

"WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!!"

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DOWN WITH THE SHAH!

The visit of the fascist Shah of Iran to the US last month and the large and militant protests against his visit focused all attention on Iran. The extensive and expensive public relations campaign by the Shah's regime (including buying people for the 'pro-Shah demonstration' in Washington at \$100-300 plus round trip air fare) failed disasterously and discredited it further. The establishment media's coverage of the protests was, expectedly, full of subtle distortions of the realities of Iran. But what are the facts?

Iran's vast natural resources and its strategic location have attracted colonialist and imperialist powers to this Middle Eastern country for centuries. Among others, Portugal, Holland, France, Czarist Russia, Britain and the US all have had colonialist interests and adventures in Iran at one time or another. While the first considerable US involvement in Iran dates back to late 19th Century, it gained the dominant role in Iran in 1953.

In the 1941-53 period, because of the contention among the imperialist powers and the contradictions within the ranks on internal reaction, the imperialists and their lackeys were not able to confront the people's movement with a unified program, and thus the people's movement was able to grow tremendously. National movements in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan, and the oil nationalization movement, were important achievements of this period; achievements which did not last long due to the weaknesses of the people's movement and its leadership.

It was at this same period that the US strengthened its footholds in Iran, and it took charge with the August, 1953, coup d'etat by the CIA, which overthrew the nationalist government of Dr. Mossadegh and returned the Shah to power. From then on, the US imperialists lost no time in consolidating their economic, political, military and cultural grip on Iran. The US organized the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, in 1957, and has developed it into one of the most brutal police organizations in the world. SAVAK agents and torturers are trained by the US and Israel, and it operates in many countries, including the US.

In the early 1960's, a series of imperialist 'reforms' designed to develop dependent capitalist relations and to further deepen and expand US influence in Iran were implemented under the name of the 'White revolution'. Millions of Iranian peasants were dislocated by the 'land reform' which, ostensibly, was to provide them with land. Today, thousands of US and multi-national corporations are active in exploiting Iranian labor and plundering Iran's natural resources.

In the late 1960's, the US imperialists adopted a new global strategy in response to its then imminent defeat in Indochina. According to this strategy, known as the Nixon doctrine, the mob of safeguarding US interests around the world was to be delegated to US puppet regimes which were to be built up militarily by the US. In the critically important region of the Persian Gulf, with its vast oil reserves and its proximity to important transportation routes, the fascist Shah's regime was an obvious candidate for this role. In the past ten years, the US has sold the Shah over \$18 billion worth of modern weapons. Today the Shah's arsenal, which also includes British, French and

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Soviet weapons, is one of the biggest in the world. For four years, the Shah's troops have been engaged in an aggressive war against the heroic people of Oman (in the south-eastern part of the Arabian peninsula) who have been fighting the reactionary Sultan Qaboos and the British and US imperialists for over 12 years under the leadership of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman.

In March, 1975, eliminating even the slightest pretension to 'democracy', the Shah abolished the ornamental two-party system and formed his single party. This was mainly aimed at further consolidation of reaction on economic, political and cultural levels against the Iranian people's growing tide of resistance, especially that of the revolutionary movement, and at the same time modification of contradictions within the Iranian ruling class through concentration of power in the hands of the Shah's clique.

This ploy of the regime, like all the previous ones, could not save it from the growing and deepening economic and political crisis. Rampant inflation, lack of the most basic means of subsistence such as sugar, meat, and rice, lack of housing, etc., coupled with extreme oppression manifested in the existence of over 100,000 political prisoners, use of torture, murder and executions, have only deepened the all-pervading dissatisfaction with and resistance to the Shah's regime and its imperialist masters by various classes and strata of the Iranian people. Last year thousands of workers in major Iranian factories have gone on strike demanding their most basic economic rights. The militant struggle of the Iranian toilers on the outskirts of Tehran for adequate housing has led to many bloody confrontations with the regime's mercenary police. And the student demonstrations in solidarity with the toiling classes and the revolutionary movement continues with increasing force.

Today the Iranian people's new revolutionary movement and its heroic organizations such as the Organization of Mojahedeen of the People of Iran and the Organization of the Iranian Peoples Fadaei Guerillas, having passed the stage of consolidation are growing and gaining momentum alongside of the rising struggle and resistance of the Iranian people. After the bloody June 6th uprising in 1963, through concrete analysis of the objective conditions in Iran, the new revolutionary movement drew a clear line of demarcation with the old reformist leadership of the movement. Many groups and organizations chose the line of armed struggle as the only appropriate answer to the concrete needs of the movement. These organizations have been able to agitate, propagate and organize revolutionary violence against one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world. At the present stage the main task of the revolutionary movement lies in its merging with the movement of the toiling classes, especially that of the working class. In the words of the OMPI:

"The existence of both currents of struggle, and the excellent conditions of their integration, i.e., the integration of the revolutionary struggle, now mainly manifested in the vanguard armed revolutionary organizations, with the trade-unionist/economic struggles, especially the workers' struggles, are the new phenomena which make the situation dangerous for the puppet regime of the Shah and the decadent ruling capitalism of Iran."

This article was written by the Union of Iranian Students in the United States (UISUS), which is part of the Iranian student movement abroad. For information, comments, and criticism, contact the UISUS, P.O. Box 744, Berkeley, Calif, 94701. The UISUS newsletter, "Iran in Struggle", and the pamphlet, "In Support of the Iranian People's Revolutionary Movement..." can be obtained from the above address.

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WHY THE LAY-OFFS IN STEEL?

In recent months communities like Youngstown, Ohio, and Johnstown, Pennsylvania, were hard hit by a massive wave of lay-offs which spread throughout the entire steel industry. Business Week estimates that by year end the steel monopolies will sack a total of 20,000 workers. The companies and labor bureaucrats are blaming 'unfair foreign competition' for the crisis. In full page ads and TV commercials they've called by a 'Buy American' campaign and the banning of foreign imports. The capitalists claim these measures will increase demand for US steel.

What the capitalists and the labor traitors attempt to hide is the fact that the lay-offs are an inevitable consequence of the capitalist system, arising from the contradictions which are inherent to the system. The only cure is the overthrow of the system itself.

The capitalist world is gripped by a crisis of overproduction which began in 1973 (see Workers' Press, Vol. 2, No. 2). All the capitalist countries have high unemployment, stagnation of capital investment, and a declining industrial output resulting in idle plants and machinery. Markets are glutted and commodities find no buyers. The purchasing power of the working class is constantly reduced by inflation and exploitation. The steel industry has been severely affected by the crisis, particularly as demand from the capital goods sector (machinery, equipment, plants, etc.), which accounts for 70% of domestic steel consumption in the US, is virtually at a standstill. The US steel industry is operating at about 65% capacity and more cutbacks are expected. In Germany, production is down 20% and nearly 50,000 steel workers will lose their jobs this year. Thousands of workers are on lay-off in Japan, where only 62% of the capacity in steel is utilized.

One way the capitalists attempt to maintain their profits and counter the effects of the crisis is by increasing the export of commodities, opening up new markets, and challenging other imperialist powers for a larger share of the world market. The contradictions between imperialist powers have become very sharp in recent years because of the uneven development of different capitalist countries. After World War II, the industry of Europe and Japan lay in ruins and the US emerged as the strongest imperialist power, dominating the world market. In the process of rebuilding their economies, Japan and Germany introduced the most advanced technology available, making their industry more productive. So long as the US continued to dominate the world market, it was more profitable for US firms to continue with old technology than to invest in the new. The Wall Street Journal reports that productivity has risen 100% since 1967 in the Japanese steel industry compared to 16% in the US.

Because the steel industry of Europe and Japan has grown in size and productivity, foreign companies produce larger quantities of steel, more efficiently and at a lower cost. By underselling the US producers, foreign competitors have taken over substantial portions of the US and world market. The US share of world steel production has dropped from 48% in 1950 to 21% today. In 1950, foreign monopolies held only 2-3% of the US market. In 1977, according to Business Week, this figure has risen to 17%. In some cases, like specialty steels, foreign competition has 60% of the US market. A similar pattern is evident in other industries such as auto, electronics, and textiles. There's nothing 'unfair' about this competition, it's inevitable under capitalism.

In sum, the contradictions of capitalism, particularly the world-wide economic crisis and the inter-imperialist struggle for markets are the reasons for the lay-offs in steel.

How should the working class respond to programs like 'Buy American'? Should workers support import restrictions such as the tariff which the Treasury Department placed on specialty steel, which will effectively bar its import?

The proletariat must oppose import quotas and trade restrictions. In 1968, when 'voluntary' quotas were slapped on foreign steel, the US steel monopolies, under less competitive pressure than raised now, raised their prices. This will happen again as the capitalists seize on every opportunity to maximize their profits. Because steel is central to the entire economy, a rise in the price of steel will result in a general price rise. Other capitalist countries will counter US trade barriers with import quotas of their own. Such trade wars have historically been part of a trend towards imperialist war. In 1930, the US imposed the Smoot-Hawley tariff in response to sharper inter-imperialist competition, particularly in the agricultural sector. This led to a spiraling of protective measures in all capitalist countries. World War II broke out in 1936, when Hitler Germany invaded Silesia.

In an imperialist war, competing capitalist countries fight for the redivision of the world market and the privileges which fall to the leading imperialist powers. Imperialist war benefits only the capitalist victors, who reap the spoils. For the proletariat, imperialist war means death and suffering. The working class must oppose all preparations for imperialist war, particularly the 'Buy American' and 'imports cause lay-offs' hysteria peddled by the bourgeoisie. These national chauvinist schemes are an attempt to convince the working class to fight the workers of other capitalist countries in an imperialist war. Today this national chauvinism is directed at Japan which is challenging the US in certain markets like steel. At another time, this is transferred to the USSR, the other imperialist superpower, and primary competitor with the US for world hegemony. But regardless of what other imperialist country is blamed, the task of communists and class conscious workers is to oppose trade war, oppose imperialist war, or if this fails, turn imperialist war into revolutionary civil war.

EXPOSE AND EXPEL THE LABOR TRAITORS

Exactly what does this phrase mean? It is tossed around by the communist movement very loosely sometimes, even to the point of being only words on a piece of paper with no real substance. The MLC has not laid out the tasks that must accompany this very important slogan concretely or consistently enough.

To expose the labor traitors means, first of all, to be involved in the daily struggles both at work and in the unions, because that is where their rotten actions can be pointed out -- the sell-out contracts, the smothering of democracy at the union hall, the failure to fight grievances correctly or hard, the stifling of any militancy in the rank and file, etc. Also, more far-reaching exposures must be made of the bureaucrats' reactionary support for the capitalist system as a whole such as their support for the 'Buy American' campaign, support for deportations, or their general reliance on the capitalist state. These have nothing in common with the interest of the proletariat and must be exposed. But most important, our communist exposures of the labor traitors must explain the reasons why these hacks no longer belong in the working class, let alone serve as our leaders; how and why these turncoats have been bribed by the capitalists, and how they represent a trend, not just some isolated individuals. Proper communist exposure means to get to the political essence of the relationship between imperialism and the split in the working class. As Lenin said:

"Obviously, out of such enormous superprofits (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze

out of the workers of their 'own' country) it is possible to bribe the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the 'advanced' countries are doing; they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert." (Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Collected Works, V 22, pp 193-4)

Exposure without action is meaningless and will add nothing to help expel these traitors and win back our unions as centers of resistance against capitalism. Organized opposition to the union hacks and their policies must be taken up by communists, advanced workers, and other progressive, democratic forces in the unions. Union democracy, election of all union officials, the fight against discrimination, such as pushing the equality of languages in the unions, and the fights to insure that communists can put forward independent positions and plans in the unions through opposing blacklisting and 'red' clauses in union constitutions, are a few of the concrete tasks before us.

Running rank and file candidates to oppose the bribed labor bureaucrats is one tactic. Such campaigns should be waged with calls for union democracy, a more militant and active union membership, slashing of the privileges such as high salaries and extra fringe benefits that union officials enjoy and which set them apart from the rank and file. Any rank and file candidate we would support must be willing to work with communists and allow the independence of the communist forces. Election campaigns should be used primarily to build a mass movement in opposition to the bureaucrats, not just for the election of one or two individuals.

Many union members have a 'spontaneous' understanding of the trade union bureaucrats treachery and deceit. However, this understanding is not scientific. It is our duty as communists to take scientific evidence concerning the bribed labor aristocracy to other workers. Those communist forces (such as WVO, RCP and others) who fail to scientifically expose these hacks or who cry that the labor traitors 'have already exposed themselves so why bother' are really doing grave injustice to the working class.

Further, the response of many workers to the conditions of our unions and the sell-out leadership has been cynicism and apathy, and they don't bother to attend union meetings, among other things. We must combat that apathy by finding practical solutions to daily problems, providing militant alternatives to the reactionary plans and policies of the present officials, using any and every example of class collaboration by the union official to politically educate the working class. All of these must be geared toward winning the unions back to the side of our class, and making them true instruments of class struggle.

EXPOSE AND EXPEL THE LABOR TRAITORS!

IMPERIALISM MEANS HUNGER

During September, Del Monte held its annual shareholders meeting. At the meeting, three shareholder proposals were made: (1) a call for a report on the involvement of the company in South Africa, (2) appointment of a board to investigate company wage practices, land acquisition practices and any involvement by the company in the Philippine government under the martial law regime of Ferdinand Marcos, and (3) a request that Del Monte list any 'political contributions', bribes or other questionable payments made by or on behalf of the corporation. All proposals were turned down by better than 97% of the shares voted.

Del Monte, the Standard Oil of the food industry, is the largest canner of fruits and vegetables in the world. With assets of close to \$800 million, it's unlikely it has any plans to change its operations regardless of shareholders' proposals.

Del Monte is a classic example of the capitalist economic system. It began as a merger of three small 'competing' canneries in the early 1900's, creating California's largest canning company. In the years that followed, it expanded throughout the US; by the mid-1950's, further expansion in the US market was limited. In 1956, it purchased majority control of Canada's largest canner; also, in 1956, it moved into the Western European markets. By the 1960's, it had moved into South Africa, the Philippines, and Latin America. These latest moves have provided Del Monte with means to increase their superprofits through land holdings and worker exploitation. For example, in Namibia, a 'colony' of South Africa, Del Monte works Black workers as many as 18 hours a day, 7 days a week, for about \$30 a month. These workers can protein-rich sardines, caught off their coast, which are exported to the US and Europe. The Namibian people, however, suffer from malnutrition caused by a lack of protein. In the Philippines, Del Monte has large land holdings and pays its Filipino workers \$1.20 for 8 hours of work. The current government insures cheap labor through laws outlawing strikes in agribusiness and other 'strategic' industries. Latin America also provides Del Monte with land and cheap labor. Competition, control and finally, expansion, such is the history of imperialism.

Motivated by profits, multinational corporations like Del Monte ignore the hunger of the world and in fact through their planting and export practices, create hunger. Although company executives like to boast about how Del Monte is in the 'world-wide business of feeding people', they fail to mention they feed only those who can pay their 'fixed prices'.

It's obvious Del Monte cannot be voted out of power any more than Standard Oil can be. However, if these companies remain in control, starvation will continue throughout the world, land will be rendered useless through cash cropping, and the quality of food will continue to decline.

The only solution to the problems created by multinational corporations, both here and abroad, is socialist revolution. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, a nation such as the US would cease to exploit other nations, trade based on mutual benefit would replace exploitation. Healthy food would replace chemical food. Distribution of food would be equitable. Companies such as Del Monte would no longer exist since all production, including food, would be in the hands of the workers.

China is one nation that has had a socialist revolution and applies socialist theory to its problems. One of China's pre- and post-revolution problems was food. Prior to China's revolution, many thousands of Chinese died yearly from starvation. Today the Chinese are a healthy, well-fed people.

How, in less than a quarter of a century, could China solve its immense task of feeding its enormous population? The first step towards change in China was the founding of the Communist Party of China. Under Party leadership, the revolution was a success and it paved the way for revolutionary changes throughout every aspect of China's social and economic life.

Food had top priority during and after the revolution. The Party began with land reform, vast areas of land were confiscated by the people. Production was collectivized through agricultural cooperatives. Grain production was established as the first priority

in agriculture. Industry, manpower, materials, funds and technical assistance were all used to promote the growth of agriculture. Grain supply was and is planned by the State to insure rational distribution. The State controls the price of grain by developing production and the regulation of grain supplies. Today the price of grain is the same as it was in 1953.

Without a socialist revolution, the Chinese would still be exploited by foreign countries, the land would be held by a few rich individuals, grain shortages would be considered normal and thousands would continue to starve to death each year. China's experiences provides the workers of the world with a viable solution to the problems created by capitalism and imperialism.

In the last issue of the Workers' Press we said that we were in the process of developing a proposal for joint study of the international situation. That proposal will come as a result of a joint meeting of communist organizations which we are organizing. We hope to have such a proposal by the first of the year.

LESSONS FROM THE MOLDMAKERS' STRIKE

The Moldmakers' (American Flint Glass Workers Union - AFGWU) strike that began September 16 and lasted 6 weeks was a nationwide strike. It involved 3,000 glass moldmakers directly and got the support of 50,000 other glass workers. The Glass Packaging Institute represented the opposition of bottle-making capitalists who brought the strike on by forcing 'dual operations' upon the moldmakers. The extension of the strike deadline by two weeks demoralized the moldmakers, allowed the companies to stockpile glassware, and gave the Teamster truckdrivers an opportunity to make deliveries 24 hours a day. This maneuver by the trade union bureaucrats and capitalists showed clearly their unity against the moldmakers from the start and constituted the main contradiction of the strike as a whole.

The Marxist-Leninist Collective (MLC) was directly involved in Local 155 (Oakland, Calif.) of the Glass Bottle Blowers Association (GBBA), whose members, in what was essentially a wildcat, militantly refused to cross picket lines. This showed their beginning understanding of working class solidarity. In response to bad conditions at the plant (rotating shifts, rampant favoritism, broken glass everywhere, speed-ups) and bankrupt union leadership, the GBBA workers, soon after the beginning of the strike, organized themselves into a Glassworkers Support Committee (GSC). This operated as a caucus within the union during the strike.

From the very beginning of the formation of the GSC, two opposing lines of the different 'communist' organizations and individuals involved presented themselves and formed the main contradiction within the committee, i.e. right opportunism (sacrificing the basic interests of the working class for some temporary advantage) versus genuine Marxism-Leninism. This right opportunism was and remains the dominant aspect of the committee's work, as economism (putting the main emphasis on 'bread and butter issues' instead of a class analysis of them) characterizes most of the struggles.

The accomplishments of the committee must not be overlooked. One of the main ones which alarmed the company most was the new unity between the rank and file of the two unions. The history of the two leaderships had been marked by competition for the same workers and most recently the rank and file of the GBBA found themselves listening to telegrams and speeches from the international representative, Van Pool, urging them to scab on the grounds that the strike was not really 'theirs'. The GBBA presented a solid opposition, especially against the bureaucrats of local 155 who refused when urged by the workers to make public the union's support of the moldmakers. The president of the GBBA local showed clearly his stand with the capitalists as he systematically opposed all progressive measures put forward by the workers during the strike.

The treatment and exposure of the union bureaucrats was one of the first places where differences arose between Marxist-Leninists and right opportunists. The latter felt that no communist agitation against the labor aristocracy should be done on a mass scale, i.e. within the union meetings, but instead on a one-to-one basis. The result was a very shallow analysis of the labor aristocracy, which includes the labor bureaucrats, and its connection with superprofits from imperialism. Any introduction of communist ideas within the committee meetings and in leaflets was quickly brushed aside or opposed as grounds for red-baiting, or ideas that would isolate us from the mass of workers. In spite of this blatant tailing tactic, advanced workers did come forward (often opposing the backward ideas of the opportunists!) and became active in organizing a benefit dance and rummage sale. But because of the lack of real communist leadership at that point, the advanced workers were held back with these busywork assignments. Very little attention was given to political development. Activities which promised 'palpable results' were the main work of the committee during the strike. The fact that \$1,400 was raised and partially distributed to the most needy strikers plus the contact and support from other GBBA locals and unions were other positive aspects of the committee's work and a step toward building working class solidarity.

During the strike two committee newsletters were distributed to the workers and this in itself was a good aspect of the work. But once again, because of the dominance of the right opportunist line, the theme was only one of militant trade unionism. As the strike progressed, some organizational errors were made within the GSC, due to a lack of experience on the part of the members. These errors affected the efficient distribution of money raised by the GSC for the most needy strikers. A self-criticism to the rank and file was proposed within the GSC and immediately voted down by the opportunists, who implied that the GSC was leading the strikers (GBBA only) and because of this they felt the committee must present a strong united front, in spite of the many criticisms of its style of work, beginning to come in from the rank and file.

The near wildcat that the GBBA participated in presented excellent conditions for the use of communist propaganda and agitation. The spontaneous activity was high, advanced and intermediate workers gravitated towards the organization of the GSC, and yet time and time again Marxism-Leninism was denied them. The opportunists see the rank and file being frightened by communist agitation, see themselves being isolated from the masses. Their idea is to slowly break the workers in to hearing the 'complicated' concepts; to ease the science of Marxism on to them, first through trade union agitation and gradually more advanced theory. This approach to uniting communism with the working class movement shows what little respect the opportunists have for the masses. It shows their disdain for the workers' ability to learn and grasp the ideas. One opportunist summed up his stand quite clearly when he stated, 'I get my line directly from the shop floor'. Hence, their refusal to do an all-sided political exposure of the trade union bureaucrats and their role in supporting the capitalists. The opportunists think the trade union bureaucrats have already been exposed. The GSC still exists and continues to function as a standing committee within the union. A red-baiting campaign has recently begun against it. Genuine Marxist-Leninists and class conscious workers must unite to oppose the dominant opportunist line, and must expose and eventually expel the bureaucrats from our ranks. This is one main lesson.