

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
December 3, 1979

Steve Gabosch
Tacoma

Dear Steve,

Since I've been writing on the recent events in Iran, Steve Clark asked me to drop you a note about the questions you raise in your November 17 letter. These are important issues. With the government driving toward war, we have to be as clear as possible in answering its charges and arguments. Of course, we will be taking up these questions in various ways in IP/I and the Militant, but here is a brief answer on the points you raise.

1. Should we dissociate ourselves from the take-over of the U.S. embassy?

No. On the contrary, we want to identify with the anti-imperialist struggle of the Iranian masses and their demand for extradition of the shah. The occupation of the U.S. embassy has become a central aspect of that struggle, the scene of the largest daily mobilizations since the insurrection last winter.

As Marxists, we are opposed to the method of individual terrorism. As you point out, such an approach leaves the masses sitting on the sidelines.

But are the masses in Iran sitting on the sidelines? You only have to turn on the TV to see this is not the case. The masses have mobilized on a scale rarely seen in history.

Whether or not we would have taken over the U.S. embassy if we were in Iran is not relevant. It's not the way the question is posed in real life. The fact is that anti-shah students in Iran took an initiative, and in the context of the revolution going on there, that initiative bore fruit. It has drawn the masses into action. The result has been a deepening of the revolution.

Here in the United States, we cannot give an inch on the U.S. government's attempts to turn the victim into the criminal by charging that the Iranian masses are acting as terrorists and in violation of international law. Our answer to these claims is contained in an article I wrote in the December 10 issue of IP/I.

2. Should we criticize Khomeini at this point as an opportunist, an ultraleft, or anything else?

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Again, the answer is no.

Khomeini has taken a progressive stand in this situation. He has backed the anti-imperialist initiative of the students at the embassy. He has called the Iranian workers and peasants into the streets. He has urged them to arm themselves and to stand fast against imperialist threats. He has urged the oppressed millions of the Muslim world to rise up against U.S. domination. He has denounced the United Nations as a tool of imperialism.

Revolutionary socialists stand with Khomeini on all these questions, raising our ideas and proposals from this stance.

Within Iran, Khomeini is currently seeking a negotiated settlement with the Kurds and he is backing away from earlier repressive moves. The massive upsurge has created a better situation to advance the revolution on all fronts, as reflected in the legalization of Kargar and the release of several HKS comrades, to cite just one example.

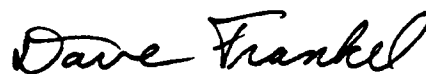
At a time when U.S. imperialism is threatening war against Iran, our job is to make clear our complete support for Khomeini's position against U.S. imperialism. We have to counter the vicious campaign to vilify Khomeini and the struggle of the Iranian masses, a campaign intended to whip up support for U.S. military action.

Finally, these events provide an opportunity for us to explain to our co-workers how U.S. imperialism oppresses our brothers and sisters among the toilers around the world. We have an opportunity to explain why American workers have no stake whatsoever in opposing anti-imperialist struggles such as the one in Iran, much less going to war against them. These struggles are in our interests, too.

To get off onto the tactics of the embassy occupation doesn't help us take advantage of this political opportunity. Our answer to any concern over the hostages is simple: The ball's in Carter's court. Send back the shah.

I hope these ideas help answer your question. Keep in touch.

Comradely,



Dave Frankel

V-PC

November 17, 1979
215 S. G Str #7
Tacoma, Wash. 98405

~~DEAR~~

Steve Clark
The Militant

NOV 21 1979

~~Dear~~ Steve,

RIGHT ON!!! to the Nov. 23 Militant. Over 7½ pages on Iran! I am very happy to see our party's newspaper cover this new escalation of imperialist threats so brilliantly. It is deeply inspiring to see the Militant stand up to the U.S. government.

One loose end ~~max~~ occurs to me, probably because I have been having to preface my comments about the Shah and Iranian students' right to demonstrate and what Carter's real motives are and so forth in my discussions with coworkers with a forthright disassociation from the tactic of ~~holding~~ taking over embassies and holding them hostage. I say I disagree with that particular tactic, but I agree with the ideals behind it. Then I shock my friends at work with how awful the Shah really was.

Am I right to use this approach? I have been saying to comrades that Khomeini is responding to the demands of the masses but in a typically ultraleft way, as opportunists are prone to when pushed into the heat of the class ~~str~~ struggle. Taking over an embassy is not an action millions of Iranians can participate in; it relegates the masses to the sidelines.

This fits in with a general confusion about the Khomeini regime since it began to crack down on democratic rights over the summer. We had a couple lengthy discussions in our branch right after Oberlin, debating if the new regime was in fact any better than the Shah after all. I think this reflected some of the pressures comrades were feeling from coworkers, including me.

Perhaps the Militant can go into how we view the Khomeini regime in more depth, and discuss the merits of this tactic of taking over the U.S. embassy. I thought that Dave Frankel's article was excellent, putting the Iranian revolution in context, but it stopped short of evaluating the embassy take-over per se.

I'd be especially interested in ~~the~~ more reports on what the HKS comrades think.

Comradely,
Steve
Steve Gabosch