

Executions protect Khomeini's allies

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The Iranian bourgeoisie and the Khomeini led Islamic establishment are continuing their offensive against the independent organisations of the working class in Iran. They are intensifying their attacks on the Left and the movements for democratic rights that gathered considerable strength in the struggle to bring down the Shah.

Prime Minister Bazargan, spokesman for Iran's bourgeoisie has openly blamed Iran's economic chaos and crisis on "excessive" pay rises won by workers in the last months of the Shah. He has attacked strikes and called for vigilance against the left declaring Ayatollah Motahari - the assassinated head of Iran's Secret Council - as a fallen victim of the struggle against Marxism.

Khomeini and the Islamic leaders also recognise the threat that the Iranian working class poses to the creation of an Islamic Republic in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the mosque hierarchy. This was shown clearly by the actions taken by the mosque dominated Komitehs to prevent the independent mobilisations of workers to celebrate May Day.

In Tehran Khomeini's supporters organised their own demonstration in opposition to that called by organisations of the left. In Isfahan, where a student was shot on a demonstration of the unemployed in April, the local Komiteh surrounded the Workers House before the May Day demonstration was due to leave. The Isfahan Komiteh challenged employed workers with instant dismissal if they were to join the planned demonstration.

The mosque hierarchy has moved decisively against the critics of the growing authority of the Islam Komitehs. Khomeini has called on Moslems to fight more fiercely against secular opponents of the new regime than they did against the Shah.

In May Islamic workers on the paper Kayhan locked out journalists mildly critical of the regime. Khomeini backed the sacking of these journalists, "the press writes in support of traitors and criminals, it is not our press." The Islamic authorities have closed down the paper Ayandegan and the Islamic militia have seized anti-clerical works from Tehran's bookstores. In the western city of Khorramabad bookshops have been ransacked for left-wing books which were publicly burnt to cries of "Islam is victorious, Communism is destroyed."

The new regime continues to face mounting demands for autonomy from the national minorities of Iran. Kurdish leader Sheikh Ezzredin Hosseini has called for the solidarity of the Arabs, Baluchis and Turks in the battle for autonomy. An unofficial militia in the Khuzestan Arab region has attacked, and briefly held, the town of Masjedzez Soleiman.

While moving to destroy the independent organisations of the workers, and democratic rights for journalists and nationalities, the Islamic council has still had to claim to be waging a struggle to destroy the forces of the hated old regime and to commit the regime to the struggle against Imperialism.

The much publicised secret trials and executions, the death penalty pronounced on the Shah and the planned show trial of 13 ex-deputies, two senators and the head of the Shah's National Resurgence Party (Rastakhiz) are a vital part of the tactics of the Khomeini-led Islamic Council. They serve to satisfy the masses demands for retribution and the dismantling of the old apparatus of repression. At the same time their secrecy prevents the masses from openly witnessing the true extent of corruption and torture and the real record of many of their new masters now parading their credentials as fighters against the Shah.

With many of the local Komitehs openly using ex-Savak forces for their work, the role of the show trials in deceiving the masses is doubly important.

The Iranian bourgeoisie are clearly unhappy about the possible dynamic of the trials and purges. They know too well what would be revealed if the masses were free to unlock the secrets of the Shah's state apparatus. That is why Bazargan, in their name, has already raised the call for an amnesty. That is why he is clearly intent on limiting the authority of the local Komitehs.

Similarly, Khomeini and his henchmen have found it necessary to put themselves to the fore in organising multi-million demonstrations against the US. The indignation of the Iranian masses at US Senatorial denunciations of the trials and executions enabled the 'leftist' Fedayeen and the radicalised Moslem Mujaheddin, to organise a 200, 000-strong demonstration against US Imperialism. Khomeini supporters were able to organise a larger demonstration and send crowds against the Fedayeen chanting "These are the enemies of Islam ...The People's Fedayeen must be hanged".

It is vital to understand that a stable alliance of the bourgeoisie and the Mosque has yet to prevent the mobilisations of the Iranian masses for the final destruction of the old regime, for democratic rights, against unemployment and for a decisive break with Imperialism. Only the independent organisation of the working class, prepared to finally break with the bourgeoisie and the Mullahs can prevent the destruction of the workers' organisations, of the democratic struggles and of the leaders of the workers and peasants who have taken up those struggles.

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