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December 6, 1979

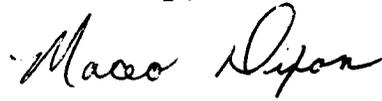
TO ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of the November 23, 1979, Workers Vanguard article on their analysis of the events in Iran and U.S. imperialism's reaction. This article makes clear the further rightist evolution of the Spartacist League. Feel free to share this with party members.

In an upcoming issue of IP/I there will be selections from international left organizations on Iran.

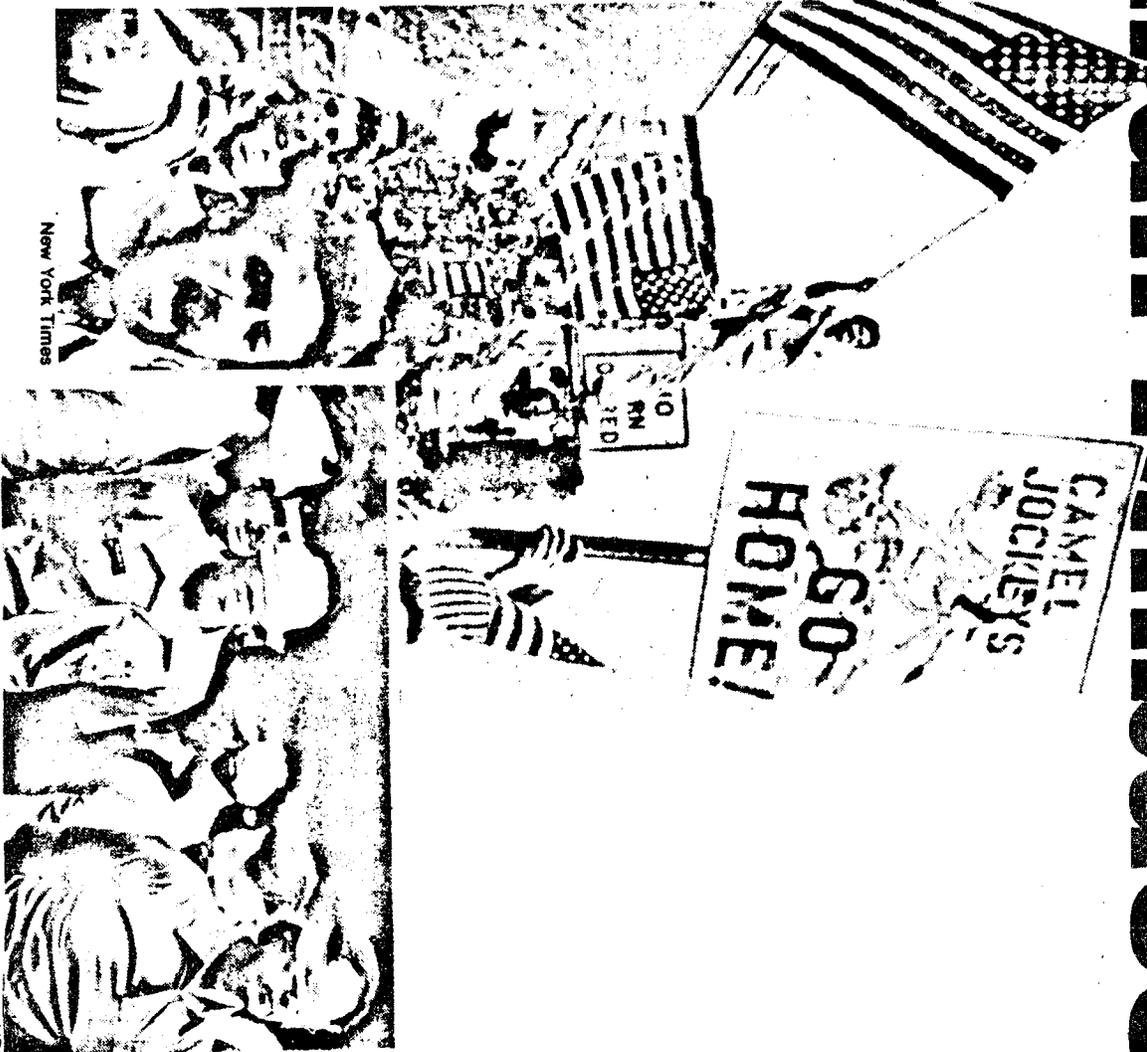
Comradely,



Maceo Dixon
National Office

Khomeini Fanatics Provoke Imperialist Threats

Iran Embassy Crisis



New York Times

UPI



As U.S. flag burned over captured Tehran embassy, flag-wavers in Houston reacted with chauvinist frenzy.

AP

NOVEMBER 20—The seizure of the American embassy and staff in Teheran enters its third week with the most dangerous imperialist power in history locked in diplomatic/economic warfare with a priest caste of Shi'ite mullahs who want to return to the seventh-century puritanical desert "paradise" of the Koran. In Iran, the embassy occupation and taking of 62 hostages by well-organized Muslim "students" demanding the extradition of murderous ex-dictator Shah Reza Pahlavi from his New York City hospital bed has revitalized waning popular support for the theocratic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. From the United States has come a backlash of "national unity." Reacting to a feeling of helplessness, right now many Americans would approve of nuking Qum, the religious capital of Khomeini's Persian-chauvinist Islamic sect. The Iran embassy crisis has even accomplished the feat of temporarily bolstering an image of the desperate Jimmy Carter as a "national leader."

The mullahs claim their action is directed against the U.S. government which granted the shah "medical asylum," and not against the "American people." But that is not the way the American people are viewing it. It is not just the right-wingers organizing flag-waving anti-Iranian demonstrations. The Teheran embassy is denounced not merely as a "nest of spies," which it certainly is, but also as a "den of corruption." Purging "corruption" in Khomeini's Iran includes banning popular music, movies, alcohol, mixed bathing, extra-marital sex, homosexuals and most other aspects of "decadent Judeo-Christian" Western culture... except dollars, marks, the pound sterling, etc. Hearing the fanatical ayatollah calling for a purge of all "America-loving rotten brains" (intellectuals), watching American tourists and American contractors working in Iran dragged out of hotels and offices and thrown in with the hostages, the U.S. population has responded with a wave of national chauvinism.

The *New York Times* (20 November) reports: "Ayatollah Khomeini has leveled a general charge that the American Embassy was a 'nest of spies.' The White House and State Department have refused to comment directly on that accusation." And for good reason: Under the shah, the U.S. embassy was notorious as a branch office of the CIA, a coequal and

sometimes predominant seat of power with the Niavaran Palace. High CIA officials were posted to Teheran as American ambassadors, including Richard Helms and William Sullivan. We shed no tears for the imperialist diplomats, NSA/CIA agents and Marine lifers captured by the Islamic students. And even while the government was disclaiming any intention of military aggression against Iran and counseling "calm," the Pentagon has created a 110,000-man "Rapid Deployment Force" standing by for such emergencies. Revolutionaries and the American working class must militantly oppose military action by U.S. imperialism against Iran.

Having made this clear, we must point out that this was hardly the heroic Tet offensive of 1968, which besieged the U.S. embassy in Saigon, nor the 1958 rock-throwing attack on Vice-President Nixon in Caracas—both clearly blows by left-wing forces against U.S. imperialist strongpoints and rulers. The mullahs have not been waging a struggle against imperialism at all—on the contrary, Khomeini's government had most recently been negotiating with Washington for resumption of billions of dollars in military aid to be used against Kurdish rebels, Arab oil workers, Iranian leftists and the Soviet Union. The Teheran embassy seizure and hostage-taking was a *diversion*. It was fundamentally an attempt to refurbish Khomeini's anti-shah credentials in a period of growing disillusionment with, and opposition to, his clerical-reactionary rule.

Internationally, the Khomeinists' action has met with disfavor from governments of almost every stripe. The

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

USSR (which no doubt figures its Teheran embassy could be next) voted in the United Nations Security Council to condemn the seizure. Even radical-bonapartist "Third World" regimes—which are usually eager to thumb their noses at Yankee imperialism, and whose "socialist" rhetoric is proportional to the savage tyranny generated by an aspiring capitalist class struggling to consolidate itself under conditions of extreme economic backwardness—have been noticeably reticent. Diplomatic immunity and territorial sovereignty of embassies are seldom violated even by nations at war, though every diplomatic office conducts its share of spying and intelligence gathering. These diplomatic rules of the game are necessary to

maintain international relations between nation-states, until the nation-state itself has disappeared in a socialist world.

In order to undercut the international disapproval which greeted the Teheran embassy occupation, Khomeini has agreed to release women and black hostages who are not suspected of being spies. This he explains as an expression of Islam's "regard" for women and the oppression of racial minorities in the U.S. Nonsense! Islam's "regard" for women is expressed in the *chador*, the head-to-toe veil which is the symbol of their enslavement and imprisonment within the home. Islam has also given institutional support to the slave trade, and to this day black chattel slavery exists in Islamic countries on the Arabian peninsula. And Khomeini's "regard" for Iran's ethnic, national and religious minorities is demonstrated by his savage persecution of the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Turkish-speaking nationalities and minor religions (notably the Ba'hai).

Chauvinist Backlash in the U.S.

The thousands demonstrating daily in front of the occupied American embassy in Teheran in support of the ayatollah were echoed by Iranian students in the U.S. But marchers carrying Khomeini icons in the streets of Washington, D.C. and Houston, Texas soon discovered that they were not in Teheran or Abadan under the mullahs' rule. In Houston a November 7 Iranian student march calling for extradition of the shah was followed the next day by 1,500 angry demonstrators at the Iranian consulate, chanting "Take Your Oil and Shove It," burning Iranian flags, waving Old Glory and signs reading, "Camel Jockeys Go Home." Outside Reno, Nevada the owner of Mustang Ranch, a local brothel, posted a sign announcing that no more Iranian students would be admitted until the hostages are released. He was fed up, he said, with the hypocrisy of the students who support Khomeini's puritanical policies yet patronize his establishment.

Carter answered the demands of the protesters on November 10 by ordering the attorney general to begin a chauvinist round-up and reregistration of Iranian students, in order to deport those who do not meet stringent visa requirements. Unprecedented immigra-

tion regulations were directed against the estimated 50,000-100,000 Iranian students in the U.S., the largest body of foreign students in the country. While students who hailed the ayatollah should have no complaints about returning to join the "Islamic Revolution," such expulsion orders would also be applied against those who opposed both the shah and Khomeini. If deported they would face "revolutionary tribunals" no less sinister than the shah's vicious SAVAK. On the other hand, one can be sure that the papers of the more than 270 Iranians studying in U.S. military academies will be found to be in order.

We oppose these draconian reregistration/deportation orders above all because of the history of such acts of victimization and the precedent it would set. The American heritage of using discriminatory immigration/citizenship laws against radicals goes back to the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798. In this century we have seen the 1919-20 Palmer Raids in which thousands of foreign-born communists, socialists and anarchists were expelled from the country in response to the Bolshevik Revolution; and the McCarran-Walter Act (sponsored by liberals such as Hubert Humphrey) passed at the height of the Cold War setting up concentration camps to intern communists in times of "national emergency." Carter's measure recalls in particular the rounding-up of Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals during World War II when 160,000 were held in West Coast prison camps. Such racist measures as Carter's decree lay the basis, for example, for an internal passport system, and must be opposed by all those concerned to defend democratic rights.

Carter also upstaged the Khomeini regime's threat to cut off petroleum exports to the U.S. by ordering a ban on November 12 on Iranian oil (which supplies about 4 percent of American consumption). The order was hailed by the oil monopolies, who see it as another excuse to raise gasoline prices. However, Carter's next measure of economic warfare against the Persian "Islamic Republic" was not so well received in the business world. When the Iranian government threatened to withdraw its investments and deposits from U.S. banks—currently estimated at \$8 billion—Carter on November 14 froze these assets. The idea that not only banks in New York but also their branches in Europe and Iran should

answer only to American law is certainly an expression of imperialist arrogance. And since most payments on the international oil market are made in dollars and to U.S.-owned banks, the move threatened to disrupt the petroleum market and fuel the move out of dollars. As the already battered dollar plunged relative to other currencies and gold rose, the capitalist press began making comparisons with Paul Erdman's fictionalized account of an Iranian-sparked crisis which plunges the capitalist world into economic ruin, aptly titled *The Crash of '79*.

The Shah's "Friend at Chase Manhattan"

One of the reasons given by the Iranian government for threatening to withdraw its funds from American-owned banks was the role of the Rockefeller family, and their "in-house intellectual," former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in pressuring the U.S. to permit the shah to enter the country. The shah certainly has a "friend at Chase Manhattan," namely its chairman David Rockefeller, who together with Kissinger has consistently enunciated the position that America must stand by its despots through thick and thin. Rockefeller also has some financial interests involved, as the banker for a large chunk of the shah's estimated \$15-20 billion fortune. For eight months the Carter administration resisted the Rockefeller entreaties because they knew admitting the shah to the U.S. would set off another explosion in Iran, where the U.S. was attempting to re-establish its sphere of influence. But in late October Secretary of State Vance finally gave in and acceded on the grounds of "human rights."

In threatening show trials of the American embassy staff for spy activities, the Khomeini regime points to another of the shah's long-time friends: the CIA. It was the Central Intelligence Agency which saved the Peacock Throne for Reza Pahlavi after he had been displaced by the bourgeois nationalist Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953. A swashbuckling account of that exploit by the central CIA operative involved, Kermit Roosevelt (grandson of President Teddy), was recently published and then precipitously withdrawn from the market and destroyed by the publisher (McGraw-Hill). *Workers Vanguard* managed to obtain a copy of the book, entitled *Counter coup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*, before it was recalled, allegedly for "production

mistakes." The press is now floating the story that the book was pulled because of objections from the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, whose name is used as a cover for MI-6. More likely, however, it was deemed impolitic at this point to print such a braggart account of how the CIA made and unmade Iranian governments:

"The meeting in [CIA director Allen] Dulles' office, which was attended by other leaders of the American government, ended with the firm decision. The author was given the go-ahead to mastermind the overthrow of Mossadeq and return the Shah to the Peacock Throne."

The U.S. backed shah Reza Pahlavi for the same reason the British had backed his father: as the best hope to create a strong, centralized Persian anti-communist regime on the Soviet Union's southern flank. This same concern led the Carter administration to seek an understanding with Khomeini, despite Washington's earlier unconditional backing of the shah. After the embassy takeover, the *New York Times* (9 November) editorially complained about Khomeini's ingratitude:

"He knows that Washington tried to appease him by discouraging the Shah from settling here in the first place. The Ayatollah also knows that the Carter Administration gave him military aid to crush various rebels and encouraged American business to help rebuild his economy."

But what the *Times* finds so hard to understand is that Jimmy Carter, who talks as if his every act is ordained by god, is a "born again" phony, while the ayatollah actually believes in what he says, and acts on it.

By granting the shah "medical asylum," Carter gave Khomeini the pretext to channel the mounting discontent with his clerical tyranny into fury against the distant ex-dictator. It is U.S. imperialism which created Khomeini, by helping the shah crush the labor movement and the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and thereby leaving the mullahs an open field as the main organized opposition to the bloody autocrat. The shah's attempts at modernization alienated all sections of society from him, especially the clergy who opposed his half-hearted reforms for going too far. As for the deposed monarch, we are in favor of the shah getting his just deserts, with as unfair a trial as possible, and oppose any attempt to grant him asylum in the U.S. or elsewhere. But the tyrant-in-power is no less guilty of crimes against the Iranian working people and oppressed than his predecessor.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is an 80-year-old religious fanatic convinced that he will soon be greeted by a special delegation from Allah, and ready to take everyone with him in a fiery twilight of the gods. He is determined to impose a theocratic "Islamic Republic" which is closer to Jonestown, Guyana than Calvin's Geneva; and if the Iranians are

not ready, they deserve to perish. To Carter's threats he responds: "We are a nation of 35 million and many of these people are looking forward to martyrdom.... After they have all been martyred, then they can do what they want with Iran." This apocalyptic vision and program offers no future to the Iranian masses. It is only through proletarian revolution, led by an Iranian Trotskyist party, that the oppressed can break the chains of imperialism and Islamic obscurantism and emancipate themselves from the shahs and ayatollahs forever. ■

Ayatollah Nuttier Than Shah But

Hands Off Iran!

NOVEMBER 20, 11:30 p.m.—U.S. President Jimmy Carter has now threatened military retaliation against Iran. Today the State Department announced that the aircraft carrier Midway and five other warships are standing by in the Arabian Sea, while the carrier Kitty Hawk is sailing from the Philippines. Is Washington getting ready to write off the hostages?

The Khomeini-led Muslim fanatics have violated diplomatic prerogatives in a way that not even the Nazis did. But Carter is invoking the felt outrage of the American people in order to get back into the White House over the bodies of tens of thousands of Iranians, whose just desire to take their own country back has been mobilized by a

clerical-medievalist fanatic.

The essential thrust of American policy toward Iran for decades has not just been to plunder the country but an anti-Communist crusade against Russia. The U.S. imperialists started sending machine-gun bullets to the mad mullah Khomeini in order to *get the Soviet Union*. And as was demonstrated by John Kennedy in the Cuban missile crisis, when it comes to taking the world to the brink of a nuclear holocaust, the U.S. bourgeoisie is no more rational than the ayatollah of Qum.

Meanwhile Carter is giving this tin-pot "Imam" just the excuse he needs to justify the privation of the Iranian masses for a generation: blame it on the Americans.

The American working class must militantly oppose these war threats. In the event of actual U.S. armed intervention, workers and socialists must stand for military defense of Iran against imperialist attack, while opposing the reactionary mullah rulers, and stand ready to offer revolutionary defensism toward the Soviet degenerated workers state as well.