

# **What the Formation of the Communist Party of Iran Depends Upon?**

## **(A General Outline)**

### **Comrades!**

The struggle for the practical formation of the Communist Party of Iran and the definition and adoption of those practical steps which must organise us in this Party in the near future, today necessitates the critique of two main deviationist outlooks in the definition of the communist party and hence the process of its formation; two outlooks with which we have been confronted in the past and will also be confronted in the future, in their different forms. These two outlooks are the Economist outlook and the voluntarist outlook. Despite differing in theoretical formulation and practical conclusions, both of these outlooks share a common basic principle and that is the non-dialectical, metaphysical and frozen methodology on which they rest in defining the communist party.

### **1- Economism and voluntarism in the attitude towards the communist party**

The Economist outlook, which is a more common deviation, defines and pictures the party in this way: "The communist party is an influential party inside the working class; it is the representative of the workers' movement and through the various organs in the factories, workers' localities and assemblies, is in close contact with the masses of workers. In short, the communist party is an influential and extensive workers' party." How can the communist party be built? The reply by this outlook, in its main outlines, is this: "linking with the working class" is the precondition for the formation of the party. And hence the practical process for the formation of the communist party is the extension of communist agitational, propaganda and organisational practice in the workers' movement, to a point where at the time of the constitution of the party it would be the representative of all, or a considerable section, of the workers and the workers' movement.

Already, in the form of the criticism of the Programme of the Communist Party by the People's Fedaiien (Minority) and also the implicit references and sarcasms by Masoud Rajavi in the pamphlet "The Summing-Up of A Year of Armed Resistance" we have been faced with this petty-bourgeois outlook. This is the essence of that position which the petty-bourgeois forces and parties, in particular that group of them which speaks in the name of communism, will in future put before us repeatedly.

The frozen and metaphysical point of departure and content of this outlook is that it considers the communist party not as a living, changing and developing phenomenon but as an immutable and invariant thing. It paints a picture of an ideal party in ideal circumstances and regards it as the universal and permanent definition of the communist party. A picture which is not at all universal and consistent, but is completely the product of definite specific and historical conditions; because it has been precisely deduced from the state of particular communist parties in specific historical conditions and particularly from the state of the Bolshevik Party in 1917. The petty-bourgeoisie holds up this picture and orders us that "you must either build such a party or whatever you build is not a communist party". In this outlook, the communist party is inevitably pictured as a broken and fragmented entity. A phenomenon which sometimes is a party and sometimes is not; since all the factors held by the Economists in the definition of the communist party (the influence and extensiveness of the party and its "link" with the masses) are themselves varying factors which change according to the political and social circumstances at every juncture, such as the existence or the non-existence or generally the degree of the growth of the open class struggle in society; and according to the relation of the class forces and the pressure of the organs of suppression and stupefaction of the bourgeoisie on the proletariat, etc. The dimensions, extension and the degree of influence of a communist party in times of mere secret activity, in conditions of the ebb in the class struggles and the indisputable domination of reaction, are quite different from the dimensions of the same party in conditions of revolutionary escalation, on the eve of the insurrection and after that, in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Economist outlook is based on a metaphysical understanding of the party; because by defining the party according to variables such as its quantity and outward dimensions, it denies the consistent essence and immanence of the communist party. By this outlook, the communist party lacks a consistent and material essence and foundation which allows it to assume different outward forms and dimensions under different conditions; to have a degree of influence, strength and extensiveness of activity which fluctuates in different periods, but still remain a communist party, with the same immutable identity.

The Economist outlook cannot for instance explain what is it that confers a single identity on the Bolshevik party, during 20 years of activity in various forms and in different periods; where as in 1908 it is a party in the opposition having little influence amongst the workers and essentially limited to secret work, but in February 1917 it is a party with extensive legal activity, linked to the soviets and with a determining influence amongst the workers, and after the October Revolution, it is a party in political power, which organises and leads thousands of political, economic and social institutions, and lays the foundations of socialism at the head of millions of workers. During this period, the degree of the mass influence and strength of the party and its active organs, changes extensively and repeatedly and the number of its members increases by ten or a hundred-fold; it comes out of the position of a small party of the opposition and becomes the leader and organiser of the attempts of the proletariat for the construction of socialism, but still remains the same Bolshevik Party as before. If we accept the Economist interpretation of the party, we must then believe that neither at the beginning of its formation, nor in 1908, nor in 1913, and nor even in 1915, has the Bolshevik party been a communist party! Since, in this outlook, party is not a living phenomenon whose outward dimensions constricts and expands in proportion to the conditions and the growth and development of the party, but it is a phenomenon which dies according to conditions and comes to life again! The Economist outlook views the

party in the course of time, as broken and discontinuous; since, as we said, it recognises it only under conditions which themselves are not permanent. A definite ideal situation which is itself a function of the escalation of the economic and political crises of the capitalist society and the growth of workers' movements and hence appears in particular junctures. Moreover, it can be said unreservedly that no communist party which has an extensive mass influence, can remain in opposition for a long period; since by definition a powerful and influential communist party, in the context of every economic and political crisis of the capitalist society, advances towards the final solution of the question of political power. Either the proletariat and its party seizes power or, as a result of the defeat of the revolution and the domination of counter-revolution, new conditions and relation of forces come to force between the main classes of society.

But the metaphysicism dominating the Economist outlook is not a question of theory, stemming from the "weak theoretical understanding" of the Economists and populists. This is the reflection of the position and logic of the petty-bourgeoisie which fears the independent proletarian organisation and tries to prevent the organisation of communists who according to their programme must build the communist party. The unity of positions of Mojahedin and Fedaiyen towards the Programme of the Communist Party and the question of the practical formation of the party has roots here. By turning the party into a mythical concept and leaving its formation to the existence of an idealized situation, Economism practically leaves the formation of the party to infinity, since the communist party itself is the most fundamental precondition for the extension of the influence of communism and the communists in working class masses and the exercise of communist leadership over the workers' movement.

The prescription of Economism for the way the communist party of Iran should be built is in fact a prescription for not building it. This shirking from building the communist party is at the same time, on the one hand, the expression of the sectarianism of the populists who cannot at any cost "part" with "their organisation" in favour of the single communist party, and on the other hand, is a manifestation of the lack of confidence, ideological wavering and petty-bourgeois superficiality intrinsic to populism.

The voluntarist outlook too is a metaphysical and deviationist outlook. In this outlook the party is in the final analysis reduced to the unity of the existing forces of the Programme of the Communist Party in their existing quality. What is lost sight of and ignored here is the fact that the communist party has a definite material essence and a particular quality which distinguishes it not only in outward dimensions but also in basis and foundation, from the existing organisations such as Komala and the UCM. The voluntarist outlook does not understand this distinction, lays no importance on it, does not consider the party as a new and different quality and regards the fusion and unity of the existing forces, at most on the basis of new documents and resolutions, sufficient for the formation of the party. This is a voluntarist method. The metaphysical character of this outlook lies in the fact that it understands the party in an empiricist fashion and reduces it to what already exists. If Economism gives a pre-existing and invariant picture of the outward characteristics of the party, voluntarism, by the uncritical acceptance of the present features of our movement and by concealing that distinct and new quality which we must create in our ranks for the formation of the party, in practice gives a static and frozen view of the party. Not to recognise the fundamental characteristics which form the distinguishing feature of the communist party from the existing circles and organisations, has no other meaning

in practice, than the defeated experience of the Unity Conference {1} at a different level, and hence shirking from the task of the formation of a communist party in the real sense of the word.

Voluntarism cannot answer this simple question that if we can call the unity of the forces of the Party Programme, with their existing quality, a party, why is it that we do not call any one of these organisations, on its own, in particular Komala which also has a very extensive practice, a communist party? What is the fundamental difference between a communist party and the present Komala and the present UCM and what new quality does the unity of the existing forces create, for instance in comparison with the present Komala, to permit such a naming? The voluntarist outlook has no principled answer to these questions. If economism postpones the formation of the party to an infinite future, the voluntarist outlook stands for the immediate formation of the party, but by shirking from the realization of definite material requisites for the formation of such a party, it practically reduces the formation of the party to the change of names of the existing organisations and hence builds a party lacking the characteristics of a communist party, with an unknown future and determining internal contradictions. A party which may bear the new name only for a short period.

The first step in the building of a real communist party is to have a correct definition and picture of the essential feature of the party. A definition which recognises the party on the basis of consistent and essential categories. A definition which has been based not on the conditions of today, not on utopian idealist conditions, but has as its basis the invariant and fundamental characteristics of the party.

Today, we must build a communist party. But we can neither postpone the formation of the party to an unknown tomorrow by waiting in vain for the arrival of the conditions desired by the Economists, nor can we, because of the urgency of the question and in submission to the conditions and limitations of today, ignore, in a voluntaristic manner, the "party" and the "communist" nature of the organisation which we must build. So, what must be done? The answer to this question necessitates at the first step the achievement of a principled and living understanding of the communist party.

## **2- What is the communist party?**

Before anything else, we must point out this obvious fact that the communist party is not a new thing. It is not a new invention, contrivance and discovery on our part. Communism is itself a specific and established tendency in the world working class movement - just like the other tendencies in this movement such as Trade Unionism, anarcho-syndicalism, reformism and so on. This point may not be to the liking of the Economists; but the same Economists are prepared, readily and without hurting their conscience, to speak of Trade Unionism, Syndicalism and even anarchism as currents existing in the workers' movement and even still call these tendencies "spontaneous" tendencies of the proletariat. No doubt, the Trade Unionist movement of the workers exhibits a spontaneous tendency of the workers for unity against the capitalists and employers, within the framework of the existing system. But today, in 1983, as a concrete movement, 'the Trade Unionist movement is a movement whose principles, fundamentals and statutes have been deeply theorized and drafted by the bourgeois reformism in Europe and the

labour aristocracy dependent on it; it has world congresses, conferences and organisations which are mainly the political products of the European bourgeois social-democratic parties. The Trade Unionist movement of today is not only not a spontaneous movement in the strict sense, but even in many cases, particularly in Europe and America, it is consciously propagandized and defended by the bourgeoisie as an alternative against the party organisation of the revolutionary proletariat. Despite this, the Economists do not hesitate in labelling it with the epithet of "the spontaneous movement of the workers". But the moment the name of communism is mentioned, this bourgeois idea that communism is a current separate from the working class which has yet to be "linked" to it is produced. Whereas, communism firstly, even at the level of its general ideas and tendencies, coincides with the old and profound desires of the toilers in the course of history for the necessity of the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the annihilation of class exploitation; secondly, and at the same time, as a real and political concrete movement, has itself many times directly organised workers in their millions, led many workers' revolutions and even for a time, and that not in a single country alone, has made these movements experience the political power. It is true that scientific socialism does not grow out of the spontaneous movement, but this does not at all mean that communism always and for ever, despite the historical link that it has many times achieved with the different sections of the world workers' movement, a current outside the class movement which must be continuously "linked" to it and linked anew in every country and every day. If at the beginning of the Twentieth century, Trade Unionism was still a mainly spontaneous, not yet theorized and still a largely crude, current, and communism and scientific socialism had just began to be introduced to the workers' movement proper, "from outside" this movement, today, nearly a century of the living class practice of the proletariat, has given new characteristics to these currents. The Trade Unionist movement has increasingly come out of a spontaneous state, and Communism has found a consistent and established influence in the depth of the workers' movement. Our Economists have fallen at least one century behind times. Communism is no longer a new and newly-emerged phenomenon for the class movement, but, has already become today an integral part of it and a practical tendency in its ranks. The Communist Manifesto, the First International, the October Revolution, the Third International and the innumerable communist revolutionaries, in the course of these decades, mobilized millions of workers under the banner of communism, and planted and reared amongst the workers, the idea of communism, the idea of the abolition of bourgeois private property, the idea of the organisation of the proletariat in an independent political party and the idea of the seizure of political power. Yes, communism has a history, and this history has repeatedly vindicated the existence of communism as a current belonging to the proletariat. Today, the slogan of "Equality, Fraternity, a Workers' Government" possesses as much a "spontaneous" character amongst the workers, as the slogan "Union is Our Strength". Belief in the communist movement, as a living current in the class movement of the proletariat is the first step in the living and principled definition of the communist party in the conditions of today.

But communism is distinct from the other existing currents in the working class movement, and is defined, and assumes an independent entity, precisely on the basis of this distinction. From the very outset, the Communist Manifesto has expressed the various aspects of this distinction. The theoretical distinction of communism and the communists from other currents needs no detailed statements, especially today that we have in hand the Programme of the Communist Party. Communists are that section of the proletariat which represents the interests of the proletariat

against the bourgeois private property, in general, and the entire capitalist system, in all its aspects. This is the axis of all communist views. But the distinction of the communists from other currents is not in their views and aims alone; communism is distinct from anarchism, syndicalism, Trade Unionism, populism, liberalism, reformism, parliamentarism, etc., also in practice. This practical distinction, i.e., the methods of communist struggle for reaching communist aims is itself a component in defining our independent identity and being. Communism is a tendency in the working class movement which is distinguished from other politico-class currents by its independent aims and methods.

Communist party is the party organisation of this specific and distinct current. Communism is a general and universal current, but the communist party is a specific phenomenon and category. Party is that political organisation which adopts and spreads communist aims and methods in a continual and consistent manner. Communist party is organised communism; and hence any organisation which firstly knows these aims and methods, considers them as its own, commits itself to them, organises and advances its struggle on their basis, and secondly, possesses adequate strength and the necessary practical firmness for continuity and consistency in this work, it is a communist party. Regardless of whether this party is small or large, weak or strong, whether is in the opposition or forms the state, this party will be a communist party, because it is the organised representative of communism as a distinct and specific current in the working class movement. This is that fundamental and consistent essence of every communist party which whenever is breached, no communist party will be in existence, and whenever it is created then the party has already been practically formed. Economism and voluntarism are both indifferent towards and overlook this essence and immanence of the party and hence cannot provide a picture of the real and basic requisites for the formation of the Communist Party of Iran. We must start from here and be precisely after the preparation of these requisites. The problem of the dimensions of the party will be determined by our struggle.

### **3- What the formation of the communist party of iran today depends upon?**

Can we now and immediately form the Communist Party of Iran? Not yet! Because our single organisation with our present qualities and characteristics cannot yet be the organised representative of communism in all its aspects, the representative of the socialist proletariat in all aspects of its struggle. During the last 4 years, in the context of a revolution whose every day has taught the working class and its vanguards as much as 20 years, our movement has been able to become the theoretical and programmatic representative of Iranian communism. The Programme of the Communist Party current today completely represents independent proletarian interests and aims, and has proven its consistency and firmness in this field. The Programme of the Communist Party is the product, and at the same time, the symbol of this consistency and commitment to the cause of communism. 4 years ago the situation was otherwise. Non-proletarian revolutionism in various forms was being propagandised in the name of Marxism and communism. Marxism is the all-sided, universal and absolute critique by the proletariat, of the entirety of the capitalist society, whereas 4 years ago the revolutionism of a large section of those who were calling themselves communist, did not go further than a limited and narrow-minded

critique of this or that effect or symptom of capitalism and imperialism. National-democratic questions constituted the point of departure and the thought framework of the greater part of the Iranian communists. "Anti-imperialism", and that in its restrictive petty-bourgeois interpretation, was the general framework of the revolutionism which was being expressed in the name of communism and socialism. But today the Programme of the Communist Party has brought back to our movement its communist comprehensiveness. The programme has declared that we object to capitalism from top to bottom, to all its anatomy and limbs, to all its economic, political and cultural aspects, and fight for the replacement of the whole of this system with socialism and this is our internationalist aim. The Programme of the Communist Party introduces us clearly as communist and not merely as consistent democrats. This all-sided criticism, and this programme for effecting an all-sided transformation in the social system, means that our movement already represents the aims and interests of the whole revolutionary proletariat of Iran. In its views and programme, our movement is now a really communist movement.

But this theoretical and programmatic distinction is not enough, because communism is not theories and programmes alone. The particular methods of struggle for this programme, too, are part of the definition of communists. We cannot reach proletarian aims by the methods of other classes. And this is our weak point today. Since, as organised individuals, we do not yet express the independence of communism in the practical methods of struggle, in the work organising and organisation; we are not yet the representative of this specific and distinct tendency in the working class movement and hence our organisation cannot yet ensure the continuity and steadfastness of struggle for the aims of the proletariat, in the independent manner of the proletariat. It cannot yet be a real communist party. The party that we would build today with our same existing quality would be a party with proletarian views and programme, but under the influence of petty-bourgeois methods and activities. For the formation of the party we must separate from the petty-bourgeoisie in this aspect too. We must convert our practical methods, into communist methods; only in this way will we be able to build a truly communist party. The communist critique of the petty-bourgeois style of work and the communist alternative in practical methods must become established in our movement. This is that final step which we have not yet completely taken.

The theoretical and practical independence of the communists is always the precondition of the formation of the communist party. Our particular situation has given to this question a historical importance. We are not in the same conditions as, for example when communist parties were formed in different countries with the declaration of the Third International, to break with deviations and "accept" ready-made and existing communist principles of a proletarian International. After a decades-long break in communist theory, programme and practice, after decades of domination of revisionism in theory and practice over our movement, we ourselves must once again and from anew provide this independence and even we ourselves become the active cell for such a proletarian International which would be the support of the formation of communist parties in other countries. So we must once again distinguish our rank from non-proletarian thoughts and parties, with the same force and firmness as Marx and Engels did for the first time, with the Communist Manifesto against non-proletarian socialism. But the acceptance and reiteration of the tenets of Marx, Engels and Lenin is not enough for us; since we are today confronted not only against capitalism but also against a revisionism which it, too, deceptively refers to Marx, Engels and Lenin. Our manifesto of class independence today must at the same

time be an anti-revisionist manifesto and this obliges us to an ever more explicit and an ever clearer separation of our ranks from deviationist views and methods which today have been introduced in the name of communist views and methods. If we set out to form the party merely on the basis of our programmatic distinction, but in practical methods still surrender to what is prevent, to that which belongs to other classes, then we have built a party which not only will not accomplish its historic task in the revival of Bolshevism, but in the not too distant future will be indistinguishable in its politico-organisational operation from the revisionist currents.

#### **4- What does the establishment of communist practical methods mean for us today?**

The party must be the organ of consistent and uninterrupted struggle in communist fashion and for communist aims. These methods must govern the party's activities. But how is this achieved? Must we wait until one by one of the organisations, groups and circles supporting the Programme of the Communist Party, firstly, accept the proletarian critique of populist methods and style of work, and secondly, each begins an extensive practice on the basis of new methods, and takes it to conclusion, so that then we resort to the formation of the party? Does the establishment of communist practical methods, mean its implementation and establishment in all organisations and groups and at all levels of practical work, and as long as this has not been achieved no party will be in existence? The answer is negative. Even for the establishment of proletarian methods in the movement, on an extensive scale, we need the existence of the Communist Party of Iran. The party itself is the prerequisite for the correction of our practice on a wide scale. So when we speak of the "establishment" of these independent methods, we have another point in mind.

As we said, what makes a party what it is, and keeps it as that is not the length and breadth of its organs, the degree of its influence, the number of its members, etc. The survival of the party is the reflection of the existence of consistent aims, programme, and practical traditions and methods in the party. So long as these aims and methods are alive and in flow, the party exists and whenever they are breached and destroyed, the party breaks up and disintegrates. But how are these aims and methods preserved? The official programmes and resolutions of communist organisations and parties are the consistent reflection of these aims and principles. Who ever joins the party, becomes a party element by understanding and accepting these resolutions, and builds a new cell in the service of the same aims and methods. In this way, the party ensures its continuation and growth. But if in theoretical and programmatic questions, adopted texts have a very important role in the firmness and consistency of the party, in the field of practical methods and established party principles, defined and established intra-party relations and the party's practice, which gave the character of established traditions to these principles and methods, have a determining role. With the same degree of importance is the existence of party cadres who are capable of communist style of work; cadres who are the living bearers and protectors of revolutionary traditions of communist work.

But we are embarking on the formation of the Communist Party of Iran at a time when a decades-long period separates us from the revolutionary traditions and heritage of practical work in communist fashion. We are the inheritors of revisionist methods, and not only have not been



naturally placed in the context of communist relations, not only do not learn these methods in party practice continuously, but must revive these relations and principles by the weapon of criticism of the existing relations and style of work. So, concerning the establishment and preservation of communist practical methods at the beginning of the formation of the Communist Party, our attention must necessarily be centred on the living factor, on communist cadres. We must get hold of this link, since the cadres will be our only real lever for the establishment and consolidation of communist methods in the Communist Party of Iran. At this juncture, the establishment of communist practical methods has no other meaning for us than their establishment amongst communist cadres who must today form the backbone of the party and be the guarantor of the continuity and firmness of the party in Bolshevik practical principles. The firmness of our party in communist views and methods can only be achieved today, in the first step, by assembling and organising those cadres who rely on these views and methods; cadres who have profoundly understood the importance of theoretical and practical separation and distinction from the petty-bourgeoisie, who have discarded narrow petty-bourgeois revolutionism and consider an all-sided struggle against capitalism and all its manifestations their permanent task; cadres who move from the standpoint of the interests and needs of the world movement of the proletariat and view all national-democratic aims from the angle of these independent class interests and aims; cadres who deduce their revolutionism not from democracy and the democratic movement, but from socialism and opposition to capitalism; cadres who understand the petty-bourgeois politico-class content of the populist style of work, who have been deeply convinced of the doomed defeat of these methods and style of work and hence under no circumstances will surrender and submit to this style of work ... Cadres who in this way are committed to building a communist party with a new quality and with a practice completely distinct from our movement's practice so far.

So, in our view, from the practical and executive aspect, for the formation of the communist party we must start from the question of cadres, and not from organisations, or texts and documents. The communist party is not the continuation and the numerical summation and, at most, the reformed collection of the existing organisations. The communist party is not a collection of new resolutions. Communist party is a qualitatively new party, and hence must be built, in the first place, by reliance on cadres who are determined to create this new quality not only in the party but also, from now, in the practice of their organisation. We can achieve, in a short period, those numbers of cadres who must form the backbone of the party and provide and ensure the continuity of a party organisation in the first stages of its formation and consolidation. In that case we shall be able to organise all the existing forces who support the Programme of the Communist Party in a strong party without these forces imposing on the party their past organisational defects, past practical and theoretical narrow-mindedness and past points of weaknesses.

## **5- What must the plan of action for the convening of the first congress be based upon?**

The pivotal thesis of our discussion was that the main obstacle in the way of the formation of the party today is the question of the establishment of practical principles of communist activity, and

this obstacle will be removed by committed cadres who have achieved independent communist aims and methods. This itself can be our point of departure in determining the practical process of convening the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party. These cadres must come together, and with respect to the unity which already exists in the Programme of the Communist Party, also achieve agreement in the comprehensive understanding and the profound critique of the populist style of work and the communist alternative in the various spheres of practical activity. The party must create its primary backbone and structure, by relying on these cadres, and then organise all the energy and strength of the organisations, circles and elements supporting the Programme of the Communist Party around this strong and firm structure. Only in this way will not the present peculiarities and limitations of the movement create an obstacle in the way of the formation of a real communist party.

There is no doubt that the drafting of a specific plan of action, with sufficient details, for the formation of the party is necessary. In this article we have sufficed to give a general presentation of the question, i.e., an emphasis on the place of the question of style of work and its close connection with the question of cadres, and leave the more detailed explanation of the different aspects of this discussion to other article.

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