

Upsurge Erupts Again in Iran... Protests Planned at UN

by Larry Everest

Like lava pushing up through cracks between the plates of hard rock that form the surface of the earth... the seething anger of the Iranian people again erupted in the streets last week.

Seizing on the opportunity provided by Quds ceremonies (rallies and marches organized by the Iranian regime supposedly in support of the Palestinian struggle) tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in the cities of Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Kermanshah, and elsewhere on September 18. As we go to press, details of the protests are hard to come by, but what is known is that protesters defied police, the chain-wielding Basij (a reactionary militia linked to the regime's armed forces); and the threat of prison, where the regime has been systematically torturing, raping, and murdering jailed protesters. Web sites report that in Shiraz, protesters skirmished with Basij militiamen and freed a group of fellow protesters who were being arrested.

This week, the president of Iran, Ahmadinejad—who symbolizes the repressive, oppressive regime ruling Iran—is scheduled to speak at the United Nations. Iranians from around the world will be coming to New York City the week of September 21-25. They will be joined by others in protest when Ahmadinejad speaks. A cutting edge of the protests will be exposing and opposing the horrific crimes carried out by the regime against those who were part of the initial wave of protest that involved hundreds of thousands after the Iranian election on June 12.

All who hate oppression and injustice should support the Call for Protest Assembly Against Islamic Republic of Iran in Front of UN, by a group of ex-political prisoners and the families of those political prisoners executed by the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] (see call in *Revolution* #175, September 6, 2009 or online at revcom.us).

The current wave of uprising in Iran was sparked by the perceived theft of the June election by Ahmadinejad. Millions of Iranians were desperate for real change and hoped that the election of one of the opposition candidates would be the beginning. Instead, within hours after the vote the Islamic Republic blatantly lied about the election, claiming it had hand-counted millions of votes and Ahmadinejad was winning in a landslide.

People were outraged and immediately took to the streets. Iran's rulers responded by insulting those who wanted change, comparing them to disappointed soccer fans, even dirt; they tried to censor news of the protest, and they threatened marchers with arrest, even death. They failed. The revolt was joined by literally millions in street protests, chants from rooftops, and in many other ways. Young people and women—the future of Iran—were in the forefront of the battle.

The uprising in Iran, and the fearlessness of the people, is remarkable and inspiring in many ways. For three decades, the Iranian people have suffered under a dark-ages theocracy. That regime came to power on the backs of the Iranian people's uprisings thirty years ago when the hated U.S. puppet, the Shah—a king put in power by the CIA in a 1953 coup—was overthrown. The Shah was despised for turning Iran into an outpost of U.S. imperialism in the region and a feasting ground for global capital and the rich, while millions lived lives of bitter poverty and his opponents were savagely tortured by the U.S.-trained secret police.

But the people's dreams for liberation turned bitter when the revolution was hijacked by Islamic theocrats led by Ayatollah Khomeini. There was no fundamental uprooting of the relations in Iranian society, just the refashioning of them. The new regime strengthened feudal relations. It continued the oppression of nationalities like the Kurds. And it imposed Islamic Sharia law on women, forcing them under veils and denying them basic rights. The Islamic fundamentalist regime jailed tens of thousands of opponents, executed thousands of communists, and ever since has reacted to any form of protest with vicious violent repression.

The recent outpourings in urban areas and especially among youth, students and women—the largest since the 1979 revolution—are the eruption of decades of discontent and alienation over the suffocating, dead-end and dark-ages character of Islamic rule—and a determination to change things. This is reflected in protest slogans: death to dictatorship, freedom of thought, freedom or death, and the widespread demand for an end to press, artistic, and intellectual censorship and suppression.

And the regime's response has been brutal and deadly. Peaceful street demonstrations have been attacked with clubs and teargas, broken up with motorcycle charges. People have been shot in cold blood—like 20-year-old Neda Agha Soltan, a woman student. Thousands have been arrested. Many have been tortured or raped while in prison and some have been murdered.

Perhaps nothing concentrates the reactionary depravity of the IRI and its ideology more than the systematic rape, torture and murder of prisoners, throughout its rule, and with a vengeance in response to the post-election uprisings. (See, *A World to Win* News Service, "Iran: rape, torture and murder of prisoners as regime policy," September 7, 2009 and the *New York Times* blog, "The Lede," August 28, 2009.)

Seventeen-year-old Saeedeh Aghaee was arrested by Basiji militiamen because she was shouting slogans on a rooftop. In prison, she was first tortured, then raped, "and then burnt in acid from the knees upward to destroy any evidence of the rape and other kinds of torture." Twenty days later her mother identified her body in a morgue in south Tehran, but the authorities refused to hand over her body unless her family paid a huge ransom, which they couldn't afford. The regime also pressured the family to publicly state that her death was due to "kidney failure," even though

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Background photo: Thousands protest in Tehran, Iran's capital, against the government, seizing on the opportunity provided by official mass rallies marking Quds Day, September 18, 2009.

Near right: Tehran, July 9, 2009.

Far right: Iranian woman at protest rally. According to an AP news report, hundreds of young men and women chanted "death to the dictator," confronting the police who attacked with batons and tear gas. Tehran, July 9, 2009.

IRAN: IT'S RIGHT TO REBEL AGAINST REACTIONARIES!



NO U.S. OR ISRAELI ATTACK ON IRAN!

Photo: AP