



معماران ازین روزگار
بسیارند که در این
دوره ازین نوع
سازند و اینها
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"Defeated Armies Learn Well"

—Summation from the
Union of Iranian Communists
(Sarbedaran)

This is a reprint from *Haghigat*, the central organ of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) which reappeared after a long lapse due to the severe repression of the reactionary Khomeini regime. The article is intended as a step towards a synthesis based on the advanced experiences of the proletariat and the summation of the serious weaknesses of the communist movement in Iran.—AWTVV.

"Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm swiftly from success to suc-

cess; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants; ecstasy is the everyday-spirit; but they are short-lived; soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crapulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful



thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta! Here is the rose, here dance!*"

The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, by Karl Marx

Preface

The development of events in the past few months in Iran shows an upsurge in the mood and struggle of the masses of workers and other strata. This new round of developments toward revolution in Iran occurs in the context of an overall crisis of the imperialist system, which in its spiral development and leaps is pulled from ebb to stagnation and from stagnation to complete depression.

The world today is on the threshold of a third imperialist war for redivision of the globe.

In the epoch of imperialism, war is the result of crisis, the pinnacle of crisis, and from the imperialist point of view, the only solution to crisis. But the same crisis that leads the imperialists toward war also, through further intensifying the exploitation and misery of the masses, lays the groundwork for waves of resistance and struggle of the proletariat and oppressed peoples throughout the world. Moreover, the crisis intensifies, concentrates, and intertwines all of the contradictions of the present epoch on a qualitatively higher level, and the different links of the imperialist chain are stretched to the maximum, making it more fragile than ever. Thus a new world-historic conjuncture is shaping up.

The Iranian revolution and especially the bright prospects coming off the new round of developments cannot be understood except in the context of the world situation.

There are two main factors which shape the moves and internal contradictions of the comprador-

bourgeois Islamic Republic. One is the galloping war preparations of the two imperialist blocs, their moves and counter-moves to pull together as much as possible their respective military blocs and destabilise their rival, particularly in the strategic region of the Middle East and the Gulf. The second factor is the weight of the existing crisis and the development of the resistance and struggle of the masses of people within Iran. On the one hand the Islamic Republic regime has certain freedoms and limitations, though increasingly its freedoms have been restricted and its limitations have grown. On the other hand there is the upsurge of the people's struggle.

So Iranian society is rushing towards a new conjuncture on a national scale, although not in the same form as the revolution of 1979 or the upsurge of 1981 but in fundamentally different dimensions. Lenin, in describing how the revolutionary situation takes shape, pointed out that it is not only that the lower classes refuse to continue in the old way but also that the upper class is not able to rule in the old way. A crisis in the policy of the upper class and fissures in their ranks must develop. He also added that no single one of these factors in itself gives rise to revolution, but only causes decay and corruption in a country unless there is a revolutionary class able to transform this situation of demoralization into a situation of active rebellion and uprising.

The example of the Iranian revolution of 1979 proves Lenin's point. Communists and the revolutionary proletariat were not able to unite the working class and oppressed around a revolutionary line and seize leadership. The results of the 1979 revolution caused further reaction and decay, ideological and cultural deterioration and more fierce and outrageous exploitation and oppression.

For the communists as well as for the working class and other oppressed masses of Iran, the upcoming conjuncture will pose serious confrontations and the greatest dangers and opportunities. This is coming at a time when our communist move-

ment is at the peak of an ideological, political and, of course, organisational crisis—this is the greatest danger facing our movement. Will the army of communists enter another battle in a state of uncertainty and confusion and risk the loss of a whole generation of revolutionary communists? Or will the unity of the communists and the proletariat around a correct line lay the groundwork for communist leadership to make great advances? "...whether the slave chains will merely be rattled, or really shattered; whether the fortress of the old order will only be shaken, or new ground seized for the cause of emancipation; whether people will fight blindly...or with head up and eyes fixed on the furthest horizon, prepared to *win*." Will the proletariat and the oppressed be the cannonfodder of the enemy classes and fight under their leadership, resulting in disastrous consequences, or will the flag of leadership be in the powerful hands of the proletariat and broad masses of the oppressed with the soldiers of the proletarian army fighting for their own interests?

The answer to these questions depends on the ability of the communists to forge a correct political and ideological line, and developing the unity of the communists around this line in a party, and on viewing what is to be done in a clear, long-range and all-sided way and rising to the occasion to fulfill those goals.

Developing such a line, however, involves applying and developing the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the particular situation of Iran. This requires relying on the most concentrated and advanced experiences and achievements of the international proletariat and in this light synthesizing the great and precious experiences of the Iranian revolution from the beginning until now. It also involves smashing revisionism, opportunism, ideological and organizational liquidationism and all the revisionist distortions of the historical experiences of the proletariat in the world and in Iran, which aim at misleading the communists and the proletariat and thus laying the ground for the un-

disputed leadership of bourgeois forces in the movement.

Past experiences, especially those accumulated in the past conjuncture, are very important in our orientation toward the coming conjuncture. Hence it is worthwhile to draw some of the most important lessons from them.

Presenting a complete summation is not the goal of this article. Moreover, in this article we will concentrate mainly on the communist movement and the forces related to it. We are not dealing with the "others" (the national bourgeoisie, revisionists, etc.—*AWTW*), not because the communists were the most responsible for the defeat and must be more thoroughly criticised than the others, not at all. In the proper place and time, we'll deal with these forces too.

Introduction

In a situation of great social turmoil and at the height of the national-historic conjuncture of the winter of 1981 to the winter of 1982, a very important meeting of the standing committee of the Central Committee of the Union of Iranian Communists was held. Decisions were made concerning the immediate tasks of the proletariat, the communist movement and the U.I.C. A majority of the standing committee voted for an immediate uprising. This was seen as the central task and main way of responding to the other tasks and problems of the class struggle (including preparational tasks). The minority held that the main task was one of preparation for the uprising. The majority view won.

On the basis of the decision taken by the majority of the standing committee, preparatory work began. The decision of the standing committee was approved at the end of June 1981 by the Central Committee, giving it an organisational stamp of approval. So in the face of the savage offensive by the Islamic bourgeois compradors, a majority of the leaders and members of our organisation put forward a clear and sharp answer, despite the strong capitulationist and defeatist trend which had

swallowed up almost all of the leaders of the self-proclaimed "communist" organisations as well as a minority of our own leaders. We declared that we would never repeat the historical experience of the Tudeh party in 1953 during the CIA coup!*

Implementation of the resolution calling for an immediate uprising put our organisation on a new footing. We were stepping out on a new course, unknown not only to us but to the entire communist movement of Iran. In fact the proletariat and the communist movement of Iran, through the Union of Iranian Communists, was shouldering the responsibility for leading the revolution, and at a time of very difficult conditions.

Implementing this resolution however raised many other key questions, such as: Is it possible for a small force to shoulder a great responsibility? Can one go into a great battle without necessary previous preparations? How can an organisation solve the most urgent problems at hand while overcoming weaknesses? And a more basic question was, what did the necessary preparations consist of, and why hadn't they already been made? Our subjective and objective abilities to answer these questions was finally expressed in the uprising of January 26, 1982 in Amol [a city in the northern part of Iran—*AWTW*].

On the nights of the 26th-28th of January 1982 the city of Amol witnessed widespread bloody battle of the armed forces of Sarbedaran and their urban mass supporters against the military and police forces of the Islamic Republic regime. Organised and led by the U.I.C., this historic armed offensive was the last serious resistance by revolutionary forces against the counter-revolutionary coup of the regime. Thus a period of development of the Iranian revolution came to an end and a new period began.

The period which ended with the Amol battle had begun with the rise of the mass movement in the winter of 1981 and with a new upsurge of revolutionary struggle which was passing to the stage of settling final accounts with the regime. Serious

moves made by Khomeini and his party to suppress and extinguish the revolution, which had seriously jeopardised the government's position, reached a peak in June and July of 1981. With the coup by the Islamic Republic Party under Khomeini's leadership and the implementation of open and widespread armed terrorist policies against the revolution, this period entered a new phase. Khomeini aimed to overcome the divisions and internal political crises of the government, smash the revolutionary political groups, push back the revolutionary masses, liquidate mass organisations and enforce an atmosphere of terror, suppression and strangulation. These were seen as the political pre-conditions for the bourgeois compradors of Iran to pull out of the crisis. Finally with the defeat of Amol, the last serious revolutionary offensive, the revolution was temporarily defeated. (The place of Kurdistan in this process requires separate discussion.)

After Amol, despite some resistance and partial offensives here and there, the revolution entered an ebb, a period which consisted mainly of summing up the experiences accumulated during the five years of intense class struggle and revolution. Ideological, political, organisational and military preparation had to begin anew.

The revolution and the mass movement suffered a temporary defeat at the hands of the Islamic regime, and the defeat suffered by our communist movement was great and terrible not only because thousands of militant communists were killed by the Islamic bourgeois comprador executioners and tens of thousands captured by them, but also because this was the third of a series of heavy defeats in the short period of 5-6 years for the Iranian communists. The loss of China and the qualitative unfolding of the crisis and the agnostic and liquida-

*The Tudeh Party is the representative of Soviet revisionism. In spite of having very strong mass and military forces at that time, in the face of the CIA coup the leadership decided to surrender and fled the country.—*AWTW*

tionist trends in the international communist movement, and in Iran the fact that communists did not play a qualitative role in the leadership of the '79 revolution and did not use historical opportunities afterward for overcoming our weaknesses and our lagging behind—these were two defeats that the roaring years of revolution and the quantitative growth of the communist movement pushed to the rear as something which belonged to the past, bitter remembrances best forgotten. History did not forgive us for this carelessness. Not seriously summing up the shortcomings and deviations of the past two defeats prevented us from gaining the most possible in the two golden years after 1979. These two years provided rich experience and opportunities equal to dozens of "normal" years. Then, when the time for the next test came, we were dizzy and half-asleep. What we were not ready for happened: the class struggle presented us with a decisive challenge. And in the turns and twists of these times, many numbed comrades took the easy road of defeatism, capitulationism and treachery, and the liquidationist and revisionist deviations and ideological crisis of many others was further deepened. Those of us who were awakened attempted to take up our historical mission, but were encumbered by past deviations, lagging behind the objective situation, not accumulating the requisite forces and experiences nor making sufficient preparations. To claim that this was a fundamental reason for our defeat is not idle talk.

The communist movement suffered a defeat. The catastrophe was not, however, the defeat itself, but the *nature* of it. A large part of the communist movement, which was organised into petit bourgeois organisations with leadership which claimed to be Marxist, was defeated without even fighting. This was true for both the organisations which were liquidated under direct police attacks and those which supposedly "preserved" their forces despite the attacks. The communist movement of Iran was defeated, not because of the unfavourable

balance of forces but basically because of its deviations and internal weaknesses. This defeat must be considered a political-ideological one. This is also the main reason for the capitulationism, passivity, demoralisation, liquidationism, agnosticism, revisionism, and confusion existing in our movement. The dimension of the damage caused by the political-ideological defeat was much greater than that caused by direct police attacks, by the arrest of tens of thousands of communists and the murder of thousands of them in prison. What broke the back of the communists was not the ferocity of the regime nor the dismantling of the organisations and the loss of the best comrades, but rather facing three consecutive defeats while remaining unable to find out the roots of and reasons for them.

The questions which are eating at the minds of the communists who haven't found a refuge in revisionism, liquidationism or just plain don't-give-a-damn and who don't want to do so are as follows: Why was the army of communists of Iran not able to wage and lead a serious offensive for seizing political power? Why was the army of communists of Iran so disarmed? Why did the Union of Iranian Communists, which began to rise in responding to the tasks of that period, suffer such a defeat and come so close to being destroyed?

The catastrophe was not, however, the defeat itself, but the nature of it.

The experiences accumulated in the process of struggling through the questions facing us during June and July 1981 are rich materials for the communist movement of Iran and to some degree for the communist movement of the world. They are important material in answering the above-mentioned questions and forging a correct revolutionary line. These experiences and achievements are not the private property of any one organisation. They are not trophies won which one can then show off.

These are vital experiences paid for in blood, and the forward advance of our communist and workers movement depends on summing up and drawing lessons from them.

Today the main point in dealing with the past is not to ask who did what; but to ask who did what, why they did it and what are the lessons of this for today and tomorrow. The question today is who is concentrating the synthesis of the advanced experiences of the communist and proletarian movement and the revolutionary masses during the years of revolutionary turmoil, especially the last conjuncture, in their line and practice, and how is this being done. This should be the criterion for the communist vanguard of the working class and the revolution in Iran. It couldn't be anything but this. We won't let it be anything but this.

Once again the class struggle in our society today is rapidly going to pose to the communists in Iran the same questions we were facing in the last period. The self-proclaimed communist organisations (from Peykar to the Union of Militant Communists or Komelah and from Workers Path to the Feydayeen Minority, etc.*) have once again given their clear answer to those questions—their political-ideological lines have the same content but in different forms, this time in a more systematic and obviously deca-

* Worker's Path is a Soviet-inspired revisionist organisation which was formed after 1979. It was liquidated after 1982, but soon was revived by revisionists to play a "good-faced" revisionist party since the Tudeh Party and the Feydayeen Majority had been extensively exposed. The Union of Militant Communists, now billing itself as the Communist Party of Iran, was a group formed after the 1979 revolution; despite its proclaimed adherence to Marxism-Leninism, this group is decidedly influenced by new-left and Trotskyite tendencies blended with a strong streak of economism and opposes the scientific teachings of Mao Tsetung, particularly on socialism, that is, it considers the Soviet Union imperialist, not social-imperialist. Peykar was formed by those who split from the Mojahedeen in 1976 and took a stand against Soviet social-imperialism; it had a strong economist deviation as well as failed to recognize the cardinal importance of Mao Tsetung's contributions.—AWTW

dent way. In the situation of confusion and crisis in the ranks of the communist movement and in the face of the coming conjuncture, the inability to draw Marxist lessons from the past and the adherence to old deviations in all their depth and breadth are undoubtedly the greatest danger threatening our communist movement and the advance of the revolution. Struggle for synthesis of the advanced experiences of the proletariat and other revolutionary masses, along with criticising and negating the summations of and tamperings with the revolutionary experience by bourgeois revisionists and liquidationists, are some of the most important aspects of the struggle to come out of the current crisis and to forge a correct line, thus securing communist proletarian leadership for the revolution in Iran. This article is a first step in this direction.

The Collapse of Mechanical Materialism in Charting the Course of Class Struggle

Perhaps the only thing in common between us and other organisations claiming to be communist was that no one was prepared for the situation in 1981. But when one asks why this is, qualitatively different reasons emerge.

Answering such questions requires very broad discussion and involves writing several books and theses (a job that has to be done anyway). Yet, even today one can and must go into the main points; here we will touch on some of these, beginning with the question, "why wasn't the preparatory work done?"

Economic Crisis, Conjuncture, and Revolutionary Situation

Most of the organisations having to do with the communist movement in Iran understood correctly—though with different reasoning—that, despite the class composition of the Islamic republic, the regime was basically relying on the class relations still intact from the regime of the Shah and was unable to change those relations, and further that the Khomeini regime set about repairing any damage done to those class relations during the struggle

against the Shah in order to preserve them.

"The Islamic republic neither wants to nor can." This famous and too much repeated refrain was churned out in huge volumes of literature from revolutionary political organisations at that time. But what was not summed up correctly was exactly what the Islamic republic regime did want to change, what they didn't want to change, what they could and couldn't change, and how. The communist movement did not have a correct analysis of the social, cultural and especially political changes in the time of the revolution of 1979, especially after the January uprising. In other words, there was never a profound grasp of the freedom and necessity of the Islamic republic

The communist movement of Iran was defeated...because of its deviations and internal weaknesses.

in comparison with that of the Shah's regime, or of the changes in the class composition of the regime and thus of changes in the alignment of class forces generally. Even those who paid more serious attention to these developments didn't grasp their practical implications, or like ourselves, drew erroneous conclusions (in right or "left" guise).

Many in our movement held that since the same crisis which prepared the ground for overthrowing the monarchy continued to function after the revolution, and since the Islamic republic had not been able to rein it in, consequently under the weight of this crisis the illusions of the masses would crumble and waves of struggle arise. But this general and seemingly correct analysis regarding the continuation of the economic crisis was in fact a cover for superficial and bourgeois economist views dominating the organisations.

First of all, many in our movement lacked even a basic understanding of the roots of the economic crisis which laid the groundwork for the 1979 revolution, let alone a cor-

rect grasp of its continuation in the changed situation after the revolution.¹

Secondly, the fashionable economic analysis of the crisis made by the movement was more a vulgar economist interpretation than a Marxist one. Many today continue to view the essence of the crisis as summarised by unemployment, inflation, a high cost of living, lack of food and a budget deficit. Naturally, with such an understanding it was then and is now impossible to see development in the situation.

Thirdly, the tremendous impact of the revolution on the course of the economic crisis was not treated seriously. It seemed enough to say this is "basically" the continuation of the "same" crisis.

Finally, after 1979, tremendous changes took place politically and socially, yet not a single serious effort was made to grasp the manifestations of the same economic crisis in the context of these social and economic changes.

However, even beyond the interpretation of the economic crisis, a related deviation of greater significance was the extremely superficial and bourgeois economist point of view of a broad range of communists regarding the relationship between economic crisis and political and social crisis in a revolutionary situation.

The economic base is in the *final analysis* decisive in social development. And economic crisis is in the final analysis decisive (and is in a sense the base) for the existence and continuation of political crisis and a revolutionary situation. But this doesn't mean that the political crisis and revolutionary situation expand and develop *parallel* to the economic crisis in society. In the shaping up of the political crisis and/or revolutionary situation, economic factors, including the impoverishment and immiseration of the masses, unemployment, etc., play a role—like many other factors—but they are not necessarily the most decisive or important ones at all. The economic crisis dries the gunpowder in the political and social arenas and, without this, waiting for an explosion is stupid.

(By explosion we do not only mean armed urban insurrection.) But the economic crisis in itself is not the most important factor in the act of explosion. Trying to understand the political situation directly from economic factors indicates a development of economism in a line and is the height of stupidity regarding the class struggle. This is mechanical materialism. Unfortunately many have held and continue to hold this view.

This viewpoint shows itself when explaining how a revolutionary situation will take shape. Contrary to the mechanical, gradualist viewpoints, the course of development of phenomena is neither a straight line nor the gradual accumulation of factors and contradictions. Rather, the course of development is twisted and full of leaps. It takes place through the struggle of contradictions and spiral motion marked by pauses. The way conjunctures and revolutionary situations develop is not an exception to this general rule of dialectics. As the fundamental contradiction of society in its economic base qualitatively intensifies and a vast economic crisis develops, all the social contradictions arising from the fundamental contradiction or involved in its process of development also intensify and become qualitatively more active in influencing each other. Thus all the contradictions of society become increasingly intertwined. This intensification and interconnectedness of the contradictions makes it easier for social pressure to break them. Under certain conditions, the conjuncture will be shaped and the ground will be provided for a serious rupture to take place in the form of chain-like actions and reactions, convulsing the entire social organism and social life. A single spark can start a prairie fire. For this reason the starting point of a revolutionary period could be a struggle, collision or friction in a secondary arena.

Society does not enter a revolutionary situation in a straight line or gradually, but leaps into it. Under certain circumstances, even the most peaceful opposition of the most reactionary strata of liberals against the ruling regime can be a

spark for mass uprising where the struggle leaps to a higher level.

All the above-mentioned weaknesses and deviations, and also other deviations which we'll discuss later, hampered a great part of the communist movement in Iran in grasping the importance of the contradictions and developments before 1981. Nor was it understood that the events of March 5, 1981* ushered in a qualitatively new phase.

In other words, many communists were unable to grasp the qualitatively higher level of revolutionary struggle during the period of the events of March 5th and failed to comprehend the depth and expanse of the mass movement in the winter and spring of 1981.

How could the commemoration of one liberal by another (Mossadegh by Bani-Sadr) be the starting point for a leap in the class struggle? How could it raise the level of the mass movement? Grasping this was out of reach of many communists' mental ability. In fact, their outlook limited their mental ability. "This is not 'real' class struggle anymore. The masses are deluded!" Such was the initial reaction of these comrades to the new rise in struggle. What strengthened this illusion about class struggle was the fact that the mass struggles were initially waged to support Bani Sadr and were against the Islamic Republic Party and—exactly because of the deviations and weaknesses of the communists—continued like that until the period shortly after June 20th.

As said before, the mechanical and economist views of many communists, particularly in analyzing the process of the development of the economic crisis in the changed political and social situation, the development of the class struggle and the way in which the political crisis and revolutionary situation took shape, left them unable to grasp how the intensity of the situation provided the conditions for society to enter a revolutionary situation, sparked by Bani-Sadr's commemoration of Mossadegh. What lit the spark was not bloodshed in a worker demonstration around economic demands.

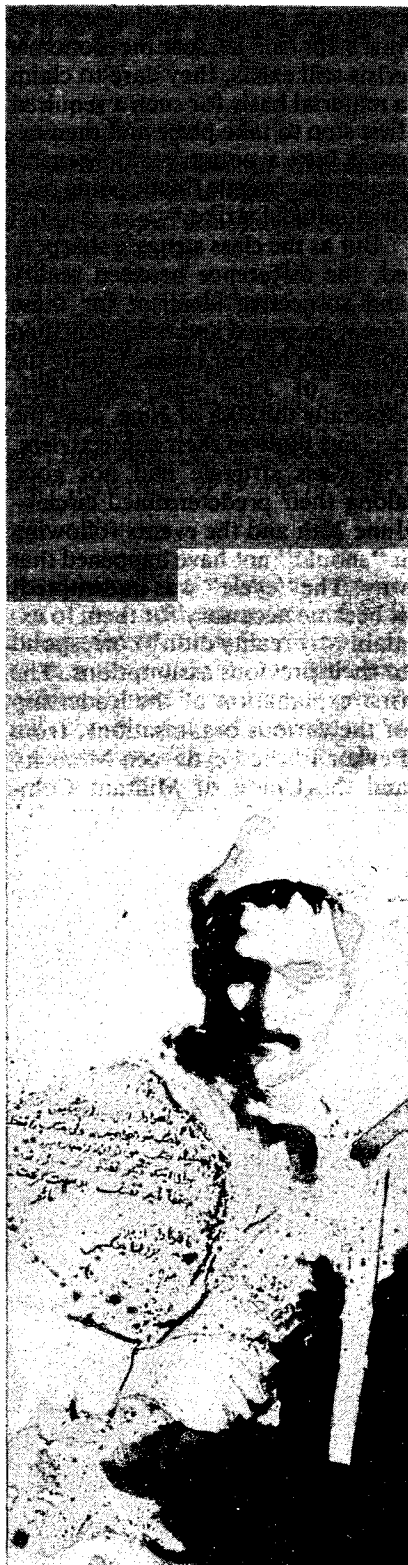
The same is true even today. The

Islamic republic, in a constant state of suppression, repression, terror and strangulation, has brought about numerous horrors and continues to do so today. There is not a day that a struggle is not waged in some community or factory around economic demands. There is not a month that these kinds of struggles are not suppressed violently. In a period of a few months, under the same conditions, soccer games gave rise to two violent mass demonstrations with anti-Khomeini slogans. It may seem kind of contradictory that the workers or youth who engage in struggle in their community or factory for economic demands directly related to their daily life were and are suppressed, and still they did not raise the level of struggle to anti-government street demonstrations and political slogans, while these same people at the football stadium, for a question much less important, start to demonstrate, pour into the streets, make "Down with Khomeini" their main slogan and clash with the Pasdaran.** Well this "contradiction" results from the material world. This is the reality of class struggle. Yes, if the spark of the previous mass movement was lit by the contradiction of Bani-Sadr and friends against Khomeini and the IRP, the next spark could be lit by the contradiction between Mr. John Fada and the supporters of Perse police!! [Perse police is a soccer team, Mr. John Fada is the head of the Tehran soccer committee—*AWTW*].

The development of the conjuncture provided favourable terrain for the rise of a revolutionary situation. On many occasions the intensification of differences among the ruling class (including bourgeois forces

*March 5, 1981: a meeting was called by Bani Sadr to commemorate Mossadegh. Tens of thousands of masses gathered at the University of Tehran to hear liberal criticism of then President Bani Sadr of the Islamic Republic Party. The peaceful meeting was turned into a heroic street demonstration to fight against Islamic Republic defendants and burning of IRP's offices by the masses.—*AWTW*

**These were armed forces organised throughout the country by the regime from the most backward sections of its social base, to guard its power against the people.



Behruz Fathi (Nasir) —played a leading role in reorganising the UIC (Sarbedaran). He was arrested shortly after the 4th Congress and executed, in no small part due to his unflinching and active defence of the cause of communism.

within the government) of society lit the spark of social fire. This is in part because the sharpening of the contradictions among the ruling class is a reflection of splits in the ranks of the ruling class and between the ruling class and the upper strata. Such cracks are among the main factors in shaping the revolutionary situation.

On the other hand, when the intensification of the contradictions among the ruling class acts as the spark for the prairie fire, the mass movement might for a short time support one or another bourgeois force and move under their leadership. This reflects the social, political and ideological influence the ruling class has among the masses. Many times, through some of their actions, they pull the masses into political life and struggle (naturally under their own policies and banners).

But, if their influence and initial leadership is not pushed aside, a serious and sometimes decisive obstacle for the development of the movement exists, which can result in the suffocation of the mass movement (as for example in the spring of 1981).

This influence will not, however, disappear by itself. The demands and expectations of the masses in these movements are essentially different than those of the bourgeois leadership. So the mass movement itself provides the *material basis* to push aside the non-proletarian leadership and bring forward communist leadership. But this “change” of leadership can not take place spontaneously and involves the specific efforts of communists. Except for eruptions here and there, the political radicalism of the masses of workers and oppressed are either reined in or unleashed—depending on the policies and forms of struggle put forward by its leadership. Only communist leadership can unleash the radicalism and decisiveness of the movement of the oppressed to its fullest. And those “communists” who accuse the masses of inactivity, who ignore the actual upsurges going on and call them illusions, are unable to push aside the *real illusions* of the masses and pro-

vide them with proletarian leadership.

Moreover, whether the spark is lit by the struggles of the oppressed or by the “struggles” of the ruling class has a lot to do with the experience, level of political consciousness, and degree of organisation of the proletariat and oppressed. This can be achieved mainly through the strength and influence of the communist vanguard among the masses as well as their sharpness and ability to act rapidly. In other words, if communists don’t look at the class struggle from a narrow and economist point of view, nor view it as a struggle of the workers and oppressed against the bourgeoisie around their livelihood, and if they are not passive observers of class struggle in society, then they should be able to some degree to direct and guide sparks of struggle from their spontaneous course on to a conscious course. (However, regarding the nature of social contradictions and the role of a communist party in class struggle, it is impossible to keep class struggle neatly organised.)

On the other hand, contrary to the narrow and economist view, spontaneous struggles or struggles of a secondary nature should by no means be ignored. Rationales such as “these are not planned or conscious” or “these are the business of other classes” and conclusions such as “this is not our business, we’ll do our own ‘class’ work independently,” etc., are nothing but economist bullshit.

The bottom line is that such reasoning undermines the role of communists, reducing communist leadership to the economic and trade union struggles of the workers, and it negates the political and ideological leadership of the proletariat and its party in the class struggle. Political leadership of the working class itself requires that all the advanced workers and also broader masses of the working class obtain an overall understanding of all aspects of political struggle going on among all strata in society. But like all other understanding and knowledge, this knowledge is not gained through simply observing and explaining processes and

phenomenon from afar but is acquired through active struggle to change them.

So for the proletariat and its communist party, even politically training and leading the class itself won't be possible without dealing with all aspects of the current political struggle in society *from the point of view of proletarian interests*, and striving to transform these struggles. In this way the proletarian vanguard not only raises its knowledge and subsequently the knowledge of the class as a whole of the relations between it and other classes in society, but even more importantly, it develops the ability to raise itself to a level of leadership of *the whole revolutionary movement of the masses*. The party can then gather the various streams of political and class struggle and unite them under its revolutionary leadership. It is from this perspective that communists *have to* pay attention to class struggle in society as a whole, even the most partial struggles, even among the upper classes and in the least important arenas, not only so as to politically train the proletariat but also to take maximum advantage of such struggles in order to deepen all struggle going on in the society, and in the interests of the proletariat, in implementing its leadership of the on-going struggles of the masses.²

The Spiral Development of History and the Extreme Poverty of a Straight Line View of Development

Another factor which contributed to many so-called communist organisations being surprised by the events of 1981 was the tendency, first, to view revolution and its development as a confrontation between two distinct, separate armies facing off against each other, and worse, to view the ranks of revolution as consisting of the vast majority of people. Related to this, the revolution of 1979 was seen in the "classic" sense, that is, the development of history and revolution were seen as circular, as more or less a repetition of earlier historical events. This is one of the main reasons why these organisations were unable to grasp the importance of the mass movement of the winter

and spring of 1981.

First, the possibility of the repetition of the previous course of events would be exceptional. For example, since 1979 the international stage upon which events in Iran will be performed has changed considerably. Iran itself has gone through developments. The players have gained new experience and know each other better, and some have even changed sides.³

Second, the class nature of the leadership of the revolution is one of the factors which played a role in the manner in which the monarchical regime was overthrown and which in the absence of a serious proletarian leadership decisively influenced the alignment of the class forces and the way the revolution developed afterwards. In other words, under communist leadership or even with the presence of a powerful proletarian pole, the alignment of class forces undergoes considerable change, thus influencing the course of further revolutionary development.

In fact, those self-proclaimed communist organisations who in 1981 were waiting (and are still waiting today) for the days of 1979 to be repeated, not only disarmed themselves, the proletariat and the oppressed, but also revealed the non-proletarian content of their political and ideological line and their understanding of how to seize political power.

And when some of these organisations (like Peykar, the Union of Militant Communists, etc.) tried to formulate a more precise perspective for themselves, they went as far as thinking that a repetition of the October Revolution would take place, and, at most there will be some switch in the order of the events of 1978-79. For example, if at the time Khomeini was leader, first the petit bourgeoisie took to the streets, then the proletariat went on strike and finally the uprising occurred, then this time, in the vision of some so-called communist organisations, first the workers will go on strike, then they will have street demonstrations and finally the uprising! Since the working class doesn't initially go on a political strike, then some broad

economic struggle is the required first step. And because the economic crisis still exists, they dare to claim a material basis for such a required first step to take place and then expand into a country-wide general economic struggle finally going over to a political strike.⁴

But as the class struggle sharpened, the difference between reality and subjective idealism for these forces deepened and this intensified confusion in their ranks. Finally the events of June and July 1981, especially the 20th of June, dealt the decisive blow to their subjectivism. The class struggle had not gone along their predetermined circle—June 20th and the events following it "should" not have happened that way! The "cycle" was interrupted. It became necessary for them to explain why reality didn't correspond to their previous assumptions. The first explanation of the leadership of the various organisations, from Peykar to the Feydayeen Minority and the Union of Militant Communists, was interesting, but painful, causing further disarming of their forces. Their summation: the events following 20 June 1981 were the mere repetition of those of 18 August 1979,* only more violent. Supposedly this wave too would pass like the past one and society would return to the predicted cycle. But this is more like somebody walking in the dark and whistling in order to overcome his fear.

The two weeks after 20 June 1981 were enough to show the bankruptcy of their analysis. Before these events, they were unable to assess the great revolutionary potential of the mass movement, nor had they tried to unleash it. Now after the coup, when the previous forms of struggle were old and wouldn't function anymore, and unleashing the fighting abilities of the revolutionary masses depended on putting forward new policies, tactics and forms of struggle, they still could

*The Islamic Republic gave the order for military attack on Kurdistan, which at the time was under the control of revolutionary forces, Kurdish militants and mass organisations. Also violent attacks were launched against the free press and against the revolutionary press and the headquarters of various progressive and revolutionary organisations.—AWTW

not see the potential of the revolutionary masses—the only thing their eyes saw was the active violent forces of reaction and the base it had whipped up.

Thus, the leaders of these organisations which proclaimed to be communist and revolutionary one after another began to formulate various kinds of reactionary, liquidationist, passive, defeatist and revisionist trifles. Peykar put forward a plan for preparing armed mass uprising while at the same time saying watch out for “adventurism.” The Feydayeen Minority tried to cover their passivity, first with much touted “fighting squads” and then with the formation of “committees of workers uprising.” Workers Path called for “a retreat and hiding among the masses.” The Union of Militant Communists found it safer to play around with the “pure workers movement” and forming “real workers councils,” ignoring what was really going on in society. Many of the “smaller groups” also said “this and that must be done, but unfortunately we don’t have the forces to do it.”

Of course, considering the depth of the deviations governing the communist movement in that period, such a destiny was not surprising. In fact, with the leap in the class struggle in June 1981, many communists, especially the leaders, instead of correcting their line, consolidated their wrong lines and took a *qualitative* leap backward into revisionism and liquidationism.

In a tragic way, “neither wants to nor can” was the situation of these groups with regard to communist leadership of the revolution. With an overview, one can see that a large part of the forces related to the communist movement had a mechanical, straight line, gradualist view on the development of the revolution and the class struggle and a narrow and economist view of the task of communists and the proletariat in the revolution. They were not able to see the twists and turns and the coming of the decisive battle, nor could they prepare themselves, the working class and other masses of people for decisively facing the counter-revolution.



Pirut Mohammadi (Kak Ismail) — was the Commander-in-Chief of the Sarbedaran fighters and a member of the standing committee of the Central Committee. He led all of the major military engagements with the regime, including the Amol Uprising, during which he fell as a martyr.

The masses were left under the leadership of the liberals and the Mojahedeen. Because of these same deviations, they were unable to shoulder or fulfill their tasks in a situation that, *despite* unpreparedness, *despite* lagging behind in this very difficult situation, *required* genuine communists to march at the head of the masses and show the road forward to revolution.

The result was that on the one hand the masses of people, lacking communist leadership, lost the ability to prepare for battle. Under the leadership of liberals and the Mojahedeen, their energy was wasted. They were driven off the political stage and their movement suffered a temporary defeat. On the other hand, many of the communists organised in these organisations, confused, disarmed and unable to lead the revolution, became demoralised. Group after group was arrested and murdered by the butchers of the Islamic comprador bourgeois regime. The communist movement suffered a heavy defeat.⁵

Ideological Disorientation and Our Deviations

In our case, however, the question is qualitatively different. At bottom our views were not gradualist. We did not tend to view the course of development of the class struggle as straight-line or circular. We were aware of how a conjuncture is shaped (we saw the revolution of 1979 approaching). We also foresaw the conjuncture which began to take shape in the winter of 1981.

What took away from the sharpness of our line was our eclecticism on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, especially our centrist tendency regarding Mao. In other words though the reasons and roots of our unpreparedness too must be sought in the ideological crisis of our organisation, our fundamental difference with the others, such as Mobarezin, Mobarezin, and Peykar, was that they had consolidated ideological liquidationism long before the conjuncture of 1981. We had not. In the twists and turns of 1981, it was only a minority of our organisation that con-

solidated their past deviations, raising them to a qualitatively different level, to a revisionism that basically had the particularities of a Peykar-type line.

Let us point to some roots of the crisis in the context of the second congress of the UIC held in March 1979. This congress put forward the basic framework of our organisation until the spring of 1981.⁶

The death of Mao Tsetung, the coup of the bourgeoisie in China and the formulation by the Chinese revisionists of their Three Worlds Theory as the strategy for the international communist movement and world proletariat gave rise to a sharp struggle between the supporters and opponents of this theory in our organisation. After a year, and as a majority of our organisation decidedly held a position against this theory, the result of this struggle was that the majority of representatives present at the first congress of the Union of Iranian Communists (spring '78) confirmed a position against this theory. This became public in a series of articles in *Haghighat* with the title of "On the Three Worlds Theory," which even today is the most systematic critique of this theory in the Iranian communist movement.

Although this document was an achievement for us and the Iranian communist movement, it has a basic shortcoming. Even though it *correctly* relies on the line of the international communist movement up to that point, closing the door to the open liquidationism which even in those days had become a strong trend in the international communist movement, we had not been able to deepen our criticism and generalize it to comprehend the historical roots of the emergence of the Three Worlds Theory in the international communist movement. In fact our criticism of this theory was one of *absolute* reliance on the line of the international communist movement, without making an analytical criticism of deviations in the international communist movement. In other words, we criticised the Three Worlds Theory by *relying* on the formulations of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the

views of the Soviet socialist government in the period of the anti-fascist struggle.

Our criticism of the Three Worlds Theory had a tendency towards dogmatism regarding the history of the international communist movement. The context for our criticism should have been more dialectical, understanding the roots of this theory in the international communist movement and developing Marxism through this. And, as is true of all periods of defeat and/or emergence of a deviation, either Marxism will be developed or liquidationism (both as revisionism or as the liquidationism of the "United Council of the Left" type*) and dogmatism strengthened. As is also common, dogmatism is itself a prelude to the emergence of liquidationism and revisionism.

They provided everything within their reach; some took up arms and joined the ongoing combat.

The point is that the nature of our approach to the Three Worlds Theory, our unconditional defense of all the positions of the Comintern and the Soviet Union and our uncritical approach to the history of the international communist movement *weakened our firm defense of Mao Tsetung Thought*. Mao himself led decisive ruptures with many basic deviations in the line of the Comintern. And Mao Tsetung Thought is nothing but the creative development of Marxism-Leninism—including in the fierce anti-revisionist struggle and the struggle to sum up the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, the struggle against economist deviations of the Comintern, and the reclaiming of a series of Leninist principles and verdicts (especially on the role of the party and class consciousness and the refusal to worship spontaneity) which the Comintern had deviated from.⁷

The renegade and revisionist at-

tacks of Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Labour Party on Mao and Mao Tsetung Thought reinforced our weaknesses in relation to Mao Tsetung Thought. Our centrism between Mao Tsetung and Enver Hoxha was in fact an expression of centrism between Marxism and revisionism.

From this point on, a centrist and agnostic tendency and following it a liquidationist tendency (its ideological aspect) began to form in our organisation. Moreover, in the case of communists in oppressed countries especially, this centrism either emerges directly out of nationalist and bourgeois democratic tendencies or lays the groundwork for falling into them. We were not an exception to the rule. Centrism means standing between Marxism (the *only* ideology of the world proletariat) and revisionism (bourgeois ideology in the guise of Marxism), standing between the world proletariat and the bourgeoisie (both "ours" or others) and between internationalism and nationalism and bourgeois democracy.

Our centrist tendency gave way to the growth of nationalist tendencies (mainly as seeing everything only in the narrow framework of the class struggle in one's "own" society and between one's "own" proletariat and its enemies, which is itself a nationalist tendency) in our ranks and for moving away from the ideological standpoint of the proletariat, that is, proletarian internationalism. The world historic mission of the proletariat as a *single world class* which is fighting for a single goal increasingly lost clarity in our views.

Furthermore, the immense difficulty in answering the problems and questions of the international communist movement, the communists lagging behind and having little mass base in the ongoing class struggle in Iran, the necessity to immediately overcome both this lagging behind and quantitative weaknesses and the pull to concentrate all forces in this direction and

*A bourgeois liberal "Marxist" tendency which was formed before the Khomeini coup, and denies the Leninist teachings on the party and class partisanship.

finally the force exerted by the objective situation (a situation of revolution) created the conditions where we avoided paying attention to the ideological questions in the international communist movement.

In sum, our organisation held this important congress in the initial period after the 1979 uprising *in a situation of ideological crisis and strategic loss of orientation*.

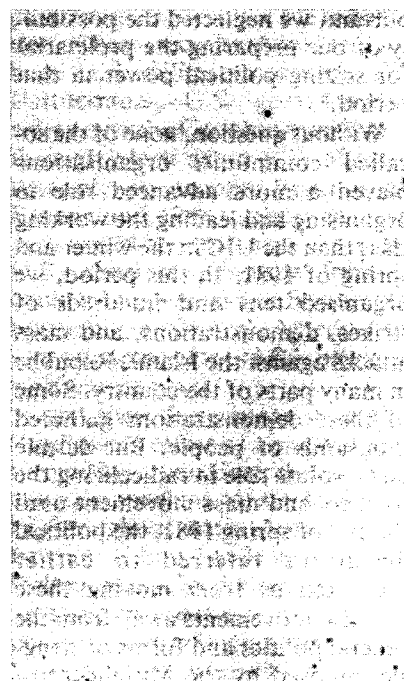
Another important factor that fueled the crisis in our ranks was that we didn't play a *qualitatively* important role during the revolution of 1979. Most of the other forces related to the communist movement didn't see the revolution coming and could not play a qualitatively important role in it (of course this was not the *only* or even *basic* reason why they didn't). This failure should have awakened them to do some serious self-criticism and to give a second thought to their line and outlook. But in our case the question was posed in a sharper way:

We foresaw the coming of the revolution. In this sense we were the most advanced of the communist forces, in fact of the whole revolutionary movement. But despite this, we were unable to play a qualitative role in the revolution. This was a heavy blow to our spirits and strengthened agnosticism among our ranks in relation to our past positions. In going back to sort out our past positions and deeds, we were unable, due to an internal ideological crisis, to find out what were the roots of these deviations. In this case the summation of the first council of the UIC not only was unconvincing but also added to the confusion. So all positions, views and practices of the past, both correct and incorrect, were called into question, if not officially, then unofficially. Finally, the third important factor contributing to our deviations in the period after February 1979 was the old persistent deviation of the international communist movement (in right and "left" forms) in relation to the attitude towards governments of vacillating classes. This deviation, especially its rightist form, which followed the prevalent view of the

majority of representatives of the 7th Congress of the Comintern, tended to make the strategic tasks of the international working class subordinate to defending the government of the vacillating classes against imperialism and reaction in order to "preserve" their progressive nature. In the past, aspects of this deviation were expressed in our attitude towards such governments as those of Algeria, Libya and Egypt. Now the direct effect of this line was in relation to our "own" government of vacillating classes—that is, if we could consider Khomeini as a representative of "vacillating forces".

As we have said, our ideological disorientation and our centrist inclinations paved the way for nationalist and bourgeois democratic tendencies. An important result arising from this deviation was the tendency to make an absolute of our perspective of the democratic phase of the revolution, which led to overemphasising the role and potential of non-proletarian class forces, and which tended to make this democratic phase of the revolution a stage in itself. The consequence of this mechanical and absolutist demarcation of the democratic and socialist revolution led to reducing the role and qualitative place of the working class in the democratic phase of revolution.

These deviations led to having illusions about the potential role of the non-proletarian classes and to reducing the role of the working class in the revolution and thus that of communist consciousness too. This last deviation paved the way to political economism or tailing behind the spontaneous political movement of the masses and, since every mass spontaneous movement is necessarily under non-proletarian political leadership, it meant tailing non-proletarian classes and strata. In brief, all the above-mentioned ideological deviations in our policies and political line were the breeding ground for economist and bourgeois democratic tendencies in our ranks. A more general practical result of this was losing our strategic perspective and tailing behind the spontaneous events. Even more im-



Ghollam Abbas Derakhshan (Morad) —was a member of the standing committee of the Central Committee and the Military High Command of Sarbedaran. He was captured during the Amol Uprising and executed two days later to silence his indomitable and exemplary defence of revolutionary Marxism, defying all torture.

portant, we neglected the possibility of our preparing the proletariat for seizing political power in that period.⁸

Without question, none of the so-called communist organisations played a more advanced role in organising and leading the working class than the UIC in the winter and spring of 1981. In this period, we organised tens and hundreds of strikes, demonstrations, and mass attacks against the Islamic Republic in many parts of the country. Some of these demonstrations gathered thousands of people. But despite our resolute role in radicalizing the workers and mass movement until the end of spring 1981, the political deviations referred to earlier prevented us from moving these political movements away from the general politics and forms of struggle imposed by the Mojahedeen--Liberal leadership.

Historical Tardiness

In late June, *Haghighat* advised the workers and revolutionary youth to form groups of 20-30 people in factories and communities, as organisations necessary to lead the final uprising. Also, before this directive, the organisation was given directives to intensify its agitational activity in factories and communities, strive to lead and organise strikes and demonstrations, guide and radicalise spontaneous demonstrations and strikes more systematically and elevate them to forms of mass organs in accordance with the necessities of heightening the class struggle. In fact, this advice signaled a repudiation of the economist line and began a new revolutionary initiative in independent communist organising (both in political and organisational dimensions) in the movements and protests of the masses. One result of these revolutionary initiatives, for example, was the turning of a mass demonstration in the Fallah district of Tehran into an attack on and seizing of arms of some Pasdaran military forces of the regime and the local committee headquarters. During this period, however, examples such as this were the exception, because every rapid transformation in political and organisational

policies *always* brings with it a *relative* degree of organisational anarchy, which naturally leads to *relative* inabilities in the overall implementation of the policies in the transitional period. Shortening the transitional period and reducing the relative inability to implement political and organisational line depends, more than anything, on the degree of political unity and subjective readiness of the leaders and masses of the organisation in the face of the new situation, and so depends too on the accumulated experience of the organisation in carrying out various tasks and different forms of struggle. At that time, and facing new policies, our cadres couldn't readily implement the line; and what was causing this relative inability this time, rather than being a deviation, was the fact that our organisation was not mentally prepared beforehand—we had not clearly enough seen the political developments and especially our own role and responsibilities. Moreover, our organisation—for various reasons including (but not only) our past deviations⁹—hadn't been able to accumulate enough experience regarding different forms of struggle and of mass mobilisation. Secondly, past deviations—the beginning of economist and revisionist tendencies—were revealing their effect on different sections of the leadership and the ranks of our organisation.

These deviations had become a strong trend and put obstacles in the path of overcoming our lagging behind the tasks at hand. The rapid twists and turns and the qualitative intensification of the class struggle especially in June and July of 1981 pushed many leaders of so-called communist organisations and a minority of our organisation to revisionism and defeatism. In that tense period of crisis, two leaps occurred in our organisation. A majority of the leadership and rank and file members of our organisation began to rupture with past deviations and took a stride forward. At the same time a minority of our leadership and rank and file members systematised past deviations and shortcomings, resulting in bourgeois economism and revisionism similar to that of Peykar's leadership. Naturally these developments had a serious effect on our ability to implement our policies.

Finally, the other important problem contributing to our inability to implement the new directives was the simple fact that these directives were late. The coup was in progress and took a leap with the repression of the June 20th demonstration and the beginning of the executions....

With this, different *tactical* requirements were hoisted on the shoulders of our organisation. Therefore the old directives should have been put aside and new ones developed, which finally did happen. (We will speak further about these tactical requirements.) The point is that the new directives should have been implemented in the winter of 1981. In fact, those directives were a very important aspect of preparation for seizing political power in that period.

...contributing to our deviations in the period after February 1979 was the old persistent deviation of the international communist movement (in right and "left" forms) in relation to the attitude towards governments of vacillating classes.

Now it is necessary to examine what preparatory work should have been done in that period.

Accumulating Forces for Decisive Battles

The key link in grasping the tasks of preparation for seizing political power lay in accelerating developments while awaiting the right time to (both partly or finally) advance. What should be accelerated and how, what organisational forms of struggle are necessary, and when is the proper opportunity to advance and how to advance? All these are

decided by having a correct knowledge of the development of the class struggle at each period and, in the final analysis, correct ideological and political line is decisive.

Knowledge of the different spheres of class and social struggle and active involvement in the more principal ones enhances the party's experiences and develops its capabilities in guiding different struggles. The party must also politically educate the masses in general and the advanced in particular, identifying the advanced in different spheres of combat and striving to recruit, educate, elevate and organise them into the party or the proper organisations under the leadership of the party. Finally all the different struggles in society must be joined into a single process and their level raised under the leadership of the party. In that way the party accumulates the necessary forces for the decisive battles to seize political power. These are among the principal duties of communists.¹⁰

Contrary to the imaginings of petit-bourgeois and bourgeois organisations pretending to be communist, preparation does not just mean doing slow political (as in pedagogical work among the masses) organisational or technical work. Further it is not just "internal" preparation of existing organisational forces either. Also "acceleration" does not mean the combat of a number of vanguards separated from the masses, whether in the form of terror or more centralised armed activities (in or outside the cities). The first is a gradualist and economist (also pedagogical) understanding of preparation which can take a more complicated form of armed economism, while the second one has a foco-ist, Castro-ite understanding of the role of communists in accelerating the course of development of class struggle. In different periods, preparatory work could also include gradual organisational and even cultural and educational activities. But preparation is neither confined to nor in most situations primarily means this kind of gradualist approach, especially in

countries dominated by imperialism, among them Iran, where armed struggle and revolutionary war is an important component of and sometimes the primary part of preparation for seizing nation-wide political power.

The necessary preparatory work in the whole period of February 1979 to 1981 should have been done in the above mentioned form. Kurdistan and the on-going revolutionary war there also must be seen in this way. This does not mean that if the possibility of revolutionary war or even liberation developed in some other areas in the period of 1979-81, we should have ignored it. The meaning is that if there is some possibility somewhere else it is wrong to let it go and throw away this opportunity—it is also wrong if you don't advance militarily in Kurdistan and develop strength in the base areas. In other words, the period of preparation does not mean a period of "not advancing." The point is that overall from February 1979 to winter of 1981, conditions for seizing nation-wide political power were non-existent, and therefore our central task in that period was to make the kind of advances as mentioned above, but during the winter of 1981, the conditions for a final advance and an offensive were ripe. This means that the preparatory work which was necessary up until the development of the class struggle in the winter of 1981 had to make the required leap.

The Leap in the Developing Course of Events; A Leap in Preparatory Work

The conjuncture and the acceleration of struggle in different levels and aspects and the prospects for seizing political power continuously push forward the new vanguard. Further, great battles demand a vanguard and bring it forward too. And with the leap in conditions to a revolutionary situation, the course of events would extraordinarily accelerate.

All these factors required a leap in preparatory work. In light of what has been said, this leap does not just mean the acceleration of current organisational work, but a leap to qualitatively higher work,

qualitatively elevating all military, political and organisational forms and levels. This is the only way to respond to the immediate needs of guiding and organising the masses' struggle and to overcome the tailing of the mass movement (naturally if we're not the leadership, others are!) and limping behind it and losing the capability of effecting the course of revolution.

But it should not be concluded from what has been said that our preparatory work is divided into different phases, as if we prepare for a conjuncture in one phase and only during that conjuncture prepare for the final battle. Rather, preparatory work for seizing power is a single process which passes through different phases which are correlative and interdependent. During the winter of 1980-81, the leap in preparatory work meant (this could also apply to any other area on the same level politically as Kurdistan) accelerating the process of the establishment of people's government, the forming of a people's army and moving to a general strategic military offensive. (Given the general military weakness of the Islamic Republic in that period, not only was this possible, but from the perspective of advancing the revolution, it was necessary.) Therefore, on the one hand an armed movement in one area dealing blows to the regime's bases would increasingly weaken it and, on the other hand, by advancing and strengthening its positions, it would strengthen the camp of revolution overall (as well as adding to the power and capability of the revolution in the areas).¹¹

In the areas where people's war was being prepared but had not reached the military phase this should have been started as soon as possible. While organising strikes and demonstrations and trying to elevate the political level of the movement in the cities, our principal policy should have been to subjectively prepare the vast masses of workers and toilers for insurrection. In its organisational dimension this meant organising the vanguard of workers and various districts into special units of insurrection and beginning an armed offensive against the committees and military

centres, and disarming the armed forces of the regime—such could have been the main method of preparation for insurrection in the cities.

The overall offensive required the completion of five tasks. First, the advanced would be trained in the military sphere. They would develop their ability to engage in warfare. Second, this would enable us to recruit more rapidly (other advanced forces would be more readily recognised and the possibility of recruiting and organising them would have been met). Third, the masses' aspirations would be recognised more precisely, and this would enable us to formulate more definite political plans and tactics. Fourth, these offensives would in-

economism and tailism of the spontaneous mass movement as well as adventurism. Further, this would help to consistently grasp the subjective conditions of the advanced, the working class movement and the mass movement in general, and to conclusively and correctly grasp the potential and the capacity of the revolution in choosing tactics and avoiding "left" and right subjectivism.¹²

However, this does not mean that having done all this we would have seized power then. But at least we would have pushed ahead and deepened the class struggle and revolution to the maximum of our ability. Thus the soil would be ploughed and the ground would be more fertile for future battles in a

happened. Our plan was to start the uprising in a section of Tehran by relying on the military force of our organisation to seize a district, immediately arm the advanced and revolutionary masses, develop branches of revolution in other areas, direct the masses to take over the principal centres of power and reaction in Tehran, overthrow the Islamic Republic and establish a revolutionary provisional government. For this reason, we chose the Fallah section of Tehran, positioned our military force and made the necessary technical and political requirements. Considering there might be obstacles in implementing the plan in Tehran, we chose the city of Amol as an alternative for starting the uprising. Proper directions were given the Amol organisation. As the preparation period was prolonged, conditions in Tehran became unsuitable to begin the uprising, and, especially given the quantity of our forces, it became impossible there. In Amol too a broad offensive by the military and



Heroic fighters of Sarbedaran in the jungles of northern Iran.

fluence a larger number of the masses and prepare them for insurrection. Fifth, through these activities, the pulse of the mass movement would be taken, meaning that, in analysing the mood of the masses (and the shift of broader masses towards such offensives), we would be able to gauge the proper time for insurrection. By accelerating our activities, we would be able to ascertain the mood of the masses more precisely. With political agitation from "within," we would be able to elevate the level of mass struggle to military offensives "out" of the spontaneous movement. We would avoid

way that had not happened before.

Lessons of Amol Uprising

In the preceding sections we have explained the dynamics of preparation and some of the causes of our unpreparedness for the past conjuncture. As regards the political and practical duties of the proletariat, we entered into battle unprepared. It is essential to draw lessons from these experiences for the future of the Iranian communist movement. Why? Because it is possible that our communists could be confronted with similar conditions.

First, let's briefly explain what

During these historic battles, these conjunctures, the proletariat learns a hundred times more about the science of revolution than it can learn during normal times.

security forces of the regime was unleashed, severely limiting our abilities. Therefore, the surrounding jungles of Amol were chosen for concentrating our forces and preparing for moving our forces to the city to start the uprising.

On November 2nd, 1981 Sarbedaran made their first move towards the city of Amol. Our aim was to take over the citadels of power from the regime. Due to a premature confrontation with the enemy midway, we decided not to proceed to the city that day—however, the part of the plan for blocking the Haraz highway and agitating among the people was suc-

cessfully executed. This received wide approval throughout the country. Four days later, the Pasdaran and the army undertook a broad offensive in the jungle against the forces of Sarbedaran. They were totally defeated by Sarbedaran, forcing them to retreat, leaving many dead and large amounts of ammunition and arms. From this period until January 25, 1982, the forces of Sarbedaran engaged the enemy in many offensives and brought heavy blows to the forces of the regime around the city of Amol. On the historic night of January 25 our forces arrived in the city of Amol. The main battle began.

The masses of people eagerly welcomed the Sarbedaran forces. They barricaded the streets, gathered information about the location and position of enemy forces, identified enemy elements and turned them over to the revolutionary firing squads, and so forth. They provided everything within their reach; some took up arms and joined the on-going combat. The spirit of the masses was high despite being under attack by the regime for 8 months and without being organised for resistance. This showed that their great potential for overthrowing the regime had clearly been hitherto ignored by the Iranian communist movement. However, the revolution could not withstand confrontation with thousands of armed to the teeth mercenaries, mobilised by the Iranian bourgeois compradors against this uprising. The revolutionary masses under the leadership of a hundred Sarbedaran communists gave what was left of their abilities. They fought, but with an ability whose limits were already determined. The masses and Sarbedaran fought side-by-side, street to street, house to house, barricade to barricade, they fell, rose up and retreated. Our communist movement experienced another defeat. This time with heads held high, they entered battle with their lives, a battle and a defeat which provides the victories of tomorrow.

Under what circumstances, with what aims and perspectives was our plan put forward? Revolutionary transformation like any other

phenomena does not develop in the same old form or in a straight line. The dynamics of 1980-1981 raised the masses to revolutionary positions that took a different form from that of 1979. As a result, new forms of struggle were required. Before the June 12th coup of Khomeini, liberal politics dominated the protests of the masses against the government. Many had illusions about Khomeini and his role in the contest between revolution and counter-revolution. But with his assumption to power and his call for an all-around attack on the revolution and the masses of people, Khomeini killed these illusions of the masses. Even so, many blows were received by the mass movements at the hands of the reaction. The mass movement was strongly influenced by the liberal bourgeoisie. There was the absence of a known and prepared proletarian pole which could rapidly show the correct policies and path.

All these things reduced the intensity of the spontaneous motion of the masses. In other words, the clearing away of the illusions of the masses about the Islamic Republic coincided with the sharpening of wide repression by the regime against the cause of the revolutionary masses and put the revolution in a defensive position. The regime was aware of the forms of mass struggle used against the Shah and was essentially able to disarm the masses. The masses were unclear as to what was the best method with which to fight, a confusion which would not go away by itself.

Further, barbaric repression and an offensive by the regime had limited the time for overcoming confusion and blocked the channels of spontaneous protests by the masses. (A factor which in 1979 was non-existent because the broad-scale mass offensive had pushed the regime to a position of strategic retreat.) In fact, after June 20th 1981, the Islamic Republic had a certain initiative, while the revolution had lost its initiative and the masses were in retreat in the face of the regime's repression. This was not due to "an ebb in the movement" or to their "ignorance" and "backwardness." The roots were in

the above-mentioned confusion. While the masses had come to grasp the necessity of overthrowing the regime, they also understood that new forms of struggle were required. The enemy was not the same as the one in the past. The battlefield has its own dynamism. The advanced masses with their class instinct had come to the conclusion that the task of overthrowing the regime was not possible by using the past forms of struggle and required new policies and new forms of struggle. Arms were at the hub of it.

Liberalism had revealed its impotence to the masses. Mojahedeen, with their dispersed and merely annoying activity, showed their alienation from the situation, their alienation from pushing forward the revolution and organising the advanced masses with the aim of immediate overthrow of the regime. In fact their role was to turn the masses into simple spectators.

The communists, in this critical moment, were looked to by the masses. In response to the existing political conditions, it was incumbent upon communists to have a plan which, for a period after June 20th, could not be anything but armed uprising against the bourgeois comprador Islamic Republic. The aim of this could only be the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and the establishment of the rule of the worker-peasant and other toiling masses under the leadership of the proletariat—a new democratic republic. In other words, armed uprising was the immediate duty of the proletariat and the goal of this uprising was the establishment of a democratic republic under the leadership of the proletariat. Our plan encompassed these conditions and goals.

What were the prospects of victory? The qualitative and quantitative limitations of the proletariat and its communist vanguard in that period were serious. Overall in society the material and ideological influence of petit bourgeois "Marxist" and non-Marxist forces was strong. The political, economic, social and military abilities of the Islamic Republic were formidable. Hence the possibility of seizing power was dim. Two other pro-

spects had a higher degree of possibility. First, as a result of the proletariat's offensive, the uprising would rapidly spread and result in a situation of relative anarchy or even the overthrow of the Islamic Republic regime and the installation of a non-proletarian government (intermediate class forces), which in this case would provide for a period of catching breath in the next round of battle. The other prospect was that our military offensive would destabilise the regime and prepare an opening for us and other progressive forces to catch our breath. This applies also for the Kurdish front. Battles in other areas, whether under our leadership or that of other class forces, could have been waged to prevent the regime from concentrating its forces in one area, thus the situation would become more favourable for us to consolidate the area under our influence and activity. This in turn would allow us to use our area of influence to advance and expand. But our ability to carry this out, to take advantage of these possibilities, was conditioned by our fighting for our own independent alternative and by deepening the struggle to the utmost and thus laying the basis for taking advantage of these other possibilities. This was our policy.

Was it correct to enter battle with a small force? Did we take on a task "greater than our ability"? Or, given the dynamics of the seizure of political power by the proletariat, would the proletariat be able to lead the revolution with its small force? How can the proletariat quantitatively and qualitatively accumulate and preserve its forces? It is clear that for the proletariat to win victory it must have a certain capacity, both quantitatively and qualitatively. But the proletariat cannot gain this experience through a "bit by bit" accumulation of the necessary strength to overthrow the bourgeois government and establish its own rule. By relying on the science of revolutionary communism and its latest achievements and through the twists and turns of the class struggle and the struggle to transform society, the proletariat learns the technique of making revolution, practices leadership and

with its leadership accumulates qualitative and quantitative strength and strives to enter the future class struggles in the most thoroughgoing way (the deepest possible way) and with the greatest achievements. In all of these great battles, whether in defeat or victory, the proletariat will enhance its knowledge of the battlefield, its enemies, its allies and the middle forces. It will be more conscious of how to make revolution and destroy the enemy. During these historic battles, these conjunctures, the proletariat learns a hundred times more about the science of revolution than it can learn during normal times. In these battles the proletariat examines its leaders, overcomes lagging behind, and makes great leaps forward, and it is in these opportunities that it can strive to make the greatest advances possible toward actually seizing political power. This must be the attitude of the proletariat and its communist vanguard toward seizing political power, regardless of their numbers. This is not a subjective view. It has its roots in the mechanism of revolution and the nature of the development of every phenomena which does not move forward in a straight line but rather develops in a spiral with in-

Failure to act on the practical and political duties at such historical moments...can only turn a force, however great, into a backward one.

numerable great and small leaps.

Let's analyse the question of small forces more carefully. First, we were not a small force. Our war policy had a vast base in society. In fact, in normal times or times of ebb in the people's movement a communist line does not have broad support among the masses. Only during periods of revolutionary upsurge are the material conditions present for communists to become an alternative to seize power. Our

weakness lay in our ability to mobilise our base in society around our communist line. Objective conditions were greatly in our favour. One day in this period of turmoil concentrated for the proletariat what would otherwise take several "normal" years to learn. The international situation was in our favour. The internal situation was explosive. The 1979 revolution was a tremendous experience for the masses of people. It had developed a generation of the best communists and conscious workers. Contrary to the prevalent mechanical views of many in our movement, a small determined force with a correct political and tactical line could ring the bell of an uprising, or as Comrade Mao put it, "A single spark can start a prairie fire." The history of class struggle in Iran has shining examples of this kind. For example the armed uprising of Satar Khan in the constitutional revolution proved that under favourable conditions sparks by a small but determined and capable force in one section of the country later developed into a great fire. There is also, however, another example: the Tudeh Party, which was a large force (this refers to the Tudeh Party before the 1953 CIA coup—*AWTW*), was turned to dust with one blow because of its opportunist and capitulationist line.

Second, the policy of communists is not decided by their size. When history presents the necessary objective and subjective conditions for uprising, it does not wait for communists to "accumulate" the necessary forces. It is their duty to seize the situation. Whether the forces are large or small should only effect the tactics used by the communists in the course of implementing their line. In the course of developments, situations arise that compel communists to enter an important battle with whatever forces they have at hand—with or without previous preparation. Failing to seize the situation will result in politically being routed, while a *defeat in battle* provides the material for future victories. If we were lagging behind the developing situation (which resulted from our not preparing for seizing state power during the two and a half

years after the 1979 revolution), and if we were blind to the new dimensions, and if the result of these two shortcomings in fulfilling our responsibilities to lead the mass movement in that period rendered the prospect of immediate victory very distant, the solution in 1981 was not to ignore our responsibilities when they became clear. In fact the solution was to come to grips with the shortcomings and subjective limitations and to strive to make up for the lagging behind by responding to the urgent political and practical tasks of the day. First, without this dialectical method one cannot overcome lagging. Second, in responding to the tasks at hand, as one overcomes lagging behind, the ability to correctly perform the tasks necessary becomes enhanced. Third, especially during stormy social upheaval, although great dangers threaten a force which has qualitatively and quantitatively lagged behind, unprecedented opportunities are created for the revolutionaries. These opportunities can be used for rapidly making leaps and overcoming previous lagging. And as Lenin says, a year of transformations in such conditions will surpass that of many "normal" years. By the same token, shunning revolutionary tasks during times of upsurge has a deadening political effect on a revolutionary organisation, regardless of size or military ability.

Fourth, while at the peak of a decisive battle the quantitative aspect might be the cutting edge between defeat and victory, communists do not enter battle assured of victory. In this respect, an important historical lesson in the bloody struggle of the proletariat exists in the example of Marx and Engels. Despite the prospect of defeat, they actively participated in the Paris Commune.

Is it correct to pit most of one's forces in decisive battles? To answer this, an understanding of the dialectics of "self-preservation" is necessary. For communists *preservation of forces* mainly has a qualitative meaning, not a "physical" one. In other words, what is being preserved must have an accumulated experience and a

certain quality which can only be attained in the process of effecting the course of class struggle and *not in any other way*. This returns again to the question of how to gain the required qualitative and quantitative ability for the proletariat to seize political power. If a force is unable to qualitatively elevate and accumulate lessons in each battle, especially important ones, it will be a fragile force in future battles (if it has not already been destroyed or degenerated from within), regardless of its quantitative size, unless it is conscious of its lagging behind and correctly strives to overcome it. Only by relying on this dialectical understanding can one grasp the relationship between the "preservation of forces" and the placing of principal forces in the forefront of decisive battles and understand how this method makes possible real preservation and advance. Relying on this principle, one can in the course of meeting the immediate practical and political duties and historical challenges overcome lagging, sort out the real political deviations and prepare for more decisive future battles. Historic moments command communists to take the offensive—this is commanded by history, not by the will of the leaders of an organisation.¹³ Failure to act on the practical and political duties at such historical moments, failure to take up certain forms of struggle under various pretexts such as not having any prospect of victory, unfavourable balance of forces, or preservation of forces for the next period and instead retreating in a time when one must take the offensive can only turn a force, however great, into a backward one, incapable of responding to the necessities of the movement and consequently rife with pessimism, confusion, liquidationism, opportunism and revisionism.

Was our plan adventurist?

If we look at our plan as a phenomenon "in itself," isolated from the historical conditions in which it was proposed, then it was an adventurist plan. But if we look at it in the framework of the historical conditions and with a cor-

Each lesson learned has always passed through a hard battle between the proletariat and its different enemies.

rect understanding of the role of the conscious element and its historical limitations, this plan and program was not adventurist. If we look at the role and place of the conscious element from an economist point of view, as if the masses by themselves would take up arms and then call on the communists to lead them, then this concrete, organisational plan for initiating the armed struggle is adventurist.

What is the role of communists? What is all the screaming and shouting about the leadership of the masses by those who pretend to be communists and Marxists? If we look at the dynamic development of a revolutionary situation (and the arriving of a proper time) from a mechanical and gradualist point of view, as though there must first be waves of general strikes and demonstrations throughout the country with the majority of people in spontaneous motion (or that the spontaneous motion of masses is "foreseeable" for uprising) then yes, our proposal for seizing political power was adventurist!

The reality is that our initial proposal for armed uprising not only was *not* adventurist but also was based precisely on the correct grasp of the conditions and duties of a vanguard accepting its responsibility to lead the movement. But as we said before, due to our lack of preparation, limitations and lagging behind the situation, the proper time was missed. Conditions for waging armed struggle were still favourable but new tactics with regard to the changed conditions were necessary. Just as tactical considerations changed before and after the coup, tactical changes within months after the coup (as opposed to immediately after the coup) were necessary due to the strengthening of the regime's forces and its increasing repression of the

people. The mood of the masses was in ebb. With the possibility of uprising in the cities growing dim, we had to change our fighting tactics.

The decision could still be waging the armed struggle from the northern jungles, not from the point of view of preserving ourselves or using the jungle as safe houses or dispersing our actions, but to prevent the enemy from securing the area, to deliver some heavy blows to the enemy, such as freeing prisoners, to attack the city and immediately retreat, taking over the surrounding villages and then falling back, keeping the spirit of the masses high, providing the possibilities for the advanced to join our ranks in the jungles and increase quantitatively. In this way we could put the enemy on the defensive, at least on this local level, and reduce the speed of its re-establishment. This by itself would have let us make our scene of action more definite and clarify the relationship between this struggle and the overall struggle. Then with more accurate planning, we would have gathered the necessary social forces for resolving the contradictions facing us and enhanced our qualitative and quantitative capabilities. We would have had more ability to clarify the prospect of advancing armed struggle and deal with the problems in carrying it forward. But in that time period, our subjective limitations did not allow us to change our tactics on the basis of transforming the situation. Therefore the January 25th 1982 insurrection in Amol, implemented according to our original plans, took place in a changed situation (a basically different situation and too late for what we had planned).

Causes of Our Defeat

Our lack of initial preparation and of the required quality to face the new conditions and immediate duties, the lateness of our action, inability to rally our social base and transform this base to active participation, inability to rally other possible forces, inability to prevail over the day to day changes in the revolution and the counter-revolution, our isolation from these

changes and loss of ability to choose timely and correct tactics and maintain flexibility in our initial plan—all this led to our tactical and military defeat in the city of Amol. Despite the avoidability of some of these mistakes and weaknesses in that period, our defeat in Amol did not mean the defeat of our line in the period from June 1981 to February 1982.

Rather, it had roots in our past deviations, which had given rise to our lack of preparation and thus our failure to acquire the necessary quality and quantity of forces. Even though in the period of June 1981 we were beginning to rupture with these deviations, they severely limited our ability. Our limitations and weaknesses in the above-mentioned period also were due to our inexperience and lack of clarity concerning the general process of advancing revolution, including its military theory. This itself was a sign that knowledge of principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was not enough in dealing with new transformations in the world generally and with the process of advancing revolution in countries like Iran in particular. Summing up the proletariat's defeat in China as well as Iran's revolution and the two and a half years of tense class confrontation following it could have provided great lessons in many spheres, including the military. But grasping this was contingent on our relying on the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and its application to our fundamental communist tasks. And our centrist tendencies and eclecticism on Mao Tsetung Thought and its principles deprived us of this opportunity (not to mention others). Given the overall conditions, what we had done was more or less the maximum our objective and subjective capabilities (limited as they were by past deviations) would allow at that period. We did what we could and had to do, and despite defeat, this is a strong point of ours. We gained experiences (and materials) which could only be acquired in response to the most important political and practical tasks of the conscious proletariat in such stormy periods.

What transformations occurred in our organisation? The surfacing of a revolutionary situation in the period of June 20th, 1981 and the dynamism of responding to the immediate political tasks of the proletariat intensified internal struggle in our organisation. A majority of our organisation started to break away from the past deviations and made a leap forward, stepping onto the road towards a more decisive rupture with these past deviations and towards grasping more firmly Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and its development. The leadership of the minority made a leap backward and chose the path of liquidationism and revisionism. Being confronted with a revolutionary situation and the dynamics involved in responding to our communist tasks led to a (dialectical) division in our organisation, a transformation which did not occur in other organisations which called themselves part of the Iranian communist movement.

Despite its communist leap forward, the majority of our organisation did not gain the historical opportunity to carry to the end the rupture with the past deviations and to resolutely carry through the two line struggle in every dimension, including organisationally. The implementation of the Sarbedaran plan, its military and tactical defeat, and confrontation with the new conditions opened a new dimension of duties (and difficulties) for the communist movement and the necessity to respond to them. This resulted in the surfacing of new weaknesses (and limitations) which had an effect on the ranks of the majority of the organisation. Some of the leadership and members of the majority line could not grasp the roots of the Amol defeat, especially the roots of the political and ideological crisis of the communist movement in general. Many fell into confusion and demoralisation. In fact the process of breaking with past deviations which had begun turned, in their case, into its opposite. With the government attacks in the summer of 1982, this trend developed to a level of liquidationism and revisionism. Although the process was different, their line

politically united with that of the minority of the organisation.

The political and ideological degeneration of the leaders of the minority and of those leaders and cadres of the majority who had fallen into demoralisation and confusion was concretely revealed at the so-called trial of some leaders and members of the UIC in the winter of 1982-83. After our military defeat in the winter of 1981 and the attack of the summer of 1982, the bourgeois comprador regime of Khomeini showcased the so-called trial of some leaders and

UIC. What many people, including many advanced know little of, and all the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois forces have kept quiet about, is the vital force of the UIC who continue on the path to communism. Part of this vital force includes a great number of our comrades, from leadership to members and sympathisers, who remained steadfast to their class stand and gave their lives in defense of communism in the dungeons of the Islamic regime. This shows that they were strongly adhering to the principle of rupturing with past deviations and

committee of leadership, carried to the end the process of rebuilding the organisation after the police attacks (reorganisation had begun in the summer of 1982) and provided the vital basis for advance in the political, ideological, organisational and military spheres.

Conclusion

It has been more than a century that the world proletariat in its battles against the bourgeoisie for communism has accumulated rich and bloody experiences—experiences which include victories and defeats, revolutionary advances and retreats of the proletarian batallions in different countries of the world, experiences which have been paid for in blood, experiences in which the proletariat in advancing its aims has learned lessons from and has enhanced its knowledge of making revolution and building socialism. Each lesson learned has always passed through a hard battle bet-



March 8th demonstration in Teheran in 1979.

members of the UIC which was basically a concentrated attack on us. The idea was to break us ideologically and politically. But this special attack of the Islamic Republic and its howling propaganda was unleashed to wipe away from the minds of the people the effects of January 25, 1982 uprising and the influence of its vanguard, the UIC, over the masses. It was a sign of the Islamic Republic's deep fear of an independent proletarian alternative in society and a response to the blows it had received from this pole. This was something that especially the vanguard and generally the masses understood. But the trial represented only one aspect of the dialectical development of the

upholding the achievements of 15 years of battle, with its peak, the Amol uprising. And outside the prisons the other part of this vital force took the responsibility to rebuild and to prepare for returning to an offensive position—politically, militarily and ideologically.

The highest crystallisation of this struggle for rebuilding occurred at a meeting of the 4th congress of the UIC in June 1983. Despite very difficult conditions, including heavy obstacles resulting from the loss of all organisational ties and that all the cadre are known by the regime, this congress ratified several resolutions (published under the title of Resolutions of the 4th Congress of UIC), elected the organisation's

between the proletariat and its different enemies. "In the course of the different twists and turns of the movement the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought has taken shape and developed through a constant struggle against those who cut out its revolutionary heart and/or render it a stale and lifeless dogma." (*Declaration of the RIM*) "In fact, history has shown that real creative developments of Marxism (and not phoney revisionist distortions) have always been inseparably linked with a fierce struggle to defend and uphold the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin's two-fold struggle against the open revisionists and against those, like Kautsky, who op-

Only communist leadership can unleash the radicalism and decisiveness of the movement of the oppressed to its fullest.

posed revolution under the guise of 'Marxist orthodoxy' and Mao Tsetung's great battle to oppose the modern revisionists and their negation of the experience of building socialism in the USSR under Lenin and Stalin while carrying out a thorough and scientific criticism of the roots of revisionism are evidence of this." (*Declaration of the RIM*)

With its defeat in this period of battle, the communist movement in Iran added to the bitter experiences of the international proletariat. But which victorious army is there which has not at one time been defeated? The proletariat does not mourn over defeats but rather draws lessons from them so as to act with more open eyes and return more powerfully to the offensive position, to turn defeat into its opposite. Yes, this is a reality! "Defeated armies learn well."

Today the international communist movement and the Iranian communist movement as a subordinate part of it are going through a difficult crisis, which is a reflection of the loss of the proletarian bastion in China and new transformation and intensification of all the contradictions in the world. Further, to the same extent that the revolution in Iran was a point of inspiration for the world proletarian movement, the defeat in 1982 of the proletariat of Iran (and its revolutionary efforts to win another advanced bastion for the international proletariat) resulted in the temporary defeat of this revolution and also did not help the international communist movement in overcoming its crisis, but instead furthered degeneration and confusion.

In a positive sense, the experience of Iran's revolution revealed the serious deviations and mistakes existing in the line of the international communist movement and the Iranian communist movement and provided rich material for their correct summation and for thus advancing the international communist movement and the development of Marxism. Without a doubt it can be claimed that a correct analysis based on the principles of the Marxist theory of knowledge of the experience of Iran's revolution and its communist movement will provide

rich revolutionary lessons for the international proletariat. Today great tasks rest on the shoulders of the world's communists and especially the Iranian communist movement. This summation is not for the distant future or only to be recorded as history, but is for immediate use in the critical situation which has engulfed not only our society but the whole world. Therefore, such a duty is immediate and on today's agenda.

Iran's revolution faced a temporary defeat in the situation of the imperialist system's plunging into one of the most intense and deepest economic and political crises in its history. The world is getting closer to the exploding point. Such a crisis will not allow the old system to stabilise itself in most of the world's regions, including Iran. Day by day all the big and small regimes defending the imperialist system are sucked into the depths of the whirlpool of the international capitalist crisis—a historic conjuncture on a world level. This conjuncture concentrates and condenses great revolutionary opportunities in it. This offers a great historical chance for Iran's revolution and the communists of Iran, who within a brief period after the defeat will once again face great revolutionary upheavals and even greater opportunities for achieving victory. Therefore we must prepare quickly. We must be conscious that the arrival of such opportunities also carries dangers, as through many twists and turns, pressures and difficulties, the proletariat confronts the bourgeoisie. What will protect the proletariat from these pressures and dangers is to never obliterate the line of demarcation between itself and its enemies and temporary allies. Therefore an important part of the immediate preparation of the proletariat is the sharpening of the line of demarcation between itself and all of its obvious and covert enemies and its temporary allies as well.

"Thus the Marxist-Leninist movement is confronted with the exceptionally serious responsibility to further unify and prepare its ranks for the tremendous challenges and momentous battles shaping up

ahead. The historic mission of the proletariat calls ever more urgently for an all-out preparation for sudden changes and leaps in developments, particularly at this current conjuncture where national developments are more profoundly affected by developments on a world scale, and where unprecedented prospects for revolution are in the making. We must sharpen our revolutionary vigilance and increase our political, ideological, organisational and military readiness in order to wield these opportunities in the best possible manner for the interests of our class and to conquer the most advanced positions possible for the world proletarian revolution." (*Declaration of the RIM*)

The revolution in Iran has faced defeat at a time when great prospects for victory exist. The international communist movement is coming out of its burdensome crisis, and along this path has won great qualitative victories. This offers another historical chance for our communist movement and for revolution. The meeting and the ratification of the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* by the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations is a qualitative achievement of the world proletariat and a great leap in the direction of the realisation of communist goals. The Iranian communists must grasp all of these issues and act upon their historical responsibility. "The revolutionary struggle of the masses of people in all countries is crying out for genuine revolutionary leadership. The genuine Marxist-Leninist forces, in individual countries and on a world scale, have the responsibility to provide such leadership even as they continue to struggle to solidify and raise the level of their unity. In this way the correct political and ideological line will bring forward new soldiers and will become an ever more powerful material force in the world. The words of the *Communist Manifesto* ring out all the more clearly today: 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.'" (*Declaration of the RIM*) □

Footnotes

1. There were organisations in the Iranian revolutionary movement that even in the winter of '78 thought the regime of the Shah was in a stable situation and far from being overthrown.
2. Here we don't mean that under any situation and with any organisational force, one must participate in every political struggle (including mass struggles). We are mainly dealing with what the orientation of communists should be and how they must view all of the struggles in society. In fact it is our political line and analysis of the current situation in society, our goal and the degree of importance of each struggle in this light, that determines our approach to these struggles (our expectations, allocation of forces, etc.) at any particular time.
3. One of the important factors in the temporary defeat of the mass movement in the face of the coup of 1981 was that the masses, revolutionaries and communists were not familiar with the forms of action of the Islamic Republic. Whereas the regime, because of its historical origins, was familiar with the forms of struggle which the masses and their vanguard had used in the revolution.
4. Later, however, the Union of Militant Communists became a little more creative and tried to make this picture more "precise" and more "proletarian." It was decided that some workers councils be formed that would not necessarily be revolutionary. These councils would unite the economic struggle on a national level, then, from below, dual-power would be formed (see for example, *Communist Worker*, No. 1, "Move Forward to the Formation of Real Workers Councils in Factories"). Perhaps the scenario would be the following: The working class would not seize power immediately. First the Iranian Keren-sky, whose rule would be that of Rahjavi, would form a government during the Iranian "May" to "October," and so forth!
5. Explanation of the roots of the above-mentioned deviation and the way they grew in the communist movement is out of the scope of this article. We only briefly want to point out that the spectre referred to as the "third line," which the majority of the genuine forces of the Iranian communist move-

ment mobilised under, consisted of organisations which had been affected by the crisis in the ranks of the international communist movement. They fell into eclectic, centrist and sometimes outright anti-Marxist positions, thus heightening the ideological crisis in these organisations. Under the weight of the crisis and the intensification of the class struggle, their eclectic and centrist positions broke these organisations, one after another, threw them out of the communist movement and transformed them into bourgeois and petit bourgeois organisations claiming to be communist. But this didn't "cure" the "crisis" for most of them. For example, some of the communist organisations like Mobarezin, Mobarezan, Peyvand, Mojahe-deen Khalgh and others had, for previously mentioned reasons, fallen into ideological crisis. The formation of "Revolutionary Unity" by them was the expression of their transformation from a communist into a petit bourgeois organisation. (Because of the particularities of development of the Iranian communist movement up until the defeat of 1981, a large part of the communists of Iran were organised in petit bourgeois organisations, such as Peykar, Razmadegan, Revolutionary Unity, Komelah and others.)

These organisations, unable to apply Marxism to the particularities of Iran, began to liquidate the ideological principles of Marxism, that is, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. They were not able to forge a Marxist line and left the ranks of the Iranian communist movement. Usually they began with the negation of Mao Tsetung Thought and inevitably negated Leninism (openly or not, mainly in the form of Trotskyism, semi-Trotskyism, modern revisionism, three worldism, social democracy, etc.). We'll write more on this in the future.

6. As said in the preface, our purpose here is not to present an all-sided summation of the past. Such a summation should be done in the context of an analysis of the development of the international communist movement and deal with all of our deviations *as well as* our positive and strong points (which form the dominant aspect of the motion) in our 15 years of existence. But considering the goal of this article, we decided not to discuss them here.
7. In the period of the first congress of the UIC, in studying our organisational practice from its formation to the winter of '78, our main deviation was assessed as subjectivism. In fact, worshipping spontaneity in the field of practical and organisational tasks was our main deviation. The way in which we developed our position against the Three

Worlds Theory and increasingly relied on the experience of the Comintern and the economist and gradualist viewpoint which dominated its 6th and 7th Congress had a direct ideological relationship to our upside down summation of past deviations in organisational practice.

8. In light of the above-mentioned which was a summation of our political deviations in the time period from February 1979 until the end of June 1981 in relation to the embassy takeover, to the Iran-Iraq war, to Kurdistan and the Kurdish people's movement, to our organisation's attitude towards the First International Conference of Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations, and to our views and practices on building a communist party—a detailed summation and drawing of lessons from these deviations is not possible in this article. Not because it is not important, just the opposite! It is too important to be dealt with briefly. We can only promise that as soon as possible, we'll organise these summations and present them to the movement.

9. We say this because even if in the past we did not have any deviations, still that would not mean that we had enough experience to lead a rapid and definitive battle. In fact, in the process of joining and striving for leadership of the great social battles, communists will gain and develop their capabilities in guiding and leading successful revolution. We will write more on this later.

10. Naturally, performing such duties demands the maximum unity and organisational flexibility including a clear perspective in relation to the different forms expressed by each aspect of the class struggle. For example, how to accelerate the struggle for the emancipation of women from the yoke of male dominance takes different forms than the acceleration of the struggle in Kurdistan.

11. By area we don't mean every area but those areas where material conditions exist for waging a people's war. We will write more on this in the future.

12. For example, many of our "leftists" foresaw the ability of the Islamic Republic to gather half a million people for the "72" burial (this refers to the 72 members of the IRP who were blown to pieces by revolutionary forces) but were unable to see the great potential of the actual though dispersed forces of the revolution. So it was not strange when they gave the order to retreat.

13. This point does not negate the preparation required for maintaining the continuity of leadership's work, an important factor which was ignored by us to a disastrous extent. □