

IN THESE TIMES

Are the hostages a diversion?

By Paul C. Sullivan

REGARDLESS OF WHAT INTERESTS initiated the seizure of the U.S. embassy and staff in Tehran, the action has produced two immediate consequences for the Iranian revolution. For one thing, steadily growing popular dissatisfaction with the theocratic regime has been diverted, at least temporarily, strengthening Ayatollah Khomeini's rule.

At the same time, the regime's energies have been drawn away from an all-out attack on the Kurdish movement and the left, and have been refocused on the relationship between Iran, the U.S. and the Shah. The resulting diplomatic stalemate has quashed any possibility of a gradual rapprochement between the two governments and has again placed "anti-imperialism" back on center stage in Iran.

Many observers believe Khomeini or his most fervent supporters planned the embassy takeover, primarily as a means of diverting attention from the regime's growing problems. Khomeini's all-out campaign to destroy the Kurdish movement by military force has backfired, leaving hundreds of dead Islamic Pastaran militia scattered across Kurdistan, and creating further disunity within the military. As the morale and fighting strength of Khomeini's forces has waned, the Kurdish movement for regional autonomy has grown stronger and bolder. Rather than suffering the decisive defeat Khomeini predicted, the Kurds have regained control of several key towns and villages.

The country's economic ills have proven even less obedient to theocratic solutions. Continued economic and political uncertainties, the dismissal or flight of key management figures, and unending chaos and confusion within customs offices have reduced foreign investment and imports of spare parts and materials to a trickle, killing thousands of industrial and commercial concerns. Unemployment has swept through every sector of the population like an epidemic, add-

Khomeini's theocratic regime has been increasingly unpopular. The embassy seizure serves to rally support against an old and widely despised enemy.



Two Iranians use the American flag to haul garbage from the occupied U.S. embassy in Tehran. Some 60 Americans and 40 others have been held hostage there since Nov. 4.

ing to the hundreds of thousands in Tehran alone who cannot afford adequate food, clothing or shelter. Garbage-strewn gutters, and polluted irrigation ditches are the only source of water for millions. Inflation has soared to an annual rate of 30 percent.

Unable to make good on his promise of material benefits for the *mostazafin*—the deprived—Khomeini has declared that the sole purpose of the revolution was to "glorify Islam." But declarations and piety alone have been unable to prevent the steady rise of discontent even among those who once followed his leadership

without question.

Unemployed workers as well as progressive and leftist organizations have repeatedly staged militant anti-government demonstrations in Tehran and other major cities and towns. An escalating wave of strikes and other labor actions have raised both political and economic demands and have threatened or disrupted oil and textile production, rail transport, shipping, and other key sectors of the economy.

Seizure of the embassy has relieved the regime of these and a myriad of other pressures for the moment, as all attention

is focused on continued U.S. support of the Shah. It is an easy target. No amount of propaganda citing the suffering of a cancer-ridden Shah will erase the memory of machine-gunned bodies from the minds of the millions who risked their lives to force him from power. The outrage expressed in mass Iranian support for the takeover is a predictable consequence of continued U.S. aid to a despot responsible for the deaths by machine-gun and torture of at least 45,000 people, and the continued impoverishment of millions despite the country's fabulous oil wealth.

But as the action strengthens Khomeini's hand, it has also cancelled whatever rapprochement had begun between the American and Iranian governments. There is reason to believe that this purpose may have motivated the takeover.

In the weeks before the embassy takeover, representatives of the Bazargan government, including Ibrahim Yazdi, one of Khomeini's closest advisers, held a secret meeting with Zbigniew Brzezinski and other American officials in Algiers. No details of the meeting were made public. U.S. corporate interests were also gradually moving back into the country, while U.S. military "advisers" had been returning to their pre-revolutionary assignments, one small group at a time, for months.

Kurdish sources reported that one such group has been training Iranian elite troops in counter-insurgency warfare. Accompanied by attacks on progressive and left forces throughout the country, these moves inspired publications like the London-based *Economist* to predict that the current regime would "eventually emerge as America's ally." (The Marxist Fedayeen have cautioned Khomeini's followers with the same prediction.)

Regardless of who initiated it, the seizure has profoundly shifted attention in Iran from anti-communism to anti-imperialism. Khomeini's continued inability to provide the benefits of the revolution demanded by the popular majority, combined with the anti-imperialist climate generated by the embassy seizure, may well benefit the Iranian left. ■

Paul C. Sullivan recently returned from a three-month visit to Iran.

Or is this a step toward drifting out of this world?

PARIS

The Nov. 4 occupation of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran took Iran "out of the world," out of an internationally shared humanity. The outrageous capture of embassy personnel to back the outrageous demand to yank the Shah from his deathbed has deepened the isolation and complicity of the Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers. The incident caused the fall of those who, like Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi, were trying to keep a bridge between the two worlds, Khomeini's and the other one.

But the other world is wicked. His country's moral isolation, rather than the Shah's decaying body, may be precisely what Khomeini hopes to get out of this performance.

Most of the emptied cabinet posts in Tehran were quickly filled by Abdol Hassan Bani Sadr, the 46-year-old theoretician of the Islamic revolution, whose *Fundamental Principles of Islamic Government* call for a sort of "Kor-



anic anarchism" in which moral principles replace government institutions in regulating social relations. Bani Sadr comes from a religious family and has studied theology, but he has also lived abroad in exile, studying sociology and economics. As Khomeini's economic adviser (*ITT*, Feb. 14), Bani Sadr theorized an independent economic system with farming based on traditional village communes and industrial production organized around collective "imam committees." He and Khomeini reportedly see eye to eye.

National isolation in a unique moral righteousness recalls the cultural revolutions in China and Cambodia and seems the natural prelude to an attempt at economic autarky. These revolutions mobilize a radical backlash in old, rural humanity against the progressive destruction of traditional ways of life. The radical catastrophes visited on

Third World countries (the most extreme being the U.S. bombing of rural Cambodia) may produce radically visionary responses among peoples who still tend to think of history as shaped by moral forces. Here and there, in contrast to the general trend, the virtue of the countryside rises up and strikes at urban "corruption."

New problems arise when the leaders of these righteous revolutions try to harness their people's moral fervor to production, to use a revived national will to bypass the complexities and restraints of a world economy that increasingly holds all nations in bondage.

Cambodia was insignificant enough to be allowed to drift out of the world economy for a few years. China was big enough to survive alone. Iran seems too much in the middle of too many interests to follow such a course for long.

—Diana Johnstone

IN SHORT



Betty Friedan

Family Day builds 'love & intimacy'

The Institute for Labor and Mental Health plans to organize a national "Family Day" during the 1980 presidential campaign for what program creator Dr. Michael Lerner says will be a move to "take the issue of the family out of the hands of the right wing."

Feminist Betty Friedan, speaking at a September "Family Day" at Oakland, Calif., told 3000 participants "family is the cutting edge for the movement of the 1980s" and emphasized "family" to include the single parent family, gay families and other non-traditional families.

Lerner, whose organization includes the active support of Dr. Benjamin Spock, Rep. Ron Dellums, D-Calif., Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee chair Michael Harrington and black feminist Flo Kennedy, says building "love and intimacy" in the family will help build stronger labor and political movements away from home. He says the organization intends to take its message to labor leaders and try to show the links between "stress at the workplace and stress at home."

Friedan blasted a "fringe element" of what she said were feminists unrepresentative of the women's movement for being wary of identification with the "family" rather than the oppressed condition of women who are unequal partners in a family situation.

Friends of the Family can be contacted at 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, Calif. 94609.

Baltimore says yes on rent control

Baltimore voters approved a charter amendment establishing rent control—the first rent control law passed in recent years by referendum in a major U.S. city.

Rent control was opposed by all three Baltimore daily newspapers as well as the city's mayor, city council president and a majority of the 18-member council. The election results sent packing Solem and Associates, a San Francisco-based consulting firm that had boasted a seven-to-nothing record in defeating rent control measures in other cities. The law is slated to go into effect Dec. 6—if it survives several court challenges leveled by landlord groups.

With 54 percent of the city's inhabitants renting and vacancy levels below Housing and Urban Development five percent "emergency" levels, a coalition of liberals and leftists spent only about \$8,000 compared to more than \$275,000 by the anti-control side in the campaign.

The Baltimore charter amendment is to establish a five-member tenant-landlord commission to roll back rents to 1978 levels. It will then set annual ceilings. Appointed by the city council, the commission will include two landlords, two tenants and one homeowner. It will also

be empowered to hold back rent increases on apartments not meeting building codes, fine landlords exceeding the ceilings and grant special increases to pay for major repairs.

The commission will also review all attempts to remove properties from the rental market and hire a staff to be paid by fees charged to landlords for each building owned.

Cambridge picks socialist councilor

Following precedents set in recent years by Detroit, New York and Washington, D.C., Cambridge, Mass., Nov. 6 elected its first socialist city councilmember.

David Sullivan, an attorney, tenants rights activist and member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), finished second in a proportional representation election which picked nine councilors at large, doubling his vote over a similar bid in 1977 in which he finished 10th, eight votes out of the running.

Sullivan's supporters attribute his strong showing to his close personal identification with Cambridge's rent control plan at a time when neighboring Somerville and Boston have lost similar controls, to his stand against condominium conversion and to a political style stressing community organizing as a means to revitalize local government.

—Peter Mandler



Minneapolis Mayor-elect Don Fraser

Dems fare well in offyear elections

Off year elections resulted in Democratic mayors maintaining much of their power in big cities, with the notable exception of a GOP dumping of Cleveland Mayor Dennis Kucinich.

Don Fraser will be the new mayor of Minneapolis. The liberal candidate of the Democratic Farmer Labor Party made a political comeback after losing a bid in senatorial primaries 14 months earlier. Fraser led his nearest challenger—Independent Charles Stenvig—by about two-to-one.

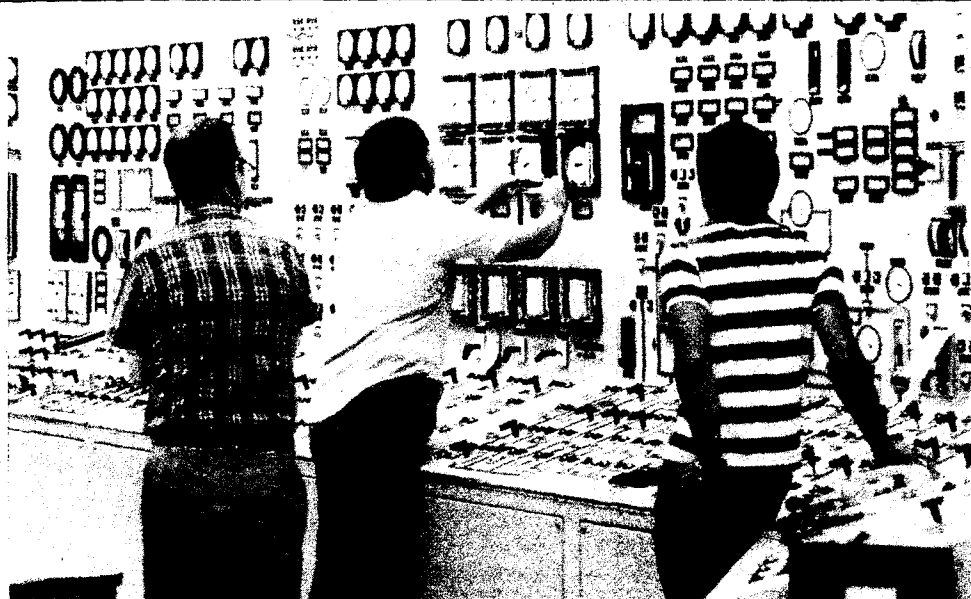
Boston Mayor Kevin White won an unprecedented fourth term, defeating Massachusetts state senator Joseph Timilty.

In Gary, Ind., Mayor Richard Hatcher was elected to a record fourth term, beating Republican W. Robert Borman. Hatcher, one of the nation's most well-entrenched black politicians, is due for the presidency of the U.S. Conference of Mayors next year.

In San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, filling the vacancy left by the murder of Mayor George Moscone, ended up in a runoff with Supervisor Quentin Kopp in her bid to become the city's first female mayor. A gay candidate for the office, city board of permit appeals president David Scott, placed third in the contest.

Jello Biafra, the lead singer of the punk rock band "The Dead Kennedys," shook up a few politicians by placing fourth in the San Francisco race—ahead of a long list of independent candidates.

New York's New Alliance Party moved from sixth to second place, but failed to



Advocate/Alan Decker

OCAW strike leaves uranium plant in hands of scabs

A uranium enrichment factory that produces the stuff atomic bombs are made of is being run at 30 to 40 percent capacity by untrained scab labor while striking Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) demand a federal investigation of "unparalleled" nuclear safety and labor law violations by Goodyear Atomic Corporation at the southern Ohio town of Piketon.

The facility, owned by the government and run by Goodyear, is the only weapons grade uranium enrichment plant of its kind in the western world, according to OCAW Local 3-689 president Denny Bloomfield.

Last week Bloomfield and other union leaders met with Ohio's Democratic Senators John Glenn and Howard Metzenbaum in Washington as the union's battle to oust Goodyear management from the Department of Energy-owned nuclear facility dragged on. The union has been on strike since May 3.

The DOE, which as the Nuclear Energy Commission gave Goodyear operational control of the fledgling enrichment process in Ohio in 1955, has denied workers the right to call in third party government agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to look into union grievances.

OCAW has filed more than 2600 grievances at the facility since 1976.

The company has been faulted in complaints including a worker getting a possible lethal dose of radiation and searing, more than 200 degree F work areas that "blister your feet right through your shoes," Bloomfield said.

Since Goodyear only manages the plant for the government, the cost of fighting union grievances is passed on to the taxpayer—an issue recently investigated by the General Accounting Office.

elect machine Democrat-turned-progressive Joe Galiber to the presidency of the Bronx.

Eighteen percent of Bronx voters pulled the lever for the New Alliance Party—far short of victory, but enough votes to cause 500 party stalwarts to hold a "victory" celebration, anyway. The party got a majority of votes in black and Hispanic precincts, although machine Democrat Stanley Simon, who outspent New York state senator Galiber six-to-one, will preside over the New York City borough of 1.25 million.

Big spending by the throw-away industry is blamed for the trashing of the Ohio Alliance for Returnables campaign to get voters to OK a ten cent deposit on all beer and soft drink containers. The returnable bottle and can referendum, patterned after Michigan's successful cutback on litter after passage of a container deposit law, was defeated in all 88 Ohio counties.

Commenting on the beverage container industry's \$1 million media blitz and GOP Governor James Rhodes' attacks

Bloomfield said after 1975, work conditions went from bad to worse due in part to what he said is Goodyear's desire to get even with OCAW for its role in blocking a move by Goodyear, the Bechtel Corp. and the Williams Co. to open the first privately owned uranium enrichment facility in Alabama.

Bloomfield says the best solution for the Piketon operation is to get new plant management. "Anybody would be better than Goodyear," he said. "Goodyear is using taxpayer dollars to break our union."

After last week's Capitol Hill meeting, aides to Glenn and Metzenbaum backed up Bloomfield in what he called a "confrontation" with DOE officials.

At press time, the DOE was promising to decide in a few days whether it would allow an investigation, but Bloomfield told IN THESE TIMES "based on past performance, they're going to say no."

Meanwhile in Ohio, office secretaries and other non-union employees are operating the maze of computers, wiring and piping at the sprawling, 3000 acre plant that processes deadly Uranium-235 and Uranium-238 by means of high pressure gasification. The OCAW workers—almost all carrying top-ranked "Q" security classification from the DOE—undergo at least 65 weeks of training for such tasks. But Bloomfield says most of the scabs at the plant made the job switch with a weekend's notice.

Outside the plant and past the picket lines, environmentalists and anti-nuke groups have joined the union's side, forming a Washington based support coalition.

For more details, contact Citizens Organization for a Safe Nuclear Policy, 514 C St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. 202/546-4868.

on "forced deposits" (the pro-returnable side spent about \$90,000), Alliance for Returnables campaign manager Jerry Austin said "they only people they didn't have come out against us were the Pope and the ayatollah."

Also in Ohio, Republican Mayor Tom Moody won a third term from Columbus voters.

The capital city's conservative leader was challenged by former municipal court judge Bill Boyland, who had wide support from the city's liberals and leftists. Boyland, who had gained notoriety in connection with early '70s political upheavals at the nearby Ohio State University campus, got 42 percent of the vote compared to Moody's 58 percent.

And in Macon, Ga., GOP city council George Israel defeated "Machine Gun Ronnie" Thompson in Thompson's comeback try for mayor.

"Machine Gun Ronnie," who served from 1967 to 1975, got his nickname after shooting at an alleged sniper as part of his "shoot to kill" crackdown on crime during the early 1970s.