

An interview with comrade F. Partow, member of the Editorial Board of Kargar-e-Komonist

The following is the first part of an interview carried out recently by the Bolshevik Message with comrade F. Partow, member of the Editorial Board of Kargar-e-Komonist (The organ of UCM). The second part of this interview will be published in the next issue of the paper.

Bolshevik Message: We can now say most definitely that Komala and Unity of Communist Militants are two well-known organisations in the world communist movement. Can you tell us a little about the way these organisations drew closer to each other?

Comrade Partow: Everything started from the Second Congress of Komala. Now, nearly two years after the Second Congress, we must say that this Congress was a turning point not only in the life of Komala but also in the life of the whole communist movement of Iran, for Komala itself is the most important organisation in the communist movement of Iran.

The Second Congress of Komala was held in a his-

torical situation. If the victory of a general anti-monarchist movement had given rise to the growth and blossom of populist views and organisations which rested on the non-class, popular, and petty-bourgeois critique of the capitalism of the epoch of imperialism in the dominated country, the continuation of the

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← class struggle between the working class and the whole bourgeoisie led to the disintegration and break-up of these views and organisations. Quite diverse currents, incongruous class interests and classes, along with their antagonistic socio-political tendencies, had merged together and combined in a general revolution and an anti-monarchist struggle. This could not but give rise, for however short a period, to the growth of those views which relied not on the exposure of the contradictory interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but on concealing them, not on the necessity of the all-sided independence of the working class, but on merging it with the people as a whole, and not on the communist party, but on Popular Fronts. But after the February Uprising the antagonistic class interests began to reveal themselves: on the one hand, the liberal-bourgeoisie and a large section of the petty-bourgeoisie began to wrest all the gains of the February Uprising and prepare the desirable conditions for confronting the economic crisis, establishing "order", and repairing and consolidating the organs of suppression of the bourgeoisie. And on the other hand, the workers and toilers who had laid hopes in achieving improvements in their economic and political life, as a consequence of the overthrow of the monarchy, resisted the offensive of the capitalists. As to why the resistance of the workers did not end in an all-round offensive against the bourgeoisie, in going beyond the gains of the February Uprising, and in another uprising, has been extensively analysed in the texts of our comrades and you have already translated these texts. My purpose in referring to the polarisations after the February Uprising is to show the objective bases of the disintegration of petty-bourgeois views and organisations. It was in the context of these objective conditions that the majority of the organisation of People's Fedaiie Guerrillas and the majority of Razmandegan, officially joined the bourgeoisie, and the attempts of the remnants of these organisations to revive the more or less militant, old line of their organisations, ended in defeat.

This reality had also reflected itself in Komala as a communist organisation with open populist tendencies and had created conflicting positions in relation to the most important questions facing the working class and the communist movement. But at the same time Komala was engaged in a national-democratic movement and was leading this movement to a certain extent. This national-democratic movement, as a part and continuation of the Iranian revolution, had itself become the subject of serious changes to the extent of open class polarisations. Two years after the new period of the national struggle in Kurdistan, the question confronting Komala was whether the workers and toilers which had an active presence in the revolutionary movement of Kurdistan should be seeking merely to create particular bureaucratic and diplomatic relations with the central government - as is stated in the programme of the Kurdistan Democratic Party as the representative of the Kurdish bourgeoisie - or whether, in the context of the struggle for autonomy, the Kurdish workers and toilers should fight for the negation of the domination of the central government, for the disbanding of the bureaucratic-military organs of suppression, for democracy, and for bringing about economic and social developments in their own interests. This question, although not in exactly the same terms as I put it, but as a general line, had given rise to intense discussions and conflicting stands.

Thus like all the populist organisations, Komala had been confronted with a historical choice: the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, communism or apostasy and opportunism? The Second Congress was not the initiator of these conflicts or their later exacerbation, but their terminator. It was before the Second Congress that two diverging viewpoints had taken form over the most important practical and theoretical

2 questions concerning Komala, i.e., propaganda and agitation, organisation, the aims and policies governing the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan, the organisation of mass sovereignty, and the question of unity and communist party. One of these viewpoints was the old view of Komala, i.e., the same viewpoint over which Komala had first taken form. The second was a Marxist view, having grown and developed in the critique of and in the struggle against the first view. It had evolved, found legitimacy, and matured, not only on account of the critique of the short-sightedness and impotence of the first view, but by virtue of its strength in putting forward practical alternatives against the first view, and in clearing the road in regard to the most important and urgent questions of the struggle. The documents of this intra-organisational struggle are now part of the treasures of revolutionary Marxism and I am sorry to see that, that part of the discussions which were published in Komala's organ - Pishro - under the title of "From the First Congress to the Second Congress" have not yet been translated into any European languages. It is true that we have now left behind two determining years and compared to that period we have made many theoretical advances, but these series of articles can help our comrades internationally to have a correct picture of the communist Komala.

The Second Congress of Komala was the official victory of the second view, of revolutionary Marxism, over populism. The Second Congress made a categorical critique of populism and stood for its rejection from the ranks of Komala. This Congress reaffirmed the urgent necessity of forming the communist party and the role of a communist programme in the way of the party unity of all communists, and stressed Komala's commitment towards this end. This Congress succeeded in assessing the true place of the revolutionary movement of Kurdistan from the standpoint of the interests of the proletariat. The Congress also put forward new tactical positions. I must stress that I do not mean that the resolutions of the Congress were correct in their entirety, but I have in mind the fundamentals and the essential orientation of these resolutions.

Perhaps this question will come up that why out of all these populist organisations, only Komala raised the banner of revolutionary Marxism, without vacillation and in a coherent manner? Apart from the theoretical and practical traditions of Komala, one must consider two important and interconnected factors. From its inception, Komala did not consider Russia as socialist and the Party in Russia as communist. Furthermore, Komala also had definite criticisms about Stalin. From the practical aspect, Komala had tried, in the early 70's up to the arrest of its leaders, to turn towards the working class and organise the workers. In 1978, when Komala regained its organisational coherence, it participated in the revolutionary movement of the Kurdish people without any vacillation, and became practically the revolutionary wing of this movement. This situation compelled Komala to seriously endeavour for clearing the way of this movement and for representing the interests of workers and toilers in this movement. And when, as a result of class polarisations in the revolutionary movement of Kurdistan, the openly populist theories revealed their sterility and restrictive character, the practical - and not verbal - revolutionism of Komala made it to advance and remove the old barriers and to turn to the only theory of the conditions of emancipation of the working class, i.e., revolutionary Marxism. The actual, and not verbal revolutionary character of Komala had given to it the attitude of not regarding its theoretical positions as a particular set of principles which would mark out its differences with the "rival" organisations, but of understanding them in their only Marxist meaning, i.e., as a guide to action. In such a process, Komala broke up the last bulwarks of populism and became the banner-bearer of revolutionary Marxism. This revolutionary character of Komala had made it not to be a sectarian organisation; not to regard the interests of its organisation as the →

← most supreme; and not to place the organisational interests higher than the revolutionary theory. So it was possible for Komala, that once it recognised the existence of communist views and positions outside its own organisation, to proclaim this loudly. This would not only not weaken it but would strengthen it. The whole course after the Second Congress demonstrates this truth. An organisation which ended the Second Congress with the most intense criticisms of itself, has now become more coherent and much stronger.

On the same question you may compare the Second Congress of Komala with, for example, the Second Congress of Peykar. This Congress too was being held at a time when as a result of the objective conditions which I mentioned, as well as the vindication of the emptiness of the old views of Peykar, and the struggle of the UCM against populism, the act of sitting between two stools had become impossible and the conflict between the two views had appeared in the Congress, in a conditional and limited way. But the congress not only did not recognise this conflict but tried to cover it up; not only did not affirm the legitimacy, growth and development of revolutionary Marxism, but tried to dissolve revolutionary Marxism in its own traditional views, and thus resorted to an impossible task. At that time we had declared: "populism is in deadend"; but Peykar's Congress not only did not recognise this deadend but closed its eyes to it. And this was because for Peykar positions served not as a guide to action but as a justification of the *raison d'être* of Peykar, as an organisation separate from other organisations. The positions of Peykar were the means for "demarcation" with other organisations and not for changing the outside world on the basis of these views. Therefore for Peykar theory was important so long as it served the growth and expansion of its own organisation. The class nature of the positions and their practical-organisational meaning were the last to matter for Peykar.

In any case, after the Second Congress the central committee of Komala invited our central committee comrades to a joint session. The conception of our comrades from the resolutions of the Second Congress of Komala was that Komala had itself come to hoist the banner of revolutionary Marxism and therefore the task which faced our comrades was that they should try so that Komala makes this move in the most resolute and coherent manner. The first session of the meeting of the two organisations was devoted not to the usual formalities of such meetings and not to "promises" about "joint action", but to the criticism and examination of the resolutions of the Second Congress of Komala. These criticisms were reflected at the level of the organisation of Komala and were approved by the central committee and the majority of the members of Komala. This was a beginning to a series of comradely discussions between the two organisations for which the programme was the basis. Following this process, the sixth organisational conference of Komala, which was held in September 1981, considered the Programme of the Unity of Communist Militants the only existing communist programme in Iran and assigned a number of the central committee members of Komala to carry out the necessary discussions with the representatives of the central committee of the UCM, in order to draw up the draft of a joint programme. The outcome of these discussions was the first draft of the joint programme which was distributed inside the two organisations in December 1981. Having considered the criticisms of the comrades of Komala and UCM and also the critical views of the other organisations about this programme, the final text of the draft was drawn up and once again referred to the two organisations. The "Programme of the Communist Party" was

3 passed in the Third Congress of Komala in which the representatives of our organisation were also present. The competence of our representative comrades for making probable amendments in the text of the final draft and also for its final adoption in the name of the organisation of UCM, had already been approved by the members of the organisation.

The Programme of the Communist Party is not only theoretically and politically more coherent and more advanced than the Programme of the UCM but is also expressive of a new stage in the life of our communist movement. A stage in which revolutionary Marxism has developed into a socio-political movement. The Programme of the Communist Party demonstrates that the most influential and the most authoritative communist organisation of Iran has been transformed from the subject of polemic of revolutionary Marxism into its banner-bearer. With the adoption of the Programme of the Communist Party a determining step towards the formation of the Communist Party of Iran, i.e., the task which the revolutionary Marxism had placed on its agenda from the outset, had been taken. Now we had to go further than the Programme and concentrate all our efforts on the question of the actual formation of the party. In response to this task a plan by the name of the "Plan of Formation of the Communist Party" was prepared and approved by the two central committees, and a joint committee, by the name of the "Coordinating Committee of the Forces of the Programme of the Communist Party", was formed at the leadership level of both organisations. In addition, it was necessary that our organisation, the UCM, recognises the tasks corresponding to the new stage of the life of the communist movement and becomes politically and organisationally armed for accomplishing these tasks. Our first organisational congress was convened during September and October of last year in response to this necessity, and with the most comradely assistance of the various sections of Komala in the liberated areas of Kurdistan. In a number of sessions of our Congress, comrades from the Political Bureau of Komala were present; also the message of the Political Bureau of Komala played an important role in the seriousness and consistency of the Congress.

As the resolutions of our Congress have been translated into a number of languages I will not talk about them, nor about the extra-organisational role of the Congress. But so far as it relates to your question, I will point out that our Congress recognised the two organisations of Komala and UCM as two organisations belonging to a single party current, and in a resolution which was passed unanimously, called for unity with Komala, and for party unity as the highest expression of this. In addition, this resolution placed particular tasks before the whole organisation, in relation to Komala.

After the Congress, the text of all the discussions was given to the comrades of the central committee of Komala. The views of the central committee comrades of Komala about our Congress have been presented in the editorial of Pishro No.5. But the most immediate results of the Congress, which at the same time stemmed from its most important achievement, i.e., the "Critique of Populist Style of Work and the Presentation of Communist Style of Work", was the alteration and concretization of the plan of action for building the communist party and the necessity of fundamentally transforming the methods of practice of the two organisations. As a corollary to the discussions of the style of work, which explained the fundamentals of communist practice as being part of our communist identity, all aspects of our activities had to be transformed. Also taking into account the role of communist practical principles as the key to the formation of the party in the specific conditions of the present development of the communist movement of Iran, it was necessary, in the work of building the party, →

Down with the Islamic Republic regime !

to go beyond the previous plan and propound another plan with a schedual, accountable, and relying on advanced organisations. The Second Plenum of Komala, held in January 1983, besides making a critique of Komala's Style of Work, also approved a comprehensive plan of action for forming the party. A committee, by the name of the Organising Committee of the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party, set up at the leadership level of Komala and the UCM, is responsible for carrying out this plan of action. It must be pointed out that before the declaration of the results of the Plenum, our central committee comrades were informed of the discussions of the Plenum and its final sessions were in fact the first formal session of the two central committees, with the presence of all the central committee members.

Now the two organisations, together with the Organising Committee have taken important steps forward in response to their tasks. I would also like to add that Komala and UCM have joint activities in many practical arenas, which I cannot elaborate on because of the repressive conditions prevailing in Iran. As you see it is a long time since we have gone beyond a theoretical and programmatic unity and now we have consensus of views on the fundamental aspects of communist activity too.

BM: A committee by the name of the Organising Committee of the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party has been recently formed in Iran, between Komala and the UCM. Could you tell us a little about the tasks of this Committee and the progress which it has made so far?

Comrade Partow: The formation of the Organising Committee was part of our general plan for the formation of the Communist Party of Iran. So I must explain the plan which the communists in Iran are now following for the constitution of the party. As I said earlier, believing that the formation of the communist party - the united party of the working class - was the urgent and imperative task of the communists, we answered the question of what the first step in the way of the formation of the communist party was, by insisting on the necessity of drawing up and putting forward a communist programme, opposed to all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois programmes. We believed that organisational unity without an ideological unity was not unity but a short pause in the dispersion. We considered ourselves quite justified to laugh at all those attempts, of the kind of the "Unity Conference"*, whose real objective was which organisation rallies which others around itself. In contrast, we demanded that the bases of a firm proletarian unity be presented and concretised, and ourselves resorted to a purposeful ideological struggle for reaching a communist programme in the context of difficult conditions and under a rain of accusations, plots and ridicules. In your first question I referred to the way revolutionary Marxism developed in Komala and to the course of development of the Programme of the UCM into the Programme of the Communist Party - the programme around which the communist party must be formed. But I must here mention a fundamental point. The advance and evolution of revolutionary Marxism did not take place in vacuum; rather, our every step forward was attended by a struggle against revisionism and its defeat, in particular populist revisionism, which we considered the most important obstacle in the way of the formation of the communist party. At the time of the adoption of the Programme of the Communist Party, the state of the forces claiming to be Marxist was as follows: The most important parties and currents which

* A conference held shortly after the February Uprising in 1979, among a number of populist organisations, as a preparation for forming the Communist Party of Iran. - Its conditions of entry were a set of abstract positions, and the Conference itself collapsed soon afterwards -BM.

4 openly supported Russia had all joined the bourgeoisie and turned to its police appendages. The two seemingly separate currents of Tudeh and Aksarriat* not only did not claim any revolutionaism, but officially considered themselves the defenders of the Imam's Line.** The pro-Chinese currents had joined the liberal-bourgeoisie, and the most important of them, the Ranjbaran Party, was the organiser of the office of the then president, Bani Sadr. These currents took up the banner of opposition against the Islamic Republic, together with the liberals, only when the latter had been expelled from the state organs. Despite their insignificant quantity, the Trotskyists had succeeded in showing the full practical meaning of Trotskyism. These organisations praised the savage attacks of the Black-Hundred bands as an expression of the hostility of the Islamic Republic with bureaucratism, and fraternally cooperated with the Islamic Societies in the factories, schools, and offices, which had no other role but spying and plotting against militant individuals and those opposed to the Islamic Republic, as expressions of non-bureaucratic institutions.

Most populist organisations had disintegrated and a large section of them had turned to apostasy, academicism, and passivism. The most important achievement of populism in Iran was the appearance of numerous circles, each of which was trying to re-discover Marxism through their study and researches on Hegel and Feuerbach. But at the same time, many circles had appeared, as a result of the break-up of these organisations, which wanted and tried to be faithful to the cause of the proletariat. A section of these had declared its joining to the ranks of revolutionary Marxism. If we refer to the O.I.P.F.G. (The Minority) and the organisations around it, then our picture becomes almost complete. By the analysis of our comrades at that time, the survival of these currents was only because of their backwardness and the depth of influence of populism within them. The later crisis of these organisations and the many splits resulting from their crisis, vindicated the correctness of our assessment of the state of these organisations.

As you see, in the spring of 1981 two fundamental poles had taken shape among the forces claiming to be Marxist. On one side, it was us, the forces of the Communist Party Programme, and on the other side were the forces which officially and publicly defended the bourgeoisie and which spoke in the name of Marxism. And it seemed that the formation of the Communist Party depended essentially on the unity of all the forces supporting the Programme of the Communist Party. So, in the first step, for the purpose of creating an all-round coordination among the forces of the Party Programme, by means of exchanging the gains of these organisations and circles with each other, by creating a division of labour, and by the removal of the barriers in the way of forming the party, such as the ability to defend the Programme of the Communist Party, the critique of the programme of others, etc, and also through other urgent tasks, the drawing up of the Plan of Formation of the Party and the formation of the Coordinating Committee of the Forces of the Party Programme were placed on agenda.

The First Congress of the UCM, by stressing the principles of communist practice as part of our communist identity and an aspect of the all-round class independence of the working class, correctly did not recognise the mere acceptance of the programme as sufficient for forming the party. It declared that for party unity the possession of both single views and united practical principles was necessary. So the practical formation of the party, with respect

* The "Majority" section of the Fedaiien which split from the main organisation in July 1980 -BM.

** I.e., the "line" of Khomeini and the Islamic Republic regime -BM.

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to the fact that identical programmatic views already existed, would now depend on the second link in the chain, i.e., the possession of united practical and organisational principles by all the forces supporting the Programme of the Communist Party. In the light of such an understanding we concluded that the communist party is not the result of the algebraic summation of the organisations supporting the Party Programme; rather, the constitution of the party must be expressive of a new quality in the communist movement. In our view, the party is such an organisation which is the symbol and defender of the all-round independence of the working class. These views of ours and the criticisms we have on the Voluntarist and Economist conceptions of forming the party, have been explained in the article "What the Formation of the Communist Party of Iran Depends Upon"* in "Towards Socialism" No.5.

On the basis of this understanding we concluded that the formation of the communist party does not depend upon the uniformity of all the circles and organisations which support the Programme and all their organs, from top to bottom, in the various dimensions of communist activity. Such an all-sided unity is not our point of departure for forming the party but one of its results. Our starting point and plan for forming the party is not organisations but cadres who beyond any organisational interests, are endeavouring to build another organisation, have the ability and experience to organise a new organisation on the basis of Leninist principles, and have the authority to call their respective organisations to join the party on the basis of its new principles. This would enable the party to withstand, from the very start, all the backwardness and defects of the existing organisations. Thus the constituent congress of our party would not be the session of the representatives of the various organisations for discussing the ways of merging their organisations, nor the official naming ceremony of a party which has long been practically formed. Rather, it would be the session of founding a new organisation on the basis of the Programme of the Communist Party, the Leninist Principles of practice, and new organisational organs, which from the very start practise on the

* See Translation Series No.14 for the English translation of this article -BM.

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8 basis of these principles, not giving them verbal recognition alone. The changing of the starting point for forming the party, from the unity of organisations to the role of the advanced organisations and cadres, is the most important difference between the present plan of action and the previous Plan For the Formation of the Party.

With this picture of the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party of Iran, the various aspects of the tasks of the Organising Committee of the Congress become apparent. This Committee has to prepare the most suitable conditions for the convocation of the Congress. In this course, it has to re-train the cadres and organs of the organisations supporting the Party Programme, and acquaint and commit them to Bolshevik principles of practice; it has to organise the necessary instruments for party activity, draft the necessary documents for adoption in the Congress, prepare the practical requisites of convening the Congress, make the necessary contacts, and determine the time and place of convening the Congress, etc. This is the main aspect of the Organising Committee's activity, which is essentially oriented to this aim that when convening the Party Congress, the joining of the organisations supporting the Programme would have been facilitated in the best way, whether from the viewpoint of the functioning of the organs or from that of their line-up.

But at the same time, the formation of the party is not a domestic affair. We believe that the formation of the Communist Party is a new stage in the life of communism in Iran, and therefore the party must be built before the working class and all the forces claiming to be Marxist. So the Organising Committee is duty-bound, on the one hand, to call on all communists to practically join the process of forming the party and to carry out the necessary discussions with them, preparing, at the same time, the necessary facilities for these discussions. And on the other hand, to demonstrate to the working class and all communists that those opponents of the Communist Party of Iran which claim to be Marxist, are not communist or defenders of the interests of the working class; but practically and theoretically they impede the class unity of the Iranian proletariat. The Organising Committee is also duty-bound to report to the Constituent Congress the attitude of the forces claiming to be Marxist, in regard to the formation of the party.

In connection with these tasks, the Organising Committee has so far successfully held the Preliminary Seminar of the cadres of the organisations supporting the Party Programme, has directly contacted all the forces claiming to be Marxist, which are in Iran at present, and has asked for their views. It has prepared some of the necessary documents for presentation to the Congress, and has taken steps towards the formation of the organs and instruments of party activity.

To be continued.

Comrade Partow is the author/co-author of many articles of which the following have so far been translated into European languages:

- 1- Anarcho-Pacifism: Peykar with the Wooden Sword (F. Partow & N. Javid) - Available in English.
- 2- Why Mojahedin Are Offended By the Formation of Communist Party (F. Partow) - Available in English, German, and French.
- 3- Communists, Mojahedin, and Religion (F. Partow) - Available in French.
- 4- What the Formation of the Communist Party of Iran Depends Upon? (F. Partow & M. Hekmat) - Available in English.