiveness, you are way off the mark in your attitude toward cult members. That is, if the statements here quoted express that attitude. As is made clear in the article, "Cult Suicide in Guyana: Why?" the members of these cults are sometimes "subjectively revolutionary men and women who want to strike out against their oppressors." These are not people towards whom revolutionaries should adopt a "to hell with them" attitude. These are people who must be won over to an objectively revolutionary program and practice. To hell with Jim Jones, Lynn Marcus, Charles Manson, et al. Surely, it is a grave error to summarily dismiss their followers also. The death of Jim Jones is no loss. But the deaths of many of his followers are tragedies which make the need to win the oppressed over to a revolutionary strategy all the more urgent.

M.L. Wade

\* \* \* \* \*

*WV replies:* Of course, we do not suggest suicide for cult members, but we demand the government witchhunters keep their hands off voluntary associations, even when their course is self-destructive. And we are not going to put our own hands on such organizations in the name of saving its misguided members from themselves. Our reference to "subjectively revolutionary men and women" was to the membership of the Black Panther Party and not to the cultists of the People's Temple or the provocateurs of the Labor Committee. Surely it is possible for an individual to make his way from even the most deranged cult toward revolutionary politics, but this is the rare exception and no basis for establishing the sort of attitude toward cults encouraged by M.L. Wade. ■



**It's Official:**

# U.S. Seals Anti-Soviet Alliance With China

With all the hoopla and manufactured fanfare they could muster, the governments of the United States and China announced in mid-December that relations between the two countries would be "normalized" beginning January 1. The Chinese in their statement termed the resumption of diplomatic ties a "historic event," while in Washington the press applauded Jimmy Carter for pulling yet another diplomatic success out of his hat right on the heels of Camp David.

Of course, right-wing Republican Senators Barry Goldwater and Jesse Helms denounced the sellout of "Free China," while a scoffing Henry Kissinger said he could have gotten the same terms four years ago. And there was the predictable teeth-gnashing in Taipei. But no one, least of all the Nationalist regime which fled to Taiwan in 1949, believed anything could be done to stop what is already the bi-partisan policy of the American bourgeoisie: to "play the China card" against the USSR.

The establishment of an alliance between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and U.S. imperialism directed primarily against the Soviet Union was a "historic event," but one already initiated in 1971-72 by Richard Nixon and cemented by earlier trips to China by such anti-Soviet hardliners as Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Schlesinger. The January 1 formalities merely ended the diplomatic lag behind the already established strategic world-political reality.

Under the terms of the December 15 joint communiqué announcing normalization, on January 1 the United States recognized the People's Republic as the "sole legal government of China." The Washington announcement went on laconically that, "on the same date the People's Republic of China accords the same recognition to the United States of America." Simultaneously the U.S. agreed to withdraw recognition from the Kuomintang outpost on Taiwan.

So it was that on New Year's Day in Peking the U.S. liaison office hosted a party for some 200 Chinese officials where ambassador-to-be Leonard Woodcock dutifully clinked glasses of Coca Cola with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) deputy chairman Teng Hsiao-p'ing. In Taipei the formal



Bureau Sygma



Der Spiegel

**Twice-purged Teng and born-again president consolidate Nixon's deal.**

closing of the U.S. embassy was marked by a three-minute flag lowering attended only by the Marines and the U.S. ambassador who insisted he was there in an unofficial capacity. But in New York's Chinatown the Kuomintang feebly made its last stand with some 10,000 die-hard Nationalists marching down Mott Street with banners proclaiming "Carter Sells Peanuts and Friends" and "U.S. Eagle Becomes Chicken."

The ceremonies over, there will now be a two-month transition period until the U.S. embassy opens its doors in Peking and closes up shop in Taipei. On 1 October 1980, the U.S. will abrogate its 1954 mutual defense treaty with Taiwan and withdraw all military personnel from the island. And while China insisted on those terms as a basis for normalization, it allowed Carter to save face by winking at a separate

American statement that the U.S. reserved its right to sell arms to the KMT regime.

But the most important section of the normalization communiqué was its explicit endorsement of the anti-Russian alliance between the U.S. and China in the form of the "anti-hegemony" clause which read:

"Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world... each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony."

The clause provoked a deliberately worded warning from Brezhnev. Carter's subsequent misreporting on national TV of the contents of the Moscow communiqué, claiming that the Soviets hailed U.S. recognition of China, sparked an angry correction by TASS which re-emphasized the USSR's concern about the terms of the normalization, particularly in light of what it called the "usual vocabulary of the Chinese leaders"—i.e., the anti-Russian codeword, "hegemony."

Early on Carter had proclaimed that recognition of China was one of the main goals of his administration. Thus the administration tried to play up the announcement as a major foreign-policy coup, using the meeting of Carter's January 1 deadline to complete its image of an energetic administration pushing forward on the diplomatic front with clockwork precision. Other more cynical pundits, however, opined the deadline was picked to give the White House a new flashy success just at the time the Camp David accords would predictably fall apart and thus keep Carter's ratings up by means of this fast-moving shell game.

Actually, everybody agreed that it was the Chinese initiative which provided the impetus to push the normalization through. In fact, the Carter administration was hesitant at first on pursuing the recognition of China especially since the president had

campaigning on a "two Chinas" platform totally unacceptable to the Chinese. At the time of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's trip to Peking in August 1977, the U.S. still had the position that it would not abrogate its mutual defense treaty with Taiwan. But things began to move in May of 1978 with the visit to China of the rabidly anti-Soviet Zbigniew Brzezinski who, among other things, privately told CCP Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and Teng Hsiao-p'ing that the U.S. would have no objection to a Sino-Japanese friendship treaty with an explicit "anti-hegemony" clause. He also informed the Peking leaders of the contents of the Carter administration's ultra-secret policy memorandum, PRM-10—a document written by a team of thinktank anti-Russian hardliners which defines the U.S.'s No. 1 military aim as maintaining nuclear strategic priority over the USSR, and calls for replacing détente with a so-called Era 2 which includes the "compe-

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WV Photo

**Kuomintang's last stand on New York's Mott Street, New Year's Day.**

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## **WORKERS VANGUARD**

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**No. 222**

**5 January 1979**

## Oust the Bureaucrats in Hanoi and Phnom Penh!

# Stalinists' Squalid War in Indochina

It was hard enough squaring U.S. aid to assorted Latin American dictators and the shah of Iran with Jimmy Carter's "human rights" crusade. So how on earth is Washington going to justify its recent backhanded support to Cambodia in the festering war between the rival Indochinese Stalinist regimes? Only last year the State Department declared Cambodia the all-time booby prize winner on its "human rights" scorecard. But that was before the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship treaty, signed in early November. Now Hanoi is accused in the language of Teng-talk of pursuing "hegemonism" in Indochina.

According to the *New York Times* (6 December), the U.S. has threatened to continue to withhold recognition of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam due to the latter's growing ties to the USSR:

"Although the Administration is still professing to be neutral in the fight between Cambodia, which is backed by China, and Vietnam, which is supported by the Soviet Union, it seemed that the United States was more concerned about the Moscow-Hanoi alliance. 'Privately, one State Department official said today that 'there is a clear pro-China bias' in the American concern...."

According to the *Times*, the U.S.'s main "inhibition" in more openly taking sides against Vietnam was the general perception of Cambodia "as possibly the world's worst violator of human rights."

"Democratic Kampuchea" is certainly no socialist Garden of Eden. When Khmer Rouge troops took the capital, Phnom Penh, in 1975 after opium-addicted U.S. puppet Lon Nol took off with a planeload of gold, they brutally force-marched the entire population into the countryside, even emptying hospitals at gunpoint. This incredible act of bureaucratic savagery led to thousands of deaths as city dwellers unused to agricultural labor perished on the road or in labor camps where they were left without tools to clear land and plant their own food supply.

After this atrocity, the paranoid regime of Pol Pot & Co. set about organizing the country on the basis of mobile production brigades, building huge dams with only shovels and baskets, forcibly separating men and women and prohibiting sexual/social contacts. Refugees describe a regime so arbitrary that it is a caricature of Mao's China during the worst excesses of the Great Leap Forward. Embellished with unsubstantiated claims of mass killings, the bourgeois press portrayed Cambodia as the living embodiment of George Orwell's *1984*, complete with a sinister and nameless ruling apparatus known only as "Angka" (The Organization) and composed of teenagers nervously



Cambodians captured by Vietnamese.

Labbe/Gamma-Liaison

fingering the triggers of their Kalashnikov automatic rifles.

That was a year ago. Today we no longer read of Cambodia as the ultimate Stalinist monolith, the nightmarish land of death camps and the *Angka*; instead it is just poor little Democratic Kampuchea, the victim of aggression by its powerful neighbor, Soviet-backed Vietnam. So now there is a big hulabaloo in the press about a new wave of "boat people" and a State Department spokesman declares, "We deplore the human-rights situation in Vietnam" (*Newsweek*, 27 November). The fact that most of the refugees were former merchants and small businessmen who left Vietnam legally, following a crackdown on the flourishing private commerce in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), is simply ignored.

Throughout the fall, U.S. intelligence was reporting a Vietnamese arms buildup and predicting a "dry season offensive" by Hanoi in its on-going border war with Cambodia. The Vietnam-USSR treaty was seen as part of the preparations, and then in early December Hanoi Radio broadcast a proclamation by a newly formed Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation (FUNSK), reportedly operating out of a "liberated zone" in northeast Cambodia, which called on the people of Kampuchea to overthrow the "Pol Pot and Ieng Sary clique." The creation of the "FUNSK" is indeed a major escalation of the war, and it appears that the days of the present Cambodian regime

may be numbered. Two months previous the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (6 October) had written:

"It is not whether the Vietnamese will overthrow the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia which is engaging the constant attention of the diplomatic corps in Hanoi, but when and how."

Carter's "national security" adviser Brzezinski has for the last year gone around calling the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict a "proxy war" between the USSR and China—hence Washington's pro-Cambodian "tilt." It is certainly true that Indochina is a battleground in the Sino-Soviet cold war. Russia is primarily interested in cementing an alliance with Vietnam in order to put pressure on Peking's southern border, and to obtain use of the Cam Ranh Bay naval base which would give the Soviet Pacific fleet an anchor point south of China. Teng, on the other hand, would be far less enthusiastic in supporting the Pol Pot bunch if Vietnam were not so closely tied to the Soviet Union. Chinese propaganda regularly refers to Vietnam as the "Asian Cuba."

However, despite the active interest and support of their respective allies, the present Indochinese war is still basically a Vietnam-Cambodia affair with the fundamental issue being the antagonism of two contiguous Stalinist regimes fed by centuries-old national hatreds. The neighboring deformed workers states are ruled by bonapartist bureaucracies each committed to the program of "socialism in one country"—their own. Rather than being a proxy war for

diplomatic/strategic advantage (e.g., the U.S.-USSR battle over Angola), the Vietnam-Cambodia war is the product of the nationalism inherent in Stalinist rule; at bottom its origins are no different than the Sino-Soviet, Soviet-Yugoslav and Yugoslav-Albanian clashes.

In this case, the xenophobic Phnom Penh regime repeatedly provoked Hanoi over border issues, and as famine spread through the countryside in 1976-77 several hundred thousand refugees "voted with their feet" by fleeing Cambodia. The widespread unpopularity of Pol Pot was a standing invitation to counterrevolutionary forces, with CIA-backed "Free Khmer" commandos occasionally making incursions from Thailand. It also offered an opportunity to the Vietnamese Stalinists who must consider the irrational rulers of "Democratic Kampuchea" a bunch of ingrates. If it wasn't for Hanoi's aid following the 1970 American invasion, Pol Pot, Ieng Sary et al. would still be back in Paris studying at the Sorbonne.

In the U.S., while Jimmy Carter is following the dictates of Realpolitik, the liberal cause of anti-Communist "human rights" is not dead. The banner has been picked up by Senator George McGovern. While in the early 1970's this imperialist "dove" called for U.S. withdrawal from its losing Indochinese war, today McGovern demands an American invasion to overthrow the Cambodian regime! In the era of the Chinese-American alliance, however, he can't seem to get a hearing in the press and has been reduced to an essay in a Bloomingdale's Christmas advertising supplement in the Sunday *New York Times*! (No doubt market research has informed the trendy Upper East Side department store that their clientele of young professionals would be titillated by championing the views of a *samizdat* McGovern; perhaps Bloomingdale's will soon be pushing Vietnamese black pajamas instead of its once-chic Mao suits.)

On the left, the pro-Peking Stalinists of Mike Klonsky's Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CP-ML) naturally take the Cambodian side against Vietnamese "hegemonism." Equally naturally, their rag, *The Call*, is filled with glowing stories of the idyllic life in Democratic Kampuchea. A sign of the times, one of these starry-eyed Stalinist fairy tales found its way onto the Op-Ed page of the 21 November *New York Times*. Sounding like Sidney Webb reporting on Stalin's forced collectivizations in the early 1930's, *Call* editor Danny Burstein assures his readers that there was no mass genocide in Cambodia: he asked Deputy Premier Ieng Sary,

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Gamma

Cambodian Stalinist bureaucracy depopulated Phnom Penh at gunpoint.



Nayan Chanda

Vietnamese killed during border raid by Cambodian troops.



# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

demonstrations, analysts say, was the fear that young soldiers, nearly all conscripts, would follow the orders of religious leaders rather than those of their officers and refuse to open fire."

On December 18 an entire army unit in the northwest city of Tabriz went over to the side of the protesters, allegedly after one soldier killed another for opening fire on the demonstration. In an even more dramatic incident, several members of the elite Imperial Guard, proclaiming their allegiance to Khomeini, gunned down a dozen officers at the Lavizam barracks in northeastern Teheran. A helicopter carrying the general commanding the shah's air cavalry was grounded by small arms fire from his own men near the Bagh-e-Shah barracks, also in Teheran!

There is now much talk of a split in the officer corps. On the one hand, hardliners like General Gholamali Oveissi (currently administering martial law in Teheran) and air force commander Amir Hossein Rabii may refuse to accept any alternative to the absolute monarchy, preferring to make one last attempt to drown all opposition to the shah in blood. On the other hand, junior officers, long passed over for promotion and increasingly contemptuous of the shah—they refer to him as "Big Boy" rather than "His Imperial Majesty"—are a fertile recruiting ground for Khomeini. In one of many appeals to the younger officers, Khomeini urged, "You can turn against the regime of the shah and the people will receive you in their arms. You have a great role to play in the service of the country and in defense of your country's independence" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 December).

In this situation the establishment of a stable parliamentary regime is well-nigh impossible. The alternative now being posed to the shah's pro-Western form of military dictatorship is the establishment of a Muslim theocratic state, which at the very least would be heavily dependent on a section of the military, if not actually headed by a Persian version of Libya's Qaddafi or Pakistan's Zia, both fanatical "soldiers of Islam."

## Oil Strikers' Offensive

The disintegration of the military, however, is not yet a reality. It is the Iranian working class which has destroyed the shah's ability to rule. Repeated strikes by government, transport, communication, banking and oil industry employees have had a powerful effect on the Iranian economy. Most recently air traffic controllers at Teheran airport have gone out, crippling the evacuation of the remaining U.S. civilian and military personnel from the country.

It has been the oil workers' strike, however, which has been the decisive factor in drastically undermining the Pahlavi regime. By the beginning of December, the daily production of crude oil had reached 5.8 million barrels—a little short of normal production figures. Since then, the output of oil has plummeted. After the assassination of an American oil company official in the southern town of Ahwaz on December 23 and the withdrawal of foreign oil workers, production reached a virtual standstill. By the 28th only 400,000 barrels were pumped out, and after a few days even this was halved.

The impact of the oil strike indicates the importance of Iran for the class struggle in the Middle East. Here is a three-million-strong industrial proletariat, the largest in the region. Workers revolution in Iran could serve as the signal for a proletarian upsurge which could cut across all the national and communal antagonisms of the Near and Middle East. But while there are apparently trade unions or semi-clandestine workers committees in-

involved in the current strikes, the Iranian proletariat has no independent political expression. Rather than posing a political alternative to the mullahs, the Iranian working class has been sucked into the orbit of the religious leadership in the name of a class-collaborationist "unity" against the shah.

Again and again the Spartacist tendency, alone on the left, has warned that this false unity poses a deadly threat to the Iranian proletariat. The rule of the mullahs means the suppression of all working-class organizations and struggles. Decades of Stalinist betrayals and the shah's brutal repression have left the Iranian workers leaderless. But how Khomeini would deal with any mass leftist organizing is shown by the example of Indonesia in 1965, when Muslim preachers collaborated with the army in whipping up an anti-communist assault on the Communist Party of Indonesia. The largest Communist party outside the Sino-Soviet states was

demanding the overthrow and execution of the shah. But this was not the result of leftist agitation: "Communist demonstrators tried to horn in at the head of the Shah Reza Ave. march Sunday but were told to get back in line and remove their provocative banners.... Some Communist leaflets were in evidence. But parade marshals instructed people not to pick them up" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 December).

Khomeini enjoys near-universal popularity among the ranks of the anti-shah forces. The core of his movement, however, is identical to that of other Islamic fundamentalist groupings in the Near and Middle East such as the Jaamat-i Islam of Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab-speaking world or the National Salvation Party of Turkey: the economically declining petty bourgeoisie of the bazaars. The tithes levied on the merchants and shopkeepers sustain the mullahs' network of mosques, schools, printing

never disavowed the book, which has been in circulation for years. According to this tract, "Since Islamic government is a government of law, it is the religious expert and no one else who should occupy himself with affairs of government" (quoted in the *New York Times*, 30 December).

In line with centuries of Shi'ite Muslim practice, Khomeini denounces Jews, Christians and the Bahai sect, and echoing Islamic reactionaries throughout the Near and Middle East, he states, "We want a ruler, who would cut off the hand of his own son if he steals, and would flog and stone his near relative if he fornicates." A collection of speeches published in Persian in 1975 called *Khomeini and the Movement* not only contains a polemic against allowing women into the labor force, but praises the Iranian army: "I extend the hand of brotherhood to them for the salvation of Islam and Iran. I know that their hearts are perturbed at capitulating before Israel and they will never be content that Iran be ground under the boot of the Jews."

But it is not only Khomeini's words but actions that brand this movement as dominated by Muslim puritanism and fanaticism: the contingents of veiled women heading up demonstrations, the countless attacks on "sinful" banks, cinemas and cafes, the 40-day cycle of protests following the customary 40-day mourning period decreed by Islam and the protest strikes called over the "desecration" of a holy shrine in Meshed (and not about the protesters killed by the intruding troops!).

In 1953 the "radical" ayatollah Kashani mobilized the Teheran lumpen-proletariat (also followers of Khomeini today) behind the CIA-inspired coup that toppled the bourgeois nationalist Mossadeq. At that time the mullahs preferred the monarchy to Mossadeq, allegedly "soft on communism." There remained no clerical opposition to the shah for a decade. Khomeini, a disciple of Kashani, followed suit. The mullahs played no role in the National Front's demonstrations in 1961 or the student protests of 1962.

In 1963, however, after the shah's declaration of female suffrage and land reform, the Muslim establishment suddenly "discovered" that the shah was a tyrant. The quarter of Iran's land owned either by religious foundations or by the mullahs themselves was to be thrown onto the market. Today Khomeini prates about penalizing landowners who have acted contrary to Islamic law. In those days it was the interpreters of Islamic law who demanded two thirds or more of the peasant's crop as their due!

The Persian chauvinism and blind anti-foreign sentiments whipped up by the mullahs promise a grim future for Iran's national/communal minorities. The Baluchis and Kurds, who have already suffered under the shah's iron heel for decades will fare no better under the "just rule of Islam," since many of them are Sunni Muslims rather than Shi'ites. The stage is set for a replay of the pogroms of the 1944-1946 period, which included attacks on Bahais at Shah Rud, Jews at Meshed, Zoroastrians in Kirman and Armenians in Azerbaijan.

## Heritage of Betrayal

Tragically, the difference between the social crisis of the 1940's and that of today is that three decades ago the proletariat at least had some form of independent political expression, albeit the wretchedly reformist Stalinist Tudeh party. The workers' strike struggles had a far greater potential for cutting across the national and communal divisions than they do now.

The period from 1942 to 1946 saw a succession of hunger riots, factory occupations, citywide general strikes, strikes in oil industry and even the organization of workers militias. But

continued on page 10

## IRAN: WORKERS REVOLUTION OR CLERICAL REACTION?

Reprinted below are two excerpts from Lenin's writings on the national and colonial questions as they particularly apply to the situation in Iran today. Those Iranian students who simultaneously hail Khomeini and the mullahs as "revolutionary" and call themselves Leninists must explain how they can claim Lenin's heritage and ignore his call for a struggle against Islamic clericalism and for proletarian independence.

"...With regard to the more backward states and nations...it is particularly important to bear in mind:

"...the need for a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements...

"...the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc.;

"...the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward coun-

tries 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. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form." (emphasis added)

—Lenin, "Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31

It is only the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League that today upholds Lenin's perspective and the program that flows from it for proletarian victory in Iran!

**Down with the Shah!  
Down with the Mullahs!  
For a Workers and Peasants  
Government!**

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League San Francisco

annihilated with the massacre of a half-million leftists, workers and peasants.

## Anti-Shah Jihad

While fake-leftists attempt to portray the mullahs as an incidental part of a broad "democratic" movement against the shah, Khomeini's campaign for an "Islamic republic" is a drive to restore the authority and privilege of the Muslim religious establishment. Although the clerically-led opposition seizes upon popular hatred for the shah's regime, it is thoroughly imbued with Islamic fundamentalism.

The mullahs are capable of mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people on the basis of traditional religious ties. In Teheran alone there are 5,000 neighborhood "procession leaders" who call their followers into the streets at a moment's notice. The million-strong marches in Teheran on December 10 and 11 were thoroughly policed by Muslim organizers, who censored the political demands raised by the demonstrators. According to one account, "Turbaned mullahs, the religious leaders of Islam, rode atop minibuses, urging the marchers through megaphones not to shout provocative slogans. The people generally obeyed" (*Los Angeles Times*, 11 December).

On the second day, the National Front and the religious leaders following Ayatollah Shariatmadari were unable to prevent the protesters from

presses, etc. The traditional connection between the two groups is further cemented by the intersection between the mullahs' desire to return to the days of Muhammad and the bazaaris' dreams of reversing the capitalist concentration which is grinding them under.

## Khomeini: Patriarch of Muslim Reaction

The concrete program of this petty-bourgeois movement is the reimposition of the Koranic law code and the erasure of all Western cultural influence. The shah, in an attempt to bolster his pose as a "liberal modernizer" granted certain formal democratic rights to women (but retains the laws upholding the Muslim patriarchal family, which grant life and death powers to husbands and fathers). The mullahs, alarmed at even these token measures and at the strata of educated bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women which had broken from traditional customs, stand for the seclusion of women from all public life, symbolized by the wearing of the veil.

The nakedly reactionary character of Khomeini's Koranic fundamentalism has been exposed by a book entitled *Islamic Government*, based on lectures given by Khomeini while in exile in Iraq. His apologists, aware that the book contradicts the more sanitized version of views given to the world press, have tried to throw doubt on its authenticity; however, the ayatollah himself has

Editor's Note: We reprint below edited excerpts from presentations to a recent Spartacist educational on Iran by comrades Reuben Samuels and James Robertson.

\* \* \* \* \*

Samuels: One has to go back to very basic materialist fundamentals in order to debate the proposition that we should revert to a movement which stands for a society that existed in feudal and pre-feudal times, namely this movement of the mullahs. That one has to seriously debate this in the Marxist movement is an affront and shows a massive skew. As I sort of hinted at in yesterday's presentation [on dialectics], I think that the motivation for this flows out of a culmination of New Left despair, reflecting itself in various movements like the ecology movement.

So one comrade asked in yesterday's discussion, "Well, on the mullah question, is their attitude toward women decisive in terms of judging the social character of this movement?" The answer, at least since Fourier, ought to be a resounding "Yes!" Namely, the character of a movement can be judged by its attitude toward the emancipation of women. It's the judgment on what kind of society these people hope to create—that's a decisive question. And this movement believes in a kind of clerical orthodoxy. They're sort of Muslim Hasids in their attitudes toward women: not only reversion to the veil, but a whole series of backward attitudes.

Likewise their program on the land question. One of the things that has created this movement of clerical reaction against the shah is that as part of his attempt to resolve the contradiction between Iran's feudal superstructure and the enormous expansion of capital in the very recent period, the shah has been forced to expropriate some of the church land and to curtail some of the privileges of the clergy. This split the clergy and propelled a movement behind Khomeini, who wishes to restore the old feudal privileges, to restore the church lands to this parasitical caste which is quite substantial in Iran, just as it was quite substantial in the Middle Ages in Europe. This is the program not of the thirteenth century, but of a reversion to the Middle Ages—that is, of the thirteenth century looking backwards—not the program of socialism, to go forward in terms of human progress, the program under which humanity has a chance to survive into the twenty-first century....

Before I get to the mullahs I'd like to talk a little bit about how this debate first arose. In the United States the comrades have been talking to a lot of ISAers [Iranian Student Association]. The ISAers seem very militant: they're being threatened with deportation; when they come out on demonstrations, they look quite impressive in their military formations, chanting "Down with the Shah, Down with the CIA!" There was no examination, however, of the social profile of the ISA. These were students who were sent abroad by the shah's regime, children of the upper middle classes, the professional civil servants, who could get out of the

# MARXISM AGAINST ISLAMIC REACTION



The Sword of Islam 1978: mullahs march in Teheran.

Wide World

country, get student visas and come to the United States. That's not so easy to do, as anybody knows from the problems our own movement has had in bringing people, especially from the so-called "Third World," into the United States. So they've been able to get into the bourgeois institutions of learning of U.S. imperialism, which are mainly training these students to go back and be the agents of U.S. imperialism, like Sheikh Yamani in Saudi Arabia.

This is the social composition of the ISA. That is not to say that militants cannot be won from the ISA, but one must keep in mind the not just petty-bourgeois but also upper class social origins of the ISA, irrespective of the "Marxist-Leninist" rhetoric, the commitment to "Mao Tse-tung Thought."

In fact, their commitment to Mao Tse-tung Thought and the "two-stage revolution" comes from the fact that they believe that the first stage is on the agenda, and they're going to lead it and it's going to put them into power.

So comrades should look behind the formal rhetoric and look at the social character of the ISA... and at what Mao Tse-tung Thought means in 1978. Primarily it means the bloc with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, the bloc with every reactionary force *anywhere* against the Soviet Union. Next to China, Persia has one of the longest borders with the Soviet Union, and this is a large part of the basis for this bloc not only between China and Persia, but also between the ISA and Mao Tse-tung Thought....

Now there's an argument you get on Iran, the argument that chaos is good. It's sort of like one of those Delphic statements from the pre-Socratics: "Anything that destabilizes the situation is good," anything that shakes it up, because what we need here is a shake-up. It doesn't matter what you use to shake it up with, or what engenders a period of chaos or anarchy, because these people do not believe any more in the proletariat as the lever of social change. So any other thing that produces any change—no matter whether it goes backward, forward, upside down, inside out—is good. It's like a new Hegelian slogan, "Change is better no matter what kind of change." It's a bizarre position. They had a change in Germany in 1933, remember.

So this is the destabilization argument. That is, the proletariat is no longer the agent of social change, so we're going to back anything that produces change as a revolutionary agent. "At least there will be some action." So we'll get the popular front, say in France, and then there will be a constitutional crisis between the president and parliament. And the workers will say, "We want our goodies that were promised by the popular front." There'll be action, strikes, conflict! So? So, therefore they come up with critical support for the popular front! We've heard it before, this destabilization argument. It's a substitution for program, or substitution for the class axis of our program.

Furthermore it puts you in pretty messy situations sometimes in places where there is the capacity for some kind of class axis, like Indonesia. There was a mullah movement in Indonesia, and it was pretty active, it was massive. This was not just the military, although the military clearly exploited and mobilized these forces. I assure you that the program of the Indonesians was much more secular than what's represented by the ayatollahs of the Shi'ites in Iran today. Khomeini's movement is very puritanical, much more right wing—a broad-based movement violently opposed to the national minorities and even the slightest sign of working-class independence—than what existed in Indonesia in 1965.

So we have a situation in Iran where there is a mass movement of people who are desperately oppressed, who see these mullahs and religious mobilizations as feeding their prejudices—national as well as religious—and offering an opening. So they go along with it, because at this point anything probably appears better than the shah to many of the oppressed people of Iran, except for the national minorities. But you have to look at the slogans of this movement: restore the clerical lands, restore the veil, ban everything that sort of represents Western progress, expel the foreign workers. In terms of the indigenous national minorities it could only be intensely genocidal in appetite.

The whole of this movement is based on clerical reaction and is far to the right of the Islamic so-called nationalists who butchered half a million Communists in Indonesia in 1965. What is so despicable about the revisionists' support to the mullahs is not only that it is a violation of every basic tenet of historical materialism and everything Marxism stands for, but Iran is a country with a proletarian axis! You could sort of understand it in Burundi, where people might get swept along with some movement that began to take on radical populist rhetoric—because they figure there is no proletarian axis. But Persia has a very strong and well-developed proletariat!

There is the possibility of the Iranian proletariat raising its head and playing an independent role. The problem is that it has been beheaded several times over, both through repression and through being discredited. The historic leader of the Persian workers was the Tudeh, the Stalinist party that is associated in the minds of everyone with the Soviet Union. And because of Soviet support for the shah it's a widely discredited party, as well as being persecuted. The problem is that we have a proletariat without a leadership. Moreover, the proletariat is nationally divided, and these things are consciously exploited, so that certain sections of the oil workers are now calling for the expulsion of foreign workers.

What we need is a party that can transcend this kind of national chauvinism and counterpose a proletarian class axis to the current instability. In the absence of that, one could more easily justify giving support to the shah, as the Soviet Union clearly is doing, than to these Muslim clerical reactionaries, because if they are able to consolidate



Der Spiegel

Muslim women in traditional veil (chador) demonstrate against the shah. The woman question is key.



power all the evidence is it could only be worse than Indonesia for the working class, for the peasants, for the national minorities and the women. So what we are coming up against today is spokesmen—under the veil, if you will, of Marxism-Leninism—for clerical reaction, genocide and a program which is not only anti-proletarian but anti-materialist.

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*Robertson:* Well, comrades, I spent most of the last two days trying as an idle exercise in casuistry to work up a defensible basis for the position of supporting the mullahs. I couldn't do it, because everything requires some giant, central falsehood. Thus, you can have the analogy of the British in India, and if it's a question of having to choose between foreign overlordship and *suttee* [the Hindu practice of immolating widows on their husbands' funeral pyres], well, *suttee* it is. But the shah, however unappetizing, repressive and authoritarian his regime, is Persian. The trouble is he's a liberal Persian. Not in what his secret police do, although I suspect that if his kill rate is running somewhere under a thousand a year over the whole period, you ain't seen anything yet.

Any axis that I would seize upon to try to explain a position like this falls. In comparison, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek were liberators in China, for god's sake! They were against the binding of feet, against the imperialist presence. They said they wanted to raise a revolutionary army. So there's a plausibility to the "two-stage" revolution that we as Trotskyists, centered on the raising of the proletariat as a class to power, have to fight. Generally it's popular frontism, whether in Chile, Sukarno or what have you. But at least there's an argument there, because there are these petty-bourgeois, nationalist, reformist types, Stalinists and whatever, who say "We stand for progress. We stand for enlightenment. We are against clerical reaction. We denounce the church in Spain." And we have to reply, "But fundamentally the class forces and the program on which you base yourself must miscarry."

I've come up with two *valid* historical examples: Kemal Atatürk versus Muslim clerical obscurantism, and Peter the

because when the Russian Bolsheviks arrived they found no point of support except the woman question. And that's where they fashioned their key cadres. It's the same thing elsewhere: One of the three main motor forces in the Chinese revolution, led by the Maoists, was the woman question. Persia is one of the gross examples, along with North Africa and sections of the Middle East, where the woman question is not a secondary matter.

We fight against the feminists in the West, because they see a gradient, or "all women are oppressed everywhere, everybody's our sisters." They don't understand in the advanced countries what the bourgeois revolution has done. *It has formally made women equal to men! The right of contract applies to women, who are now equal human beings, however offended or abused! They're recognized in law as human beings!* That is not the case in these countries, and that's why when the revolution comes, if it has a proletarian centrality, it *must* reach out and encompass the woman question. And in a fake way the "progressive" nationalists must at least give lip service.

Now some bits and pieces of things: We got used to these very revolutionary Maoists, Iranian students, that are all over the United States. So the *Spartacist* editor gave a talk on the Iranian question in Boston, a long, hard talk; and he reached into his briefcase afterwards, took a pull out of a bottle and... someone protests! "You're insulting me! How dare you drink in my presence!" It might as well be Saudi Arabia, which by the way is rather more of a client state of the Americans than those pornographic Coke-swilling Persians are. But they're very pure. You know what's been happening to sea captains lately when they find out they've opened their liquor cabinets in Saudi ports? They are flogged in the town square. It might as well be Ireland—clerical reaction. Except that seeping in under the crevices, under the doors even in the Republic of Ireland, there's some recognition that the masons have been running amok since 1789.

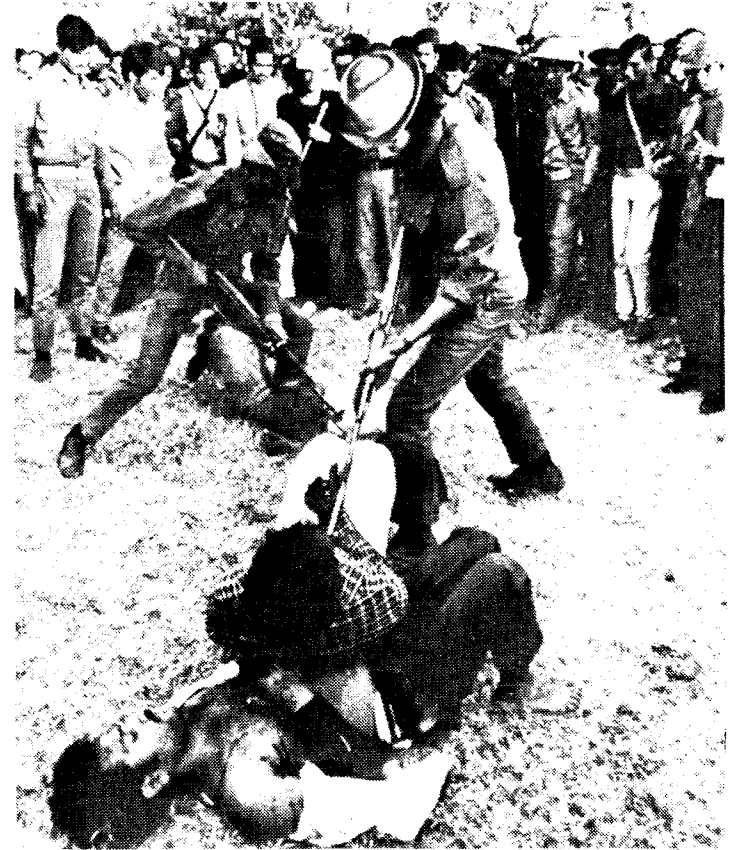
So we have some real questions that ought to be answered, but they don't appear here. It is important to explain why the shah—the subjective intentions

The army is, after all, Muslim, and I take a look at his latest general in his shades and his pretty uniform and it looks like somebody from the Chilean general staff. He'll swing over, we've seen that before. It happened in Pakistan and a whole bunch of countries. So if the shah falls, I think only the Israelis stand to lose unambiguously. They will. But for the Russians and the Americans it's completely obscure what the outcome will be, and also for the Arabs.

Now there are other aspects of the shah's policies: don't give a damn about Islam, pay attention to Persian

ism. And then we've got to argue that Manchu restoration is not a good thing, and that in fact all that about the binding of feet and the wearing of pigtaails is significant....

The tendency when there have been errors on the part of those who claim to be socialists or Marxists, including Marx himself, is to stress—falsely sometimes—the simple proposition that the advanced country shows the backward country the image of its own future. So Marx said: Oh fine, the Americans are winning in Mexico. This was very early, before he learned



**Muslim nationalists in Bangladesh carry out genocidal policy against the Biharis. This is what national minorities in Iran can expect from Islamic reaction.**

AP

power politics, bring in a lot of foreign workers—Arabs and Indians—and furthermore a policy of enlightenment toward the domestic religious groupings which are viewed more as nationalities. They've got Zoroastrians, some Bahais and a few Christians and Jews and they're all scared shitless. For one thing there's now begun to be as a popular thing assaults on women without veils—throw acid in their faces. So if you're not a Muslim woman walking down the street, you wear a big sign around you saying "No, No, I'm not a Muslim woman, I'm just a whore, so it's alright." This is the texture of what's happening there.

The problem is, I for one have been howling for years, "Wait a minute, the Persian empire is built on sand! The shah is unstable—the shah must go!" There's a big proletariat. It's extremely important if we can—in Germany and England and the United States where there are large Iranian student populations—get to them and try to form some Bolshevik propaganda circles to make contact with the proletariat, because it's the closest thing I've seen to the tsarist empire anywhere else today! But, of course, there's one difference I didn't pay attention to: the tsar was based on the Orthodox church, whereas in Iran there's been this thrust toward modernism, the usual ineffectual land reforms. But what land is going to get reformed—it's the mullahs' land. So now we face the absurdity of the landlords leading the landless against the repressive ruler who promised land but only made little deliveries of it, enough to infuriate the landlords, centered on the mullahs, but not enough to satisfy the landless. So you support the mullahs?

The connection must be broken. Of course the shah must go! But the struggle of the Bolsheviks is for the proletariat to become a self-conscious class, to take command. Except that here there's an embarrassment: it's not against the first-stage revolutionaries we have to argue but against people who want to support reaction. It's as though in China the problem was not with the KMT, the nationalists, but rather the crystallization of Manchu restoration-

something which Ireland taught him, and the French in Algeria: that imperialism perpetuates backwardness. It was a certain empirical development on Marx's part, in connection with Ireland. He had been working on a much narrower, European model: here's France and there's Germany, and under the pressure of invasions and wars Germany begins to develop in the same way as Napoleonic France. First it was part of Belgium, then England, then France, then Germany, then maybe Italy: different areas become capitalist, industrialized, and begin to compete with one another. That's a true statement, but it wasn't a statement for the future, for the triumph of imperialism with the crystallization of an entire world market, when those who had arrived begin to divide and redivide the world among them—not even consciously conspiring—in order to keep it divided....

So the shah's oppressive, authoritarian regime sits atop the Persian and other peoples of Iran, and has done so along with his father for a long time (with an interregnum during the Second World War); and now the regime is being shaken to pieces. Except it's being shaken to pieces by an outburst led by and dominated by the old classes. There's something in Teheran called the bazaar: it's the small merchants, and they feel the competition of credit card department stores. If you want an analogy—not an analogy, actually, but essentially an identity—France recurrently has these Poujadist movements of the small farmers and small innkeepers, and that is the present axis in Iran. Except that in France it's just lighting a match in a cold night and it blows out. But there's a vast explosive revolutionary potential which we recognize in Iran, throughout all the classes. So that our task—in a propagandist way, because we're largely external to the situation—is to find a way to raise, however modestly, the proletarian perspective in Iran, not to accept the subordination of all elements in society that are necessarily against the government (except for very small coteries) under this present Muslim clerical reaction.... ■



G.P. Putnam

**Women delegates from Soviet Central Asia at demonstration in 1920's.**

Great versus the Boyars. But the people who want to support the mullahs in effect come out for clerical obscurantism in Turkey—that's the old sultanate—and they come out for the Boyars. So I stand before you really embarrassed in terms of trying to make such a false argument.

There's a long history to the Muslim question in Central Asia, not just Persia—in Azerbaijan, the extension of the Russian Revolution. There's a very nice book, by the way, about the question. It's called *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* [by Gregory Massell],

of his apparatus and a considerable cash flow notwithstanding—cannot and could not modernize Persia in this day and age. That goes to the heart of the question of the existence of a pre-structured world capitalist, imperialist economy, even though the shah has fought and clawed to try to create a sub-imperialist role in the Persian Gulf region.

In fact, in terms of great power politics—or anybody's power politics—why would you be in favor of the downfall of the shah? In any case the shah is probably going to go. He's divesting himself of great chunks of his apparatus, the army is becoming shaky.

# For Political Revolution in Vietnam!

The following article by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) was published in the "Open Tribune" column of the 27 December Rouge, newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), French section of the United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel.

The polemic was written in the context of a debate within the LCR spurred by the Vietnam-Cambodia war and the hue and cry in the imperialist press over "boat people" fleeing Vietnam. As part of its flirtation with the Eurocommunists, the USec issued a major line document ("Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat") which calls for freeing all political prisoners in the degenerated/deformed workers states (as well as for legalization of bourgeois parties after the socialist revolution). However, some of the ex-New Leftist Mandelites, who in May '68 marched through the Left Bank district waving NLF flags, now want to make an exception for Vietnam.

In an article on "Democratic Freedoms in Vietnam" (Rouge, 24-26 November), USec Indochina expert Pierre Rousset writes:

"We call for freeing all political prisoners in the USSR. Should we do the same in Vietnam? But here we must differentiate between a regime which has been in power for 60 years and one which has just emerged from 30 years of civil war....

"To call indiscriminately for freeing all political prisoners in Vietnam today is to call on a revolution to hang itself. This is not our job."

The LCR leadership's open support to the Vietnamese Stalinists has elicited an anguished outcry from a section of the organization leaning toward liberalism. Another article in Rouge (14 November) by LCR cadres "Sandor and Nikita" protests:

"...the thousands upon thousands of statements by refugees (which must of course be taken critically) can no longer be ignored in order to avoid saying what we know about the type of 'socialist democracy' practiced in South Vietnam or Cambodia."

But Sandor and Nikita fail to label the Hanoi bureaucracy Stalinist or call for its removal through political revolution. Lacking a solid class program, the USec can only bend with its changing (and frequently contradictory) appetites, leaning now toward Stalinism, now toward liberalism and social democracy.

The fierce bureaucratic repression carried out by the Vietnamese regime is hardly surprising for Trotskyists: what else would one expect of a regime which has always been Stalinist? This follows from the logic of Ho Chi Minh's liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, just as the war between Cambodia and Vietnam flows logically from the conflict of interests between two antagonistic "socialisms in one country." As we explain in our pamphlet *For Political Revolution!* the deformed revolution in Indochina has overthrown capitalism and replaced it with Stalinist regimes, like those of China and Cuba. Trotskyists fought for the military victory of the NLF and defend the Indochinese deformed workers states against any imperialist attack, but have never given the slightest political support to the treacherous misleadership headed by Ho Chi Minh. Only a political revolution, driving out this bureaucracy and establishing soviet democracy will open the road to socialism in Indochina.

The leadership of the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire], in contrast, is experiencing increasing difficulty with its apologies for the Vietnamese leaders it had characterized as "centrist" and, according to Pierre Rousset, as having "assimilated the decisive lessons of the permanent revolution." Some of those who once marched to shouts of "Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh" and hailed the new deformed workers states by calling for "two, three, many Vietnams," today feel compelled to blunt their enthusiasm, as shown by the timid criticisms from Nikita and Sandor,

who for their part represent nothing more than a capitulation before the growing pressure of bourgeois public opinion. They carefully refrain, however, from posing the crucial questions and remain within the framework set by Pierre Rousset: refusal to characterize the Vietnamese bureaucracy as a Stalinist regime on the same basis as the regimes in power in the USSR, China and Cuba; and refusal to call for political revolution. The Pabloists, who formerly were willing to abandon their own comrades to better court the "instinctive Marxist" Ho Chi Minh, continue their policy of capitulation to the Stalinist leadership. The Rouge articles on the war between Cambodia and Vietnam implicitly come out for, in a more or less veiled manner, the Vietnamese side in this conflict between two deformed workers states. Pierre Rousset's article published as part of this debate over "democratic liberties in Vietnam" (Rouge, No. 799), is nothing but a lengthy defense aimed at minimizing and justifying the bureaucracy's crimes. As for the statement by the Vietnamese Trotskyist Group (Rouge, No. 798), it is openly crypto-Stalinist: lumping together all political prisoners with the collaborators of imperialism, the statement considers the sole error of the Vietnamese Communist Party was to have "made promises [of a policy of forgiveness] it could not fulfill" and ends with a call on Hanoi to "cut short the rumors which cannot fail to unsettle those who lent their support to the Vietnamese resistance."

Against the United Secretariat (USec) majority's craven tailism of Ho Chi Minh, the position of the SWP, which accurately characterized the Vietnamese leadership as Stalinist, might at first glance appear more orthodox. In fact, the SWP's reservations merely flow from its appetites toward the liberal bourgeoisie: in order to achieve a bloc with the latter based on the single

slogan "End the War Now," the SWP refused throughout the entire Vietnam war to specify its class character, to call for victory to the NLF and the defeat of its own imperialism. And it is this policy of class collaboration which the OCI today terms "exemplary"!

By capitulating to the Stalinists on the one hand, and to their own bourgeoisie on the other, both majority and minority of the United Secretariat concurred in refusing to construct a Trotskyist party in Vietnam. At the time of the 10th World Congress, the Vietnamese Bolshevik-Leninist Group (which today totally capitulates to the Vietnamese bureaucracy) sent a letter to the USec which not only remained unanswered, but which the LCR leadership refused even to allow its own membership to read and discuss:

"We request that you make our existence known to the sections and that you debate out the following questions.

"1) Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group which has remained loyal to the International and which has carried on against great obstacles, in the most difficult of conditions?"

"2) Should we work towards the creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?"

"An answer to these two questions would already resolve half the debate under way on the Vietnam problem." (February 1974)

The crucial question for Vietnam remains the construction of a Trotskyist party to struggle for unconditional defense of the gains of the revolution against imperialism and for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy. The accomplices of the Stalinists and those of Carter's cold war campaign are neither willing nor able to build such a party, whose creation can only be linked with the rebirth of the Fourth International fought for by the international Spartacist tendency.

Ligue Trotskyste de France  
25 November 1978

## Indochina...

(continued from page 4)

who replied "absolutely not." And critics of the regime could speak freely; why, the people he talked to were "candid in their views" about the gunpoint evacuation of Phnom Penh! Well, we bet Burstein would have a hard time finding those foolhardy souls again who voiced such criticisms. But what does he care—the job of a Stalinist hack is good public relations not telling the truth.

The Cambodian rulers have tried to rally popular support by appealing to peasant primitivism and virulent

national chauvinism against the "Youns" (pejorative Khmer term for Vietnamese).

"Now, during the fighting against the Vietnamese aggressors, annexationists, swallows of territories, the prophets have foretold once again....

"These forces have participated with the security forces for border defence to constantly create troubles and difficulties to our population along the border, behaving arrogant and haughty conducting themselves as 'fathers of Indochina', as 'big brothers of Indochina', saying that 'the tinies in Indochina have to comply with my order', 'whatever I do, you the tinies, you have to obey me'."

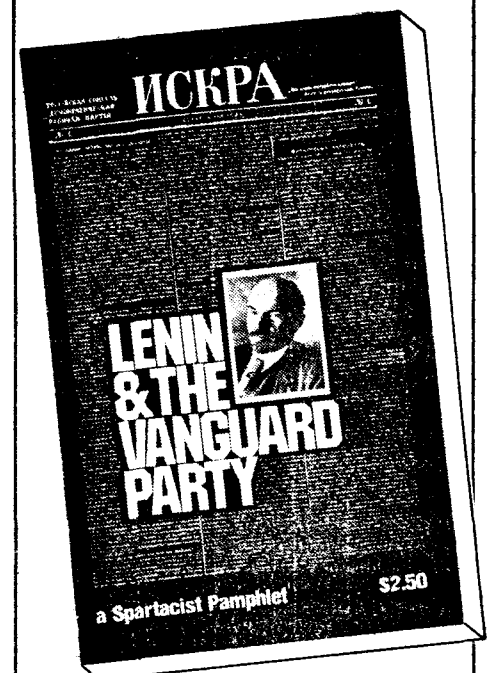
speech to Kampuchean Revolutionary Army, 17 January 1978

Pol Pot's main accusation against Hanoi is that it seeks to establish an Indochina federation. As against Pol Pot's isolationist "tinyism," a genuine soviet federation of Indochina would actually be a considerable advance, especially for the impoverished Cambodian people. The idea of constructing socialism by dismantling industry, evacuating the cities, building dams by hand and collectivizing the elephants is absurd and obscene. As the most advanced country of Indochina, it would natural for Vietnam to play a leading role in building such a federation, one based on the free union of all its members.

However, if the Hanoi-backed Cambodian front is installed in Phnom Penh on the points of Vietnamese bayonets, the result could be an effective Vietnamese "protectorate." What began as a squalid border war could develop into a struggle for the independent national existence of the Khmer people. But it is far from clear that such a change in the nature of the war has occurred. It is also unclear to what extent the Vietnamese-sponsored "FUNSK" enjoys support among the Cambodian population, in reaction against the barbaric practices of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Given these unknowns, as proletarian internationalists we would not lightly give military support to Pol Pot's xenophobic, primitivist regime against its more advanced Vietnamese counterpart. Whatever the outcome of this war, the centuries-old nationalist bloodletting in Indochina can only be ended by proletarian political revolu-

tion, led by a Trotskyist party, against the parasitic, oppressive Stalinist bureaucracies in both Hanoi and Phnom Penh. ■

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# U.S./China...

(continued from page 3)

tition of the cold-war era." Joking with his hosts while climbing a section of the Great Wall, Brzezinski quipped that the last one to the top would have to go fight the Russians in Ethiopia!

The felt urgency on Peking's side came from its fear of encirclement by the Soviet Union, particularly in light of the new USSR/Vietnam friendship treaty signed in Moscow November 3. In Bangkok, during a jaunt across the Far East, Teng denounced the treaty as "aimed at surrounding China." Returning to Peking, in the midst of the short-lived "wall poster democracy" campaign, Teng met U.S. syndicated columnist Robert Novak for the purpose of making a major policy statement singling out the danger of the "Polar Bear" (Russia). For the first time, Teng explicitly used the word "alliance" in referring to relations with the U.S., and State Department officials immediately pricked up their ears (*New York Post*, 29 November).

In the same interview Teng went out of his way to reassure the U.S. its investments in Taiwan would be protected. And he pointedly used the word "reunification" of Taiwan instead of the previous term "liberation." (Hsinhua news agency pointedly corrected a dispatch that had gone out with the old slogan in order to underline the significance of the change.) Not only would the approximately \$600 million worth of U.S. investments in Taiwan be secure, but Teng held out the possibility that the island could become formally part of the People's Republic of China without changing its capitalist economic system. (To emphasize the desire for "friendly" relations, shortly after the normalization statement, two Kuomintang officials who had been sent to the People's Republic for a conference in 1950 and never returned announced they wanted to go back to Taiwan to talk to their old friend Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek and current head of the KMT regime!

## "Who Lost China?"

For years the U.S. capitalist class has trumpeted Taiwan as a "bastion of the Free World," a living symbol of capitalist order and stability. Yet within hours after the normalization agreement was announced, this paradise for U.S. investments began looking like Caracas, 1956 during the Nixon visit, with street riots, burnings of U.S. flags and the stoning of the American ambassador. But to no avail. The days were long gone when the China Lobby in Washington rivaled the AMA or the American Dairy Association in clout, when the pro-Chiang Kai-shek Committee of One Million included everybody from Barry Goldwater to Hubert Humphrey.

In 1951 when Truman dismissed

MacArthur for wanting to bomb Chinese bases north of the Yalu, the general returned to the states to a standing ovation in Congress and the biggest ticker-tape parade New York had ever seen. During the witchhunts of the 1950's the charge that the Democrats and "Commie dupes" in the State Department had "lost China," was one of Joe McCarthy's biggest clubs. In the early 1960's under the Kennedy administration, China was viewed as the most aggressive of the Communist countries, with JFK's war minister Robert McNamara running around scheming up

leading to the collapse of its old anti-Communist alliances like SEATO, the Nixon/Ford administration was proclaiming its Pacific Doctrine, vowing to maintain the U.S. position as a maritime power with a perimeter along the rim of the East Asian mainland. This strategy, moreover, did not originate with the U.S.'s losses in Vietnam. As early as the stalemate in Korea, a powerful section of the U.S. ruling class, including such people as the Rockefellers and their Council on Foreign Relations, were convinced that the U.S. should not fight another land war in Asia.

dous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China. Should the imperialists adjust their policies in terms of their long-run interests (which would take time, as such factors as U.S. public opinion would have to be readjusted), the Chinese would be as willing as the Russians are at present to build 'Socialism in One Country' through deals with imperialism at the expense of internationalism."

Thus, with periodic shifts the basic lines of U.S. foreign policy in the post-World War II period have always been directed against the USSR. That Car-



Eddie Adams



UPI

Playing the China card against Russia has been a bi-partisan policy. Above: Teng dines with Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger.

ways to outwit the "CHICOMS." This idea was carried to such extremes that one 1960's film, *The Chairman* starring Gregory Peck, even projected a U.S./Soviet plot to overthrow the Mao regime.

No longer. Today the old Republican refrain "Who lost China?" is about as effective as a wet noodle against the Democrats. In part, Carter is not vulnerable to right-wing attack because his entire policy has moved so far to the right (attacks on labor, women and blacks; the anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade, etc.). More fundamentally, the U.S. bourgeoisie is united behind his policy. Formal recognition merely cements the already established alliance between U.S. imperialism and the Peking bureaucracy directed against their declared "main enemy," the Soviet Union. Secondly, it is clear that everyone hopes to make big bucks. The Chinese have taken an aggressive posture of inviting investments; for instance, they have been scouring Europe, conducting over 160 trade and military missions to West Germany this year alone!

Kissinger is right when he says that he could have done the same thing four years ago and that it was only Watergate which prevented Nixon from establishing full diplomatic ties at that time. The Shanghai Communiqué signed by Nixon and Chou En-lai in February 1972 explicitly recognized Taiwan as part of China and pledged the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Taiwan. Again, it was the Chinese who took the initiative at that time, and for the same reason: following a series of 1969 border clashes with the Soviet Union at the Ussuri River Mao communicated through Sinophile Edgar Snow that he would see Nixon in Peking.

On the U.S. side, the decision to normalize was given added impetus by the defeat in Vietnam. Yet even after the U.S. had been driven out of Indochina,

Today some analysts are comparing the normalization of relations with China to the classic "reversal of alliances" in the decades following the 1848 revolutions, a time when a series of European wars reflected shifting alignments of Russia, France and Germany. However, U.S. policy since World War II has been governed by a consistent central thrust—hostility toward the Soviet Union. Rather than "containment," which falsely implied that China was expansionist, U.S. policy from John Foster Dulles to Dean Rusk was one of encirclement. This same policy of encirclement is being continued today against the main target, although the position of China in this strategy has switched.

In the early 1960's the CCP bureaucracy was characterized by a verbally militant posture vis-à-vis the U.S., a role largely forced upon it as a result of its isolation following the Sino-Soviet split. New Left radicals at that time enthused over the Maoist regime's denunciation of Khrushchev-style "peaceful coexistence." The so-called Trotskyists of the United Secretariat went so far as to give "critical support" to Peking in the Sino-Soviet split. In sharp contrast the Spartacist League's analysis, considered so outrageous at the time, has been confirmed at every point. We characterized the verbal militancy of the Maoist regime as "Khrushchevism under the gun." And in our August 1969 document, "Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League" (*Marxist Bulletin* No. 9), we wrote prophetically:

"At the present time, the Vietnam war and the extreme diplomatic and internal difficulties of the Chinese state have forced the Maoists to maintain greater hostility to imperialism and verbally disclaim the USSR's avowed policy of 'peaceful coexistence' while themselves peacefully coexisting with Japan. However, we must warn against the growing objective possibility—given the tremen-

ter's "human rights" crusade is simply part of American imperialism's drive against the Soviet Union should come as no surprise. Yet the same impressionists who yesterday were giving "critical support" to Peking today try to pressure imperialist "democrat" Carter to stop being "hypocritical" and put teeth into his "human rights" campaign.

While the objectives of U.S. foreign policy have remained constant, the strength of American imperialism has been sapped by its declining economic weight and military defeats. Ever since the rout in Indochina U.S. diplomacy has consisted of tricky maneuvering to give the appearance of strength by setting itself up as arbiter (e.g., Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" and Carter's shell game Camp David accords) without actually resolving anything. The China alliance is part of a major effort to readjust the Soviet-U.S. balance of power to American advantage.

The Kremlin bureaucracy is obviously worried about the implications of the U.S.-China link. In an article written in November, the top Soviet expert on America, Georgi Arbatov, stated that there would obviously be "no place for détente" in the face of a de facto Washington-Peking-Tokyo "axis" (*New York Times*, 22 December). This terminology calls up images of the Germany/Italy/Japan Anti-Comintern Pact of the 1930's, and Soviet flunkeys around the world (such as the Portuguese Communist Party) have already begun denouncing the new anti-Soviet axis. But even if a USSR on the defensive should be forced by an emboldened Washington into a slightly more testy posture, Stalinism without formal détente still seeks a modus vivendi with imperialism.

The parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies are incapable of waging revolutionary struggle against the imperialists, for the necessary mobilization of the masses would directly threaten their privileged positions. The Peking Maoists are willing to let Hong Kong and Taiwan capitalists coexist and grow, while allying with every anti-Soviet reactionary around the globe; their Moscow counterparts abruptly cut off all economic aid to China in 1960 and allowed U.S. imperialism to devastate Vietnam. Only political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states coupled with social revolution in the capitalist countries can defeat this new unholy alliance of counterrevolution. ■

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## Iran...

(continued from page 5)

the Stalinists of the Tudeh party betrayed these struggles, forcing the oil workers back on the job in 1946 in order to procure a few cabinet seats. They consistently subordinated the interests of the Iranian proletariat to the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, which merely wished control of oil concessions in northern Iran.

The Tudeh party held aloof from the workers' upsurge in the early 1950's, which demanded nationalization of the British-owned oil companies, for the very same reason: the Soviet Stalinists' desire to make a deal with the shah. The movement for nationalization thus fell into the hands of the bourgeois nationalist Mossadeq. Mossadeq, who sought to put Iran under the "protection" of U.S. rather than British imperialism, was a hundred times more hostile to the toiling masses than he was to imperialist domination of Iran. Thus, when the U.S. decided he was "de-stabilizing" the country and opening the door to Tudeh party control and organized the 1953 coup, Mossadeq was utterly incapable of resistance. But so was the Tudeh party, which had the potential to mobilize the working class for the seizure of power. These muddled reformists were completely smashed by the ensuing repression, and then completely discredited when the USSR struck a deal with the shah and swapped arms for natural gas.

A whole generation of young militants rejected the Soviet Union and the Tudeh party's betrayals only to end up as apologists for Peking's alliance with Teheran, politically irrelevant acolytes of Albania's Enver Hoxha or urban guerrillas hopelessly isolated from the Iranian proletariat. The working class entered the 1970's without any credible political leadership and with a heritage of Stalinist betrayal.

The Tudeh party is currently wedded to the bourgeois liberals of the National Front, committed of course, to the Menshevik/Stalinist strategy that Iran must pass through a period of bourgeois democracy before proletarian dictatorship is possible. The fact that the National Front prostrates itself before Khomeini gives the lie to this proposition. In fact, the bourgeois-democratic tasks cannot be accomplished without a workers revolution. The impotence of the bourgeois liberals flows from this basic fact of the imperialist epoch.

The myriad of "Marxist-Leninist" critics of Tudeh are in fact proponents of equally repellent forms of class collaboration. Rather than capitulate to Khomeini via the medium of the National Front, they cheer him on directly as the most "consistent" oppo-

nent of the shah! In many cases the Stalinist puritanism of the Maoists even rivals that of the mullahs. As for the American left, even as they distance themselves from the Jonestown cultists and publish the most orthodox Marxist critiques of religion in their press, these very same opportunists are also praising the mullahs' campaign for theocratic rule.

One of the worst aspects of the shah's rule was the suppression of all political life in Iran for two decades. With the fall of the monarchy the fat will hit the fire and a period of political sorting-out may



Enzo Luceri

### Mullahs reimpose the veil.

ensue. But revolutionary Marxists do not generalize this into a schema of two-stage revolution, nor do they blithely proclaim, recalling the Third Period Stalinist formula, "after Khomeini, us." Given the concrete balance of forces in Iran today, a period of reactionary Islamic rule is likely. But the masses' experience with the "Islamic republic" will hardly be a pleasant one. Most likely it will take the form of a dictatorship of military officers claiming to represent the "Sword of Islam."

This does not mean that a catastrophic defeat equivalent to that of Indonesia in 1965 is inevitable. The convulsions shaking Iran give the Iranian proletariat the possibility of sweeping away the filth of religious obscurantism, agrarian poverty, national oppression and grinding exploitation, and of leading an offensive against all the oil sheikdoms, pseudo-socialist military despotisms and dictatorships of "soldiers of Islam" that surround Iran.

## Carter Opens Door to Butcher Shah, Gusanos, "Boatpeople"

LOS ANGELES, January 2—The luxury estate of the Iranian monarch's sister nearly caught fire today as more than 2,000 anti-shah demonstrators massed outside the Beverly Hills sanctuary of the torture-chic dynasty from Teheran. As the shah packed up his family for safe shores, the Queen Mother's arrival in the U.S. was greeted with chants of "Death, Death, Death to the Shah!" U.S. imperialism enforced its policy of political asylum for reactionary butchers with tear gas, billy clubs and arrests. Demonstrators were injured when a cop car crashed through the crowd.

The State Department has made elaborate security arrangements to protect the shah's family, which is busily buying up expensive real estate in Southern California. Two of his sisters own estates in Beverly Hills and rumors that the shah himself is buying contiguous property in the posh suburb of Bel Air have been flying all week. A real estate agent said the family planned to build "an incredible palace" surrounded by a moat. But it is not the moat but the U.S. government that will shield the Pahlavi family from the just vengeance of their victims.

The protection afforded the shah and his kin is only the most spectacular recent example of U.S. imperialism's consistent policy of offering sanctuary to the architects and henchmen of reactionary terror. Attorney General Bell on 22 November announced a proposal to grant asylum to an additional 22,000 "boat people"—fugitives from the Indochinese revolution, among whom are war criminals who belong on trial in Hanoi. One token attempt to pretend "even-handedness"—the deportation proceedings under way against former Saigon police chief Nguyen

Ngoc Loan, the Vietnamese war's most famous public killer, who murdered a bound "suspect" as an example—has been termed "ridiculous" by no less a figure than Jimmy Carter.

The Justice Department is bringing into the U.S. some 3,500 political prisoners from Castro's Cuba, under an Immigration Act provision granting "discretionary powers" to the attorney general. While not all Cuban immigrants are active reactionaries, these newly released prisoners are nearly all *gusanos* ("worms") who have fought against the Cuban revolution. The U.S. government's considerations are practical as well as ideological; ardent anti-Communist *gusanos* have been invaluable to the criminal dirty work of the CIA/FBI.

Of course, the attorney general will not use his "discretionary powers" to grant asylum to the desperate victims of right-wing repression, such as refugees from the bloody grip of the Chilean junta. And Mexican immigrants driven to the U.S. by poverty will be met with attempts to seal the border with armed guards using seismic, magnetic and infrared sensors—technological descendants of devices developed in Vietnam. A 12-foot steel and mesh barrier has even been proposed to separate El Paso from Ciudad Juarez.

The shah and his family should be tried by a workers tribunal of the victims of their torture chambers! No asylum for Vietnamese war criminals or Cuban capitalist restorationists! Deport Loan to Ho Chi Minh City to stand trial! Open the doors to Chilean refugees and others fleeing reactionary terror! Stop the deportations of undocumented Mexicans—Full citizenship rights for foreign workers!

This requires the construction of an Iranian Trotskyist vanguard party steeled in combat against Persian chauvinism and Muslim reaction, opposed to all varieties of Stalinist class collaboration. What is necessary is a program relating the felt grievances of the Iranian masses to the proletarian seizure of power:

Full democratic rights for women!  
For the right of self-determination for all oppressed nationalities—full linguistic and cultural rights! Land to the tiller!  
Win over the ranks of the army to the

side of the proletariat—no confidence in "anti-imperialist" officers!

No asylum for the shah—people's tribunals to try the shah and his SAVAK torturers! Smash SAVAK! Down with the shah! No to theocracy—for a sovereign secular constituent assembly based on universal suffrage!

For workers revolution to overthrow the shah—for a workers and peasants government in Iran! For a Trotskyist party in Iran, section of the reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

## For a Newark Strike Against Gibson's Layoffs!

NEWARK—Four thousand angry city workers and their supporters demonstrated in the streets of downtown Newark December 21 to protest the threatened layoff of more than 2,000 teachers and other municipal employees. At a meeting held afterward, union members chanted "Strike! Strike!" when leaders of the Municipal Labor Council, a coalition of public employee unions and police organizations, read a resolution to endorse a "general work stoppage in the event that we fail to convince the mayor to reorder his fiscal priorities."

The solidarity of the city union leaders with the notoriously racist and brutal Newark cops undermines the possibility of the kind of militant labor action that could rally the city's largely black and Puerto Rican population behind the city's workers. Moreover, despite some militant rhetoric, the leaders of the union-cop coalition are not building for a general strike and are instead putting their real efforts behind a petition campaign to recall Mayor

Kenneth Gibson. But replacing Gibson with another capitalist politician wouldn't change a thing.

Gibson, like Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young, has long been touted as a "progressive" and "friend of labor" by various reformists. Yet on numerous occasions in the past Gibson has not hesitated to slash jobs and break strikes. Now he is trying to make Newark city workers pay with their jobs for the cutoff of \$10.8 million in promised federal aid. Gibson later remarked cynically that he doubted 2,000 layoffs would make much difference in the quality of life in Newark.

At the December 21 protest the Stalinist Communist Party (CP) and Progressive Labor Party (PLP) passed out leaflets with the carbon-copy slogans "Butter, not guns" and "Oppose the bosses' plans for guns, not butter." But the CP and PLP reformists and Amiri Baraka's Revolutionary Communist League (M-L-M) breathed not a word in their leaflets about a city general

strike. The capitalists and their politicians have made Newark a symbol of urban decay, a city dependent on federal handouts and scraps from the table of

Prudential Insurance. The city workers can make Newark a symbol of militant labor struggle. For a general strike against the layoffs! ■



WV Photo

WORKERS VANGUARD



## Cleveland...

(continued from page 12)

at U.S. Steel in Lorain, outside the city.

While the Cleveland labor movement has every reason to be hostile to Kucinich, the majority of the union leaders actually oppose him out of a conservative fear of antagonizing the banks and large corporations. They prefer to work through such regular Democratic Party politicians as Forbes, who in fact are virtually mouthpieces for Cleveland Trust. For example, the municipal unions have come out in support of the plan to sell Muny Light. Such gutless groveling to the banks only encourages anti-labor sentiment among the petty bourgeoisie and falsely allows Kucinich to parade as the champion of the "little guy" against big business.

### Power to the People?

What mainly irritates the bourgeoisie about the Cleveland situation is Mayor Kucinich, whose populist fantasies put him at some distance from the norm of most large-city mayors. Thus the *Wall Street Journal* (20 December) commented in an editorial:

"Mayor Kucinich seems to be reliving the rhetorical battles of the Progressive Era, regardless of their current irrelevance. He is denouncing the banks and CEI [Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co.] as 'robber barons,' and conspiracy theories flourish in his incredibly inexperienced City Hall milieu. It's a net gain for Cleveland that default is puncturing these anachronistic fantasies...."

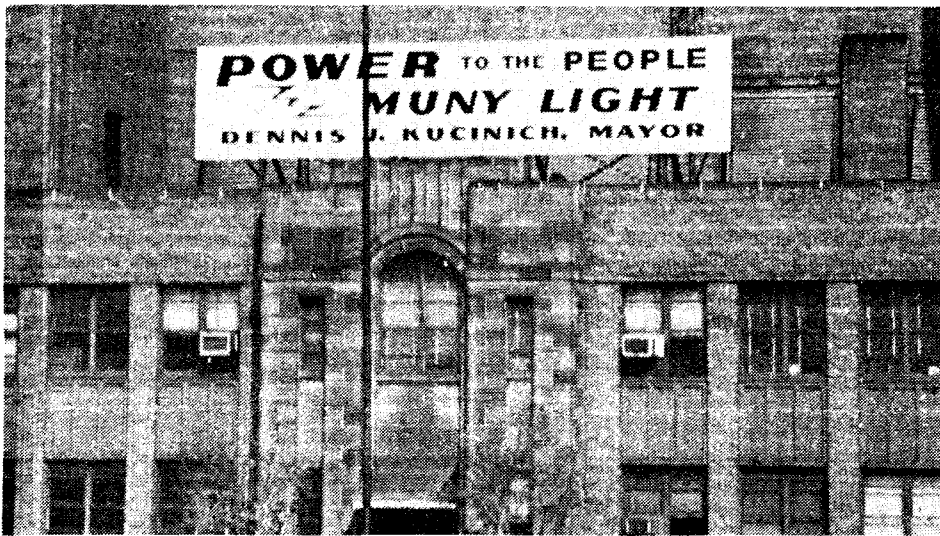
Nowhere are these populist fantasies more obvious than in the sign over Muny Light which reads, "Power to the People."

A particular bone of contention between Kucinich and the bankers is the fate of Muny Light. Set up in the early 1900's by Progressive mayor Tom Johnson, the city-owned Muny is today so decrepit that it does not even generate its own electric power, merely retailing power which it purchases from the privately owned Cleveland Electric Illuminating. Approximately 20 percent of Cleveland's residents are serviced by Muny and they get somewhat reduced rates relative to what CEI charges.

While Kucinich has supported maintaining Muny, the majority of the city council wants to sell it to CEI as a means of paying off the municipal debt held by the banks. The banks also vigorously favor this policy, not only because they want to be paid off, but because they in turn run CEI (seven of

the 11 CEI directors sit on the boards of the banks which forced Cleveland's default).

Kucinich and his political opponents have conducted a running battle over Muny which has typically taken on comic proportions. Thus the city administration recently authorized some street repair in Cleveland, during which CEI manholes were "mistakenly" paved over. On the other side, CEI entered a lawsuit against the city for nonpayment of accumulated debt, including substantial sums owed it by the financially distressed Muny. When it won a court judgment CEI vindictively got relief by attaching the repair vehicles of its competitor, thereby hoping to cripple



Muny Light Co: the banks want it.

Muny's ability to provide electrical service.

The question of Muny Light will appear on the citywide referendum in late February, along with the proposal Kucinich is plugging as a lesser evil: an increase of the city income tax from 1 to 1.5 percent. Despite the marginal importance of Muny, socialists are opposed to destitution of industry, and we would therefore advocate a "no" vote on the sale of the municipally owned utility. The tax proposal is a rather different matter. Except in instances of a clearly regressive tax that falls centrally on the workers, the labor movement generally has no interest in supporting this or that measure which the capitalist state uses to raise revenue. In Cleveland today, a call for a "yes" vote would inflame workers and a middle class whose incomes are already being rapidly eroded by inflation. On the other hand, the present tax protest movement as epitomized by California's Prop 13, is being used as a vehicle by

reactionaries and racists, aimed at cutting social expenditures generally. Therefore, the workers should abstain on this measure.

### Democrats Dig Cleveland's Grave

Cleveland's plight has been widely compared to New York's financial situation. In fact, underlying the bankruptcy of both municipal governments are the same basic material factors: a shrinking tax base due to flight of industry and resulting high unemployment. Unlike New York, however, Cleveland is primarily a center of heavy industry and since the 1950's it has lost over half of its jobs in heavy industry,

particularly in machine manufacturing. Since 1969 alone, industries representing about 17,000 jobs a year have left the city. Meanwhile, the population has been declining at a rate of roughly 20,000 a year. While many of the white residents follow the outflow of jobs, Cleveland's ghettoized blacks (now 40 percent of the city population), lacking mobility, have been left to increasing squalor and poverty and a declining number of jobs.

In its pauperization and ghettoization, Cleveland is similar to numerous other older cities. In fact, Cleveland offers a microcosm of the increasing disintegration of the American social fabric and the accompanying rightward shift of the Democratic Party. The policy of the Forbes wing of the party is identical to that of the mainstream Democratic Party nationally, exemplified by Jimmy Carter: fiscal austerity, a balanced budget, dismantling of social reforms and other "remedies" long championed by the Republicans as their

more circumspect in dealing with her colleagues.

White the ex-cop did not fit in with the clique of slick professional pils who make up the S.F. Board of Supervisors—the well-off businessmen, realtors and lawyers for whom such open contempt for the oppressed is considered bad taste. So naturally the SWP and CP paint Moscone and Milk as progressive martyrs cut down by reaction. They focus particularly on Milk, a man who was not only possessed of considerable personal charm and courage, but was also the first open homosexual elected to a major San Francisco office. This is particularly significant in a city where the gay population is large and politically well-organized (it has been estimated that up to 30 percent of S.F. registered voters are homosexuals). Milk was a symbol to Castro Street of the possibility of acceptance and success in bourgeois society.

His vehicle was the Democratic Party, for which he tried to organize homosexuals as yet another "constituency." And his skill brought him success in this liberal city which hangs out signs reading, "Gays Welcome Here." But Milk's personal success was bought by selling the party of savage counterrevolution in the Korean and Indochinese Wars of Truman, Kennedy and John-

son. And while liberal labor bureaucrats dream of reviving the New Deal coalition of unions, blacks and the "progressive" bourgeoisie, the "opposition" which is actually emerging to machine candidates within the Democratic Party is made up of demagogues like Kucinich, whose racist, anti-union program is if anything to the right of the mainstream Democrats.

Most of the left has simply chosen up sides behind one or another wing of the Democratic Party. Last year the Socialist Workers Party sided with Forbes on the recall election and later called for defense of Forbes and other councilmen indicted for corrupt practices. The Communist Party (CP), on the other hand, has recently reaffirmed its support to the little league populist mayor of Cleveland. The 16 December *Daily World* reports a CP statement charging "big business and the banks with seeking to destabilize and destroy the city administration because of its anti-monopoly stance." There is not even a single mention of the layoffs in this disgusting whitewash of Kucinich.

The Cleveland crisis clearly underscores that the Democratic Party in all its wings is the enemy of the American working class. Class-conscious militants must fight for a workers party, based on the unions. Such a party cannot be built outside the fight for a class-struggle leadership within the workers movement, for the Meany and Frasers will certainly never break with the capitalist parties, much less fight for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie.

It is not only the relatively weak municipal unions which are under the gun in Cleveland today. All workers face disaster in this declining city. Cleveland is an industrial town and it must be the industrial unions which provide the backbone in the fight against the bankers' attack. When the city's rulers try to lay off municipal workers, all Cleveland labor—UAW, Teamsters, Steelworkers—must answer with strike action. When they try to sell Muny Light to the CEI, labor must demand municipal takeover of the private utilities. When the banks demand their interest-bloated payments, labor must say "cancel the debt" and lead a fight to expropriate the banks. When old factories threaten to shut down, unions throughout the country must respond with industry-wide strike action. Only the militant struggle of the working class can prevent Cleveland from becoming a giant Youngstown. ■

## Moscone...

(continued from page 2)

issued a statement "join[ing] all San Franciscans" in expressing "shock and condemnation" of the assassinations. It went on: "An atmosphere of shock, confusion and violence has touched the lives of every man, woman and child in our area. This kind of atmosphere creates a dangerous opportunity for right-wing forces to demagogically attack legitimate progressive movements" (*People's World*, 2 December). And which are these legitimate movements? Evidently the "progressive" Democrats.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which aggressively seeks to present itself as a credible electoral "socialist alternative," waxed even more eloquent, terming the murders "an expression of irrational hatred and violence produced by the decaying capitalist society" (*Militant*, 8 December). At that level of universal causality, capitalism can be held responsible for everything from the incidence of heart disease to chewing gum. Denouncing White as a bigot and reactionary—which he surely is—the SWP declaimed: "...it was a small step for this ex-cop's bigoted hatred and frustration to drive him into firing his gun at two elected officials especially since one of these victims was gay."

Just who are these "elected officials" anyway? Isn't Moscone the same capitalist politician who crushed the 1976 San Francisco municipal craft workers strike? Isn't Milk responsible for funneling votes of the large homosexual "community" to the party of Anita Bryant, the Dixiecrats and the Vietnam War? Not according to the SWP. For them the Milks and Moscones are the voice of bourgeois "sanity" menaced by crazy right-wingers. These reformists are so eager to prove their respectability and cash in on illusions in the popular former gay rights activist Milk, that they "forget" such elementary Marxist facts as the class character of the Democratic Party.

It happens that the assassin was also an "elected official," elected by a two-to-one margin. However, complaining that his supervisor's salary was too low, White resigned from the board to run a hot potato stand on the S.F. wharf. When this self-appointed Mr. America later changed his mind, he was enraged to find that the mayor had already picked out a fellow liberal to replace him. So minutes before the new appointee was to be sworn in, White marched into City Hall and took out his frustrations by pumping bullets into Moscone and Milk. The debonair mayor meant to step on White like a worm, but the worm bit back. No doubt acting mayor Diane Feinstein will be

son; the party which under Carter has relentlessly slashed away at democratic rights for blacks, women and homosexuals. So when the *Militant* announces a New York City candlelight vigil for Harvey Milk, they know full well they are lighting a candle for the Democrats.

For the SWP this expression of an appetite for bourgeois respectability is nothing new. When John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 the SWP sent a cringing telegram to the widow of the chief imperialist in the world expressing their sympathies. This message of condolences was another dramatic sign of the SWP's degeneration from revolutionary Trotskyism into treacherous reformism. We said then and say now that it is not the business of the working class to mourn capitalist rulers. As communists our sympathies are with their victims, the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese slaughtered on orders of JFK and LBJ, the strikers arrested by Moscone.

We have tears for the striking Bay Area Teamster run over by a scab on the picket lines last summer, but we have no tears for the Moscones and Milks, the JFKs and RFKs. Our job is to organize the workers against these phony "friends of labor"; we leave the "responsible" mourning for strikebreaking, witchhunting, warmongering Democrats to the likes of the SWP and CP. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Not One Layoff, Wipe Out the Debt!

# What's Happening in Cleveland?

CLEVELAND—It seemed too much like a comic-opera Christmas skit to be the most important urban financial crisis since New York City's near plunge into bankruptcy. Visions of civil disaster and massive layoffs danced ominously in the heads of Clevelanders as the banks demanded payment on \$15.5 million in short-term notes. Then, at the stroke of midnight on December 15, this Great Lakes port became the first major U.S. city to default on its bank loans since the 1930's depression.

But who could take seriously the plight of Cleveland so long as center stage was occupied by the "Animal House" antics of its 32-year-old mayor, demagogic "urban populist" Dennis Kucinich. A few days after default he retaliated against the city's biggest bank by marching into the neo-Grecian rotunda of Cleveland Trust with a bevy of reporters to withdraw his \$9,197.99 in personal savings. "I will not keep my clean money in a dirty bank," he declared as his backers chanted, "You can't trust Cleveland Trust."

In the heated atmosphere of this mid-winter financial crisis all sides paint a picture of a city about to go under as its funds to meet day-to-day expenses run out in February and further borrowing is impossible. On December 16 Kucinich announced that one municipal worker in five would be laid off at the beginning of January due to default. However, just before New Year's he rescinded most of the layoffs pending a February referendum. Thus the mayor who was elected on the basis of opposition to tax increases and retention of a run-down city-owned electrical facility is trying to salvage his career by pushing a city income tax hike and putting the Muni Light Co. sale to a vote.

From afar it might seem like a battle between the banks and the "people's mayor." But the amount of money involved is downright puny: in NYC, Wall Street extorted \$3.7 billion (i.e., \$3,700 million) from union pension funds alone to cover the shortfall, whereas the total sum involved in Cleveland is less than one half of one percent of that. In reality what is going on here is the same old fight among Cleveland Democrats which earlier in the year forced Kucinich into a recall election (see "Cleveland Mayor Squeaks By in Recall," *WV* No. 214, 8 September).

While Kucinich blamed default on a "dirty" bank conspiracy, black Democratic city council head George Forbes backed up by the banks was screaming that the mayor and his administration were "snake oil" salesmen dragging the city over a precipice. They know each other well. There is without doubt a bank conspiracy to topple the Kucinich administration, which has indeed sold an overdose of snake oil to Cleveland.

Kucinich makes an easy target for the "responsible" bourgeoisie. There is after all plenty of embarrassing incompetency in the present administration, derisively known as the "kiddie corps." When Kucinich was elected, the JayCee booster outfit, Cleveland Growth Association, came up with the slogan, "There's a New Generation in Cleve-

land." The trouble is that this "now generation" runs Cleveland like it was some sort of National Lampoon fraternity romp. When the 27-year-old school board president, John Gallagher, was arrested a few months ago for exposing his ass on a public highway (widely referred to locally as "the great moon shot of '78"), *Cleveland Magazine* moaned that such acts "lent credence to the widespread belief that Cleveland is being run by a band of post-pubescent crazies" (January 1979). It sure does seem so.

In the midst of the financial crisis, attention has focused on the mayor's Director of Finance, Joseph Tegreene, 25 years old, whose main claim to financial expertise is a two-month internship on Wall Street. Betty Grdina, the Cleveland Community Development Director, is also 25. When she found her house picketed over the failure to build a promised fire station, she called her younger sister, the Assistant Safety Director, who had the police harass the demonstrators.

Some of Cleveland's absurd criminal shenanigans predate the Kucinich regime. Under Republican mayor Perk, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of fireplugs were stolen from the municipal water system. They mysteriously showed up later, repainted, on streetcorners in the suburbs. The Kucinich administration at one point even tried a Watergate-style raid on the offices of a former city administrator to get the "goods" on the previous Republican administration. The bungling burglars found nothing but a cache of liquor, which was emptied by morning. Besides getting themselves apprehended the Kucinich gang managed to punch a hole through the wall of the office and to drop a safe on the foot of one of the apprentice "plumbers." This action, too, was defended by the mayor's aide who authorized the job. "People are born at night. People die at night. I guess we can go into people's offices at night," he said.

And to make things even worse for Kucinich, on the same day he made his



Warren Browne

Dennis Kucinich: the "urban populist" mayor threatens to stuff layoffs down throats of Cleveland workers.

famous retaliatory withdrawal at Cleveland Trust, his mentally disturbed younger brother was arrested for making a "withdrawal" at another local bank... by handing a teller a Christmas card with the holiday greeting: "All your \$ or die."

### Banks and Mayor Target Labor

To Cleveland workers the comedy was not so funny, for the war in the Democratic Party had the guns of both sides turned on them. The day after declaring default, Kucinich announced layoffs of 2,000 municipal workers—some 20 percent of the city workforce. Immediately 16 unions along with the cops' "union" formed a coalition to fight the layoffs. There was even talk of a general strike, but after a quick consultation with George Forbes the local bureaucrats backed off in a hurry. After wildcats by repairmen, electrical workers and the long, bitter teachers' strike

which went down to defeat in late October, the ranks of city labor might have turned to a general strike call with enthusiasm. The piccards opted for a safer channel and went to court.

Kucinich went after the city unions with a vengeance he was supposed to have reserved for "big business." The mayor wailed that "we won't tolerate any strikes called to dictate policy. Strikes are for collective bargaining only. They are not for mob rule in the usurpation of an administration." When Paul Wells, president of Laborers Local 1099, initially threatened to pull out his entire local if there were any layoffs, Kucinich replied that if the Laborers set up pickets, he would "put the union out of business."

On December 28, Kucinich canceled 1,600 of the scheduled layoffs and postponed the other 400 until January 5. The mayor claimed that this was based on an understanding with Cleveland Trust, which has apparently decided to await the outcome of the February 27 referendum on the income tax hike and proposed sale of Muni before pressing its claims for \$5 million owed it by the city. The other Cleveland banks are expected to follow suit.

Kucinich's initial announcement of layoffs, whose scope shocked even the bourgeois press, certainly did not win him any new friends in the Cleveland labor movement. The only significant union that has given the mayor any real support is the United Auto Workers (UAW), and this mainly because a former UAW local leader, Bob Weisman, is the mayor's second in command. The Cleveland city labor council, on the other hand, last year demanded the recall of Kucinich. AFL-CIO bureaucrats, and particularly the Steelworkers, were miffed at the administration's opposition to tax writeoffs to Republic Steel for expansion of a Lake Erie ore dock, fearing it would cost union jobs. The projected dock was later relocated

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