

Iran workers tip the scales

Thu, 11/01/1979 - 13:51

From Workers Power issue 3

The total cessation of oil exports from Iran is undeniable testimony to the tremendous weight Iran's workers have thrown into the scales in the struggle against the blood soaked Shah. The strikes by bank workers, state employees, newspaper workers and car workers, are inexorably strangling the functioning of the Iranian economy. Unprecedented wage increases have been won (25% to 100%) over the last 3 months which partly recoup the effects of inflation but the strikes continue and are now overtly political, centring on calls for democratic rights, the kicking out of foreign exploiters and the overthrow of the Shah and his machinery of mass murder.

The Ayatollah Khomeini, a fierce anti-communist is forced by the obvious centrality of the working class's strength to overthrowing the Shah, to praise the strikers and call on all oppositionists to give them financial and other support.

The military regime despite unexampled savagery has been unable to restore order in the streets or break the workers resolve. The court camarilla, the generals and police chiefs and their CIA advisers have only two choices, more repression taken to genocidal proportions or concessions.

The latter course, to have any chance of producing a stable transitional government would necessitate the Shah's flight along with the most notorious generals, Savak chiefs etc.

The crucial question facing the Iranian revolution is the role of the working class. Already its social weight is proving the single most decisive factor. But more than this is needed if more than the figurehead, the trappings of Pahlavi monarchy, is to be altered. A Savak-military dictatorship swathed in Islamic demagoguery would be no step forward for Iran's oppressed masses. A coalition of mullah nominees and bourgeois politicians swathed in anti-imperialist rhetoric would be, at best, a concealed foe of the working class and democratic rights - one which the exigencies of the class struggle would soon drive sharply to the right. Whilst the proletariat can and should fight alongside the mullah led forces, it will be fatal for it to support a Khomeini-style government. Therefore the objective strength of the working class in the anti-Shah movement must be transformed into conscious leadership. This requires the focussing of existing strike committees into effective workers councils. These must be organs not only of mass strikes against the Shah, or his military successors, but of armed insurrection. They must become organs which can lead the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles to their fulfilment in an Iranian Socialist revolution.

To achieve this goal means the creation of an Iranian Trotskyist party capable of breaking the workers from the influence of the mullahs, the Tudeh and the Maoist guerrilla organisations. The stageist conceptions of the Stalinists yield the leadership of the masses to anti-proletarian 'progressive forces'. The full democratic demands of the Iranian revolution can only be won under conscious proletarian leadership. They can only be safeguarded by proletarian power.

No Arms no intervention

There is no limit to the hardware imperialism will provide to prop up its bloody puppet state in Iran.

The stoppage of oil supplies threatens severe disruption to the economies of Imperialism's most faithful henchmen - Israel and South Africa - as well as to the economies of the Imperialist heartlands.

That is why the Carter administration has committed its security apparatus and its fleet to the massacre of the Iranian workers and peasants.

Not to be outdone the British Labour Government - on the very day the Shah's British tanks mangled the bodies of demonstrators on the streets of Ghazvin and Tehran - announced its commitment to the butchery in Iran. 100 Shir One Chieftain Tanks, worth over £500 million, will be delivered to Iran by the spring. Callaghan and Holy Owen have promised the fulfilment of £1 billion worth of arms orders with no cancellation.

British workers cannot remain silent as the Imperialists step up the butchery of the Iranian masses. If the British labour movement allows the transportation of arms to the forces of repression and murder in Iran then it too will be complicit in the deaths of thousands of Iranian workers and peasants.

A campaign of solidarity with the workers and peasants of Iran must be built in the British labour movement. There is not time to wait for fine speeches and petitions. Action must be taken now to block all arms supplies to the butchers of Iran. This means fighting for action by munitions workers, by transport workers, by dockers and airport workers to stop the flow of arms now.

In every town labour movement committees of solidarity must be built - committed to action, to blacking, to demonstrations to force the Labour Government to break with Imperialism and its allies in Iran.

Source URL: <https://fifthinternational.org/content/iran-workers-tip-scales>