I. A WHOLE HOST OF SPECTERS
HAUNTING KHOMEINI'S 'ISLAMIC
REVOLUTION'

Dear Friends,

A whole host of specters are haunting
Khomeini's "Islamic Republic" before ever it is
officially established. There is the specter of a full social
revolution in the very unfoldment of the Iranian
Revolution which, after all, witnessed a series of the
greatest, most powerful and sustained mass mobilizations
for months on end before the three days of insur-
rection. Clearly, February 9-12 had not only driven the
Shah and his Stooge, Bakhtiar, from the throne, but the
manner in which the workers ended their general strike
to return to work without returning their guns, as the
Ayatollah had commanded, showed that only Chapter
1 of the Revolution had ended. It put a special empha-
sis to the complaints of his appointed Prime Minister,
Bazargan, about lack of production. As the Deputy
Prime Minister, Entezan, put it: "Despite the Ayatollah's
commands, none of the major industries in the country
are functioning because the workers spend all their
time holding political meetings."

As if Workers' Councils, Neighborhood
Committees, anjumeni, many new forms of sponta-
neous organization, and youth dominant in all, did not
take on the apparition of a dual government, there
came, with the celebration of International Women's
Day, a mass outpouring of women, bearing the banner,
"We made the revolution for freedom, and got unfre-
dom," which may very well have opened Chapter 2 of
the Iranian Revolution. It is true there had been other
outbursts of criticism of Khomeini from the fedayeen.
But whereas Khomeini's friend, Arafat of the PLO, per-
suaded them to call off the march to Khomeini's head-
quarters(1) and, instead, hold a rally at Teheran
University, the Women's Liberationists took to the
streets.

No doubt Khomeini was ignorant of the fact that
March 8 was International Women's Day and the
Iranian women intended to make their celebration of
the past a claim on the present and future when he
issued the March 7 order for the women to wear the
chador. But his mild retreat—the claim that it was a
"duty, not an order"—hardly succeeded in exorcising
the new specter. Quite the contrary. Though the Ayatollah
criticized the goons who attacked the march, tried to
stone the women, and shot three, the women felt that
those goons were in fact practicing what the Ayatollah
preached as "Islamic law."

For five straight days the women continued their
marches, and not only against Khomeini, but against
Prime Minister Bazargan, and on March 10 held a
3-hour sit-in at the Ministry of Justice. Nor did they tol-
erate the mass media's autocratic choice of what they
would photograph, who they would give voice to,
whom they would focus on. Instead of letting their
protests go unrecorded, the women marched upon the
mass media, thus exposing the fact that the censorship
there is now almost as total as it was during the Shah's
dictatorship. Think how quickly those bourgeois and
petty-bourgeois opportunists changed sides. They wait-
ted two days after the insurrection started before they
came to the radio to announce that they will not oppose
the people but be "the voice of the revolution." That was
February 11. The very next day they snuck in an ad-
jective; they now called themselves the "voice of the
Islamic revolution."

Nor was the Ayatollah calmed by the fact that the
Women's Liberationists produced a schism in the
Fedayeen (and to a lesser extent also in the
Moujahideen). For, while a good part condemned the
actions of the women(2), others formed a human chain
on both sides of the march to protect them from further
harassment. That certainly was a great advance over the
beginnings of the Portuguese Revolution in 1975(3)
where the Left males attacked women's demonstrations
with impunity. 1979 in Iran showed, at one and the
same time, that male revolutionaries would not permit
attacks on women revolutionaries, and women were
striking out on their own as a way of deepening the
content of revolution.

Finally, the Women's Liberationists focused on their
internationalism, not limited to the invitations to Kate
Millet from the U.S. and Claudine Mouillard from
France (who had come to express their solidarity with
the Iranian women revolutionaries.) The more crucial
point is that the Iranian women felt that literally mil-

It is this that so frightened the Ayatollah that he
dared call the Women's Liberationists "agents of impe-
rialism" (to which we'll return later). The expulsion of
Kate Millet is but a symbol of how he intends to roll the
clock backward in his attempt to exorcise all these
specters as he must first try to stop those fighting for
self-determination with guns in hand—the Kurdish
rebels.

Under these circumstances of ever new forces of rev-
olution, for male revolutionaries to disregard how total
the revolution must be if it is to uproot the exploitative, racist, sexist society, and once again try to subordinate women's struggles as a "more part of the whole" (as the whole can be without its parts), is to play into the hands of the reactionaries, be that the secular Basargan government, or the Aytollah Khomeini who is trying to "institutionalize" his Islamic "revolution", that is, to confine it to where he can steal the fruit of the revolution without making the masses who made it at the bottom as in any and all class societies.

The schisms within the ruling class are not as irreconcilable as between labor and capital. Nor are they only a question of secular vs. theocratic rule. The fact that the former nevertheless tried to keep some distance away from the planned March 5 celebration of the 12th anniversary of Mossadeqh, who was the first to nationalize the oil industry and shake up the Shah's throne, threw a glaring light on what he intends to do with his so-called Islamic Revolution. Basargan, who did sit on the platform was not recognized as any voice of the 1951-53 revolt and thus was in no position to as much as bridge the dissident bourgeois liberal factions. Instead, the person who spoke first was Mossadeqh's grandson, Hedayet Matine-Dafiari, who criticized Basargan's attack on the extension of democracy.

More significant was the voice of the Aytollah Telegi who had broken with the Islamic Revolution Committee in late February, approving, instead, elected, not appointed, worker's committees, thus making sure that the revolution don't stop at its very first step, the overthrow of the Shah.

There is no point in underestimating the power of the Aytollah Khomeini, whom many are now treating more as a supporter of Islamic revolution even if he has not freed those spectators haunting his revolution. That counter-revolution is right within the Revolution. He knew how to hit at the women, mobilizing a few thousand to march with their tongues tied so as to protect the revolutionary act of showing their father, husband and son. "Sexual politics" is anything but that, the male chauvinism exposed, and that included of the Aytollah Khomeini, was the limitation of the freedom of human nature and the society, the freedom of human rights—political, social, economic, intellectual, class.

In the latter case—the most worrisome for the Islamic—was the way it was the workers in the case, the printers, united with the "professors." They seemed most abstract—workers of exploiting the revolution, on politics, strategy, on internationalism, to satisfy their thirst for knowledge of all to do with revolution. Thus in the very midst of revolution, the general strike was at its height, the printers decided to work double shifts so that they could satisfy that thirst. As one eyewitness report describes it: "Lookos are flowing at the people as fast as soldiers' bullets...they read everything about revolution. All Marxian books that have been translated are being reprinted and spread hand to hand and house to house.

"Capital, Paris Commune, Communist Manifesto, What is to Be Done?, State and Revolution, Imperialism, Wretched of the Earth, Black Skin White Masks, Colonial Dying." 99 A further new translation of Marx's 1848 Essay on Alienated Labor and immunes [leaflets].

How indisputable is the bourgeoisie press that keeps repeating old official (SAVAK)-facts that Marxists number 2 but percent of the population.

II. THE MAIN ENEMY IS ALWAYS AT HOME

The workers in revolution need no "vanguard parties" to tell them that the main enemy is at home, that the conflict between labor and capital is irreconcilable, and that native capital such overwhelming ties-in with imperialism that, if its life is threatened, the capitalists will certainly ask for imperialism to come to their aid in bringing on full counter-revolution. But under no circumstances does this mean that the workers' own self-activity, self-organization, self-development, thus deepening the revolution. Thus, no sooner had Basargan retested its reall full authority by a counter revolutionary act, then the Basargan cartel of cartels took over the factory that the workers' leaders at once resigned from the workers' committees' protest. Listen to Mohammad Javad Khatamian's appeal:"To All Oil Workers and Those Who Fight for Freedom.

After 90 days of our heroic strike, during which we have cut off all supplies of oil—the livelihood of the reactionary regime and of its imperialist backers—and by the bloody struggle the people we have succeeded in overthrowing the Shah...

As a representative of the oil-workers—the heart of our industry- and as one of the initiators of the strikes in the oil fields...I am resigning because I can see that reactionary elements working under the banner of Islam are consciously suppressing the people's freedom and rights...

It was you workers who fought and suffered from sackings, imprisonment of our homes and still we did not give up because we all felt a responsibility to the whole of the people of Iran. Myself and other representatives who were responsible for leading your struggle know better than anybody that it was you yourselves that made the victory—not anybody else.

Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East

We do not accept any dictatorship and will always support those who fight for freedom...We must remember and understand the nature of imperialism, which has everything, in its hands. We must remember what history has taught us over the years in Portugal, Argentina and especially Chile. Until imperialism is completely smashed such things can happen again.

This is the situation at presente, if it will once again develop a mass base, the way is to stop the attempted counter-revolution, provided that we, as revolutionaries, in turn, do not forget that to speak only of national revolution is as imperialist as it was responsible for the counter-revolution in Chile, in Argentina, or anywhere else for that matter, is a deviation. It is a deviation very welcome and to indeed calculated by the indigenous capitalists. That is to say, native rulers will say anything, anything at all, so long as thereby the class struggle at home can be subordinated to fighting everything "foreign" as Enemy No. 1. What World War II showed us was that, outside of Hitler himself, none were more adept at playing the nationalist game than Peron, and, contrary to Hitler he succeeded in so fooling the Left with his "anti-imperialism that made him die as a revolutionary." To this day, Peronism has so brainwashed the trade union movement that it followed him to the end.

Or look at the Trotskyists this very moment in Iran who, while fighting against imperialist, are so black out against the bourgeoisie. They lack a political line or class-consciousness, a political line that the workers' leaders at once resigned from the workers' committees protest. Listen to Mohammad Javad Khatamian's appeal:"To All Oil Workers and Those Who Fight for Freedom.

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present.

III. TWO IRANIAN REVOLUTIONS, 1906-11 AND TODAY'S

One look at the 1906 Revolution(12) will reveal its two greatest features that today's Islamic celebates keep quiet about. One is its inspiration in the Russian Duma revolution of 1905. Indeed, it was at the height, November–December 1905, that the first general strike broke out in Tehran. While today Iran means oil, in 1905 it was Baku, Russia, that meant oil, and because thousands of Iranian oil workers had gone to Russia and were inspired by the Russian workers fighting Tsarism, they learned also about a very new form of organization—Soviets. This, then, was what became the form of spontaneous organizations in Iran was well.

The uniqueness in Iran was that what had started out, indigenously enough, as a secret organization, became Ajamturni, a very nearly dual-government—local units organized independently of the Shah and the Majlis by popular elections, defending their independence on the ground that there was too much bureaucratic corruption in the government. By 1907, these ajemturnis were by no means limited to Tehran but proceeded also in Tabriz, Enghelab, and not only in the towns, but spread to rural areas. What is ironic is that one—Shuster—was very far removed from any ajemturni, much less that of women, revealed the kinship between the two sides of the women's movement. Her description of what happened: "The Persian women since 1907 had become almost at a bound the most progressive, not simply in the world... That statement upsets the idea of centuries makes no difference, it is the fact." (p.191)

Shuster describes how "out from their walled court-yards and harems marched 300 of that weak sex; with the flush of undying energy for liberty and its modern expressions, they broke through some of the most sacred customs which for centuries past had bound their sex in the land of Islam." (p. 192)

It is true that there exists unto today and under no circumstances be disregarded in coping with the ulans and ayatollahs—that the religious leaders sided with the revolution, at least its first stages. As a matter of fact, it was in March 1906 when, on a trip to the Gulf, the Czar had triggered the opening of the Revolution when his march to the Isfahan's Palace was transformed into Bloody

Sunday in January, 1905, by the Cossacks firing into the March, the Greek Orthodox Church sided with the Isfahani, the religious leaders in Iran went with the Iranian mass both in opposing, and, in some cases, instigating, the Shah granting a Constitution and allowing them to establish a Majilis (Parliament).

But even here we must see the negative features. For the first chapter, the one so celebrated now as the December 10, 1905 Constitution and its power and produced a Majilis. There then followed many spontaneous organizations that worked independently of it. Once the Majilis convened, the religious leaders began moving away from any class struggle. By October 1907, the amendments the Majilis passed restored many powers to the Shah, especially the supreme command of the armed forces so that one could hardly call him just a figurehead. In any case, Tsarism, which had been too busy putting down the Russian Revolution to be overly involved in Iran, decided to move against it and by 1908 the Cossack Regiment bombarded the Majilis and put down the revolution. But here still another unique feature emerges. Whereas the Russian Revolution was totally crushed in 1908, in Iran it remerged, and the Shah was driven from his throne. It took more Cossack brigades and British imperialism as well as the Shah, after three more years, finally to destroy entirely that Revolution.

Now, it is the difference between the December 1906 Constitution and the October 1907 Amendments which point not to the dualism in the Tsar's leadership in various periods within an ongoing revolution. It points as well to today: the March 30 plebiscite standing us in the face. Khomenei-Bazargan—both because just because they have won so fake an "election." Yet we cannot entertain any illusions. It will be much, much harder for revolutionaries to function. The imminent counter-revolutionary tide with that he calls "Islamic Republic" and "Islamic moral code," and we already saw it at work not only against the women but against the life style of a whole new generation of revolutionary youth who are the very heart of this revolution.

Nor should we entertain any illusion about the "superiority" of the secular middle-class intellectuals who think that because they see Khomenei as "symbol," not philosopher, even though he is an intellectual, than he will win, in the end. There is but one grain of truth in that pretension, and it concerns, not intellectuals but theory. There is no doubt that the great work of the current generation, which is certainly applicable, and indeed we just show it in Iran developing into the right insurrection.

Now, what we have to hold in mind for further development is her attack on Marx. In March 1934 Zinoviev had triggered the opening of the Revolution when his march to the Tsar's Palace was transformed into Bloody

The very start of the 1848 German Revolution, rather than at the end of that revolution when Marx, in his 1850 Address to the Communist League, called for the people to turn to action, instead, stood sternly against making the Shah grant a Constitution and allow them to establish a Majilis (Parliament).

The Russian Revolution was not so much the last act in the series of bourgeois revolutions of the Nineteenth Century as the forerunner of a new series of future proletarian revolutions, in which the major role will be played by the proletariat and its vanguard, Social Democracy, are destined historian to play the leading role.(14)

IV. WHERE TO NOW?

Each revolution discloses something new and unique and challenging. The new in the Iranian Revolution reveals both new strength and new weakness. Surely the sustained mass mobilization in so despotic a land, armed to the teeth and pruned by Nixon since 1972 to take over the U.S. policeman's bat for the enervated Middle East, was no less strongly against a miracle, especially when you considere the Shah that extended that Great Illusion to believe he would be pivotal to the final confrontation between the two nuclear states of the U.S. and Russia. Moreover, they write so spontaneously that even the Left that always likes to roll out the credit for vanguardism had to admit that not only were they not organized by any party, but they seemed to be organized by "nobody." Yet it would be wrong to think either that it was only spontaneity that was at work, or that "nobody" organized it. Were it so. Khomenei, for whom one million poured out to welcome back, could not proceed so brazenly of a counterrevolutionary tide with what he calls "Islamic Republic" and "Islamic moral code," and we already saw it at work not only against the women but against the life style of a whole new generation of revolutionary youth who are the very heart of this revolution.

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Etnobibliographic Note.

It took nothing short of the First World War and the collapse of the established Marxist (Second) International before Lenin recognized that, without philosophy, without the dialectics of liberation in thought as well as in action, Marxism reduced to economism was inadequate. In any case, what is most relevant for today, and not only for Iran, is to do away with elitism and such black slingers as the need for an "April Thesis" to "amend the party line" of the Congress Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution with its built-in underestimation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry.

Trotsky's illusion that the April Thesis meant Lenin's "adoption" of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution notwithstanding, the real relevance of an "April Thesis" for the transition period now in Iran is not the forced identity with that theory that Trotsky built up. Rather, the plain facts of how it came to be and what we will help the Iranian comrades work out on the basis of the indigenous and the new, the revolutionary national and international forces of revolution, their path to social revolution, their move from "February" not only to April but to October.

It was the shock of the simultaneity of the outbreak of World War and the collapse of the Second International that compelled Lenin to return to Marx's origins in the First. There, Marxian was reduced to vulgar materialism. He refused to stop with mere exposure of the betrayal. Rather, with Capital in hand as well as the political theses of the new situation of the "War of Independence," Lenin delved into Hegel's Science of Logic. Of all the revolutionary Marxists—Luxemburg, Trotsky, and many, many others Lenin alone decided that first of all he must reconize his own method of thinking and doing.

In a word, before the April Thesis was and could have been written, there came, first, Lenin's Philosophico-Scientific Notes (precisely, his Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic). Then he worked out his theory of imperialism(16)—his confrontation with the new state of economy—monopoly capitalism on the way to state monopoly capitalism, not of its own nature but related to the transformation of the whole system of capitalism into opposition of a section of the proletariat that did gain from capitalism's expression into imperialism. Thirdly, and above all, a new phase of live revolution—the Irish Easter Rebellion, 1916, which gave a new dimension to the "National Question" as self-determination, as "the bacillus" of proletarian revolution.

Finally the determinant emerges for that proletarian revolution—its whole weightiness into thought for the moment he broke from bourgeois socialism in 1843 until his death, 1883, that is to say, from his Humanist Essays through Capital and the Paris Commune to his
ed—and where we should begin—is "All Power to the Soviets," that is to say, all power in the hands of the masses, their forms of organization, their control of production and distribution of the economic wealth of the country and of the bourgeoisie state, and by working put a new relationship of theory to practice, and the movement from practice to theory, the establishment of new human relations. We have, after all, 65 additional years of experience, we have seen in Russia and China also become transformed into their opposite, with both vying for U.S. imperialism's alliance! Surely we cannot behave as if nothing had happened in all those decades of maturation, aborted revolutions as well as revolutions transformed into opposite.

There is no way to extend and deepen the revolution if Bazargan is allowed to reduce to a consultative role; the function of the committees organized by the workers to run the plants and offices. The fact that the Prime Minister feels compelled to take to the air waves to declaim against what he calls the "dangerous logic of revolution" further exposed his capitulation to the external empire's freedom, released by the ongoing revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini's stopping the revolutionary tribunals against the Shah's most powerful and vicious henchmen in the SAVAK and in the government has focused on just how rapidly he is turning the clock back, aided by no means only at the expense of the women's freedom. These acts of retrogression are not only a reasonable logic. They are acts of outright counter-revolution. Let us extend our solidarity to the embattled revolutionaries—the new generation of revolutionary students as well as workers; Women's Liberationists as well as national minorities fighting for self-determination. Let us extend the activities here to stop the interfering hand of U.S. imperialism hungrily for and the strategic location for its nuclear global aim.

The struggle continues.

Raya Dunayevskaya
Detroit, Michigan

NOTES

1. That this is not the first time Azad helped stifle an onoing revolution was seen clearest in Lebanon. See Political-Philosophic Letter No. 6, August 1976, "Lebanese: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left."

2. Le Monde (13-14-79) prints an article, "Left Groups Admit Women Against Continuing Street Demonstrations," by its correspondent in Tehran, Jean Guerard, that quotes a leader of the Fedayeen condemning the women demonstrators for weakening the Bazargan government, thus letting "the country sink into a civil war which will profit nobody." Evidently that part of the Fedayeen, Maoist-and otherwise, is ready to settle for becoming part of the state.


5. See "Eyewitness report: Iran's ongoing revolution" (News & Letters, March 1979) which further describes the "success" of the workers committees, "self-organizing and creativity of the masses of the people. It has amazed both revolutionaries and reactionaries. In every city and village you can find all kinds of self-created committees, councils, associations and other forms of organization, such as Kanoon (which means council) or Anekouz (sewers). Every strata has its own organization: students, writers, lawyers, teachers, bazaar merchants, bank and government staffs, and workers. Workers Committees have discharged all the government made unions and called for formation of a 'Confederation of Iranian Workers.'" See also the eyewitness account in International Press (2-26-79).

6. Peculiarly enough, this appears in one of the most serious articles in the Sunday Magazine of the New York Times (3-11-79): "Iran: Heart of the Matter," by B.W. Apple Jr., head of the NYT's London Bureau. It illustrates how very 'logical' the downfall of the Shah appears now, though a few months back no one among these spots would have seen "How could the Shah, a monarch who commanded more than the British Army, more helicopters than the U.S. 1st Cavalry in Vietnam, be pressured so neatly out of power?" Very obviously the bourgeois journalists still have to learn both of the power of the masses and the power of the idea of freedom of those "2 percent" of Marxists.

7. We are using the translation that appeared in Socialist Review (March 1979).

8. Some in the Arab world were so desperate about over rid- ding themselves of Western imperialism that they could- n't resist even Hitler's blandishments. See U.S. and Russia Enter Middle East Cockpit by Raya Dunayevskaya (News & Letters, Detroit). Ludden Roy, in "Persia in Perspective" (New Left Review, Summer 1963) rightly calls attention to the fact that there is a "counter-revolutionary anti-imperialism."

9. The Washington Post News Service (reprinted in the Detroit News, 3-25-79) ran a quite informative article by Jonathan C. Randall about those conditions of labor and problems of minorities, as well as testifying to the fact that inflation ran at a 50 percent clip, while the unemployed numbered 3.5 million.


11. Besides the Le Monde article cited above, which reported the slaughter of the Fedayeen against Kate Millet, the women's liberationists demonstrating in Tehran in solidar- ity with the Iranian women found their own experience of being heckled by 'Iranian students, mostly Maoists, combining their slogans against Kate Millet with "Long Live Khomeini!" The following week, they held a press conference in which, once again, they slammed Kate Millet and had the gall to claim that, though the Iranian women had invited her, she did not represent the Iranian women. Proof? No one stopped her expulsion. Did they even try to stop a state povet and its goons? See the Detroit Free Press (3-21-79).

12. The most relevant book is The First Russian Revolution: Its Impact on Asia by Irving Spector (NY: Prentice-Hall, 1962). From being, as the other books listed, out of context of the Russian Revolution, it is directly related to it, and though the author is a bourgeois academic, he is objective. The book that is an 'I-person account is The Strangling of Pervis (A Personal Narrative) by W. Morgan Shuster (NY: Greenwood Press, 1968; copyright 1932). Two other works on this period are The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909 by John E. G. Browne (London: Cambridge University Press, 1920) and The Shahs Mission and the Persian Constitutional Revolution by Robert A. McDaniell (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1954).

The most relevant book from the Left in English cannot compete with either daily reports or actual revolution. Still they should be consulted for background. See the following works by Fred Halliday: Arabs Without States (Penguin, 1974) and Iran: Dictatorship and Development (Pelican, 1979).

13. I will develop this in my book-in-progress, "Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution," which will include the translation of the speeches by Rosa Luxemburg from the Congress.

14. Minutes of the Fifth RSDRP Congress which includes the speech are unavailable in English.

15. That Trotsky's own writings are more telling than any Stalinist slander about "underestimation of the peasantry" can be seen in Leon Trotsky as Theorist (Ch. 4 (pp. 128-150) in my Philosophy and Revolution (Dell, 1973).