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★ Kurdistan. The Regime's Attack; the Resistance Movement and Its Future Prospects

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A year has passed since the first organized attack on Kurdistan by the Iranian government. This bloody attack, unparalleled in Iranian history, is extending daily. It has progressed from last year's three month war (Summer, 1979) to scattered wars in the Kamyaran, Qasemlou and Qatour valleys. . . afterwards to the bloody wars in Sanandaj, Saez, Marivan, Baneh and recently to the Eight hour war in Mahabad. During the past year, the regime has used various techniques in its attempts to suppress the Kurdish people's movement. At times it has made conciliatory gestures, such as the "Good Faith Mission" to Kurdistan, while at other times it has savagely bombarded the Kurdish regions from land and air. These policies are all different parts of a single strategy, namely the destruction of the Kurdish people's movement. Taking into consideration the strength of its armed forces, their combative spirit, the political and organizational strength of the movement in Kurdistan, and the different factions within the present ruling class, the regime has played various political tricks in order to get rid of the "obstructors of Islam." Since the recent war in the Sanandaj-saez region, the regime seems to have abandoned the tactic of a political solution and to be planning to rely on military force for the foreseeable future.

Several factors which indicate that a military solution to the Kurdistan question has become a more significant part of the policies of the ruling class in Iran are: the repeated criticism by the so-called "Followers of the Imam's line" and even by the Imam himself of the policies of the Bazargan government and the "Good Faith Mission" in Kurdistan; the complete military, political and financial support of the mercenaries known in Kurdish as "Muslim Pishmargan"; the establishment of the armed forces' joint staff in the western regions of Iran; and finally the repeated threat of the 28th and 64th divisions to bombard the Kurdish regions in case the "Pishmargan" (Armed revolutionaries in Kurdistan) penetrate Kamyaran. Today the regime has become frustrated and hopeless and is preparing a new offensive against the heroic Kurdish people to defend its existence in Kurdistan.

Preparation for the Offensive

At present, the armed forces of the regime are settled in garrisons in the vicinity of virtually all Kurdish cities. This does not mean that the Army, the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards of the Islamic Republic) and the Jash (Kurdish mercenaries) have absolute control of the cities; rather it points to the presence of the government's representatives (in this case, the armed forces) inside Kurdistan. Though this presence does not appear to quiet the region, just garrisoning the armed forces, and controlling traffic is considered a victory for the regime. The regime is also aware that no further military advancement is possible. The regular army, the non-native Pasdaran, and the native Jash essentially do not have the capacity for an extensive and organized military drive into the rural areas, which provide a crucial base for the national movement. At this stage, their objective is merely to besiege the cities and to limit the political activities of the progressive revolutionary organizations. The regime, hated by the Kurdish population, cannot count on the slightest local support for their anti-revolutionary activities. Nonetheless, to complete the siege of the cities, the regime would have to take the cities of Mahabad, Boukan, Sardasht, and Piranshar. Due to the political significance of Mahabad, however, the next offensive will be concentrated on this city. While the Mahabad garrison, located inside the city, is fully armed and even has the control of three nearby hills, because of the large number of Pishmargan in Mahabad, the regime's forces are unable to prevent the presence of "legitimate" political organizations in the city. Boukan has also been besieged from Sazez and Miandoab, but the political forces continue their activities there as well. Though Boukan has no special significance militarily and its only road to another liberated Kurdish city--Mahabad--would be closed if the army siezed the latter, the regime long ago turned Miandoab into an arsenal. The situation of Sardasht and Piranshar is such that if necessary the Pishmargan can evacuate the city and attack the garrisons from the suburbs. Nevertheless, it has been expected and verified in recent days that the regime's attack would be concentrated on Mahabad. Considering the fighting experiences of such cities as Sanandaj, Sazez, Marivan and Baneh and the fact that the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK) is the main opposition force in Mahabad, the regime will not face serious resistance in Mahabad, so once again the war will turn to the rural areas. The assassination of Mayor Abbasi (the military commander of DPK) has somewhat shifted the balance. The DPK's Pishmargan along

with other revolutionary Pishmargan have laid siege to the garrison. Nevertheless, even if the garrison or the Pasdaran in Mahabad launched an offensive, it could not last long after the onset of winter. Since the armed forces positioned in the hills to control the Pishmargan's access to the city have to return to their garrisons in the winter, the government cannot reinforce its security in Mahabad for very long.

The capture of Mahabad, Boukan, and other cities is part of the regime's military program. Even if the regime captures these cities, it will still face many more problems in Kurdistan: Guerilla activities in rural areas will become the main aspect of the war; moreover, the regime's Air Force is unable to operate in winter; the army is more vulnerable in rural areas and its defeat there is more probable.

In rural areas, all the factors which determine the outcome of a war work to the advantage of the Pishmargan. The popularity and local influence of the Pishmargan, who are supported by the Kurdish people, the high mountains and thick woods, the Pishmargan's control of an abundant supply of weapons and ammunition, and the experience of one year of continuous fighting, all favor the Kurdish movement and hamper the regime. The spread of the war to the rural areas would be a loss to the regime and not the Pishmargan.

The Ruling Clique and the War

The regime claims it is fighting against the reactionary government of Iraq as well as the Palizban (monarchist) mercenaries. According to the regime, the war zone is far from where the Pishmargan are operating, and therefore the regime will not be able to use the same forces that are in combat with the Iraqis against the Pishmargan. In other words, the Islamic regime has to fight on two fronts: in the south as well as in the north in Kurdistan. Moreover, the regime has to show its military presence in other regions of Iran such as Baluchestan, Turkman Sahra, and Fars. A new war in Kurdistan would prove to be fatal for the regime due to the following factors: the inner struggle within the ruling clique; the low morale of the armed forces due to the executions of military commanders; the rapid growth of people's dissatisfaction; and the unsolved social problems.

In such a contradictory situation the incompetent Islamic Republic

would not survive an erosive war in Kurdistan and most probably would have to retreat. Such a move would affect the general political climate of the country and result in the weakening of the present regime. Hence, Kurdistan is the Achilles' heel of the Islamic Republic government. While the continuation of the war in Kurdistan weakens the regime, its discontinuation would indicate a failure to bring a military solution to the Kurdistan question. Today, the social equations in Kurdistan are such that all the attempts on the part of the regime will result in a decline in the central government's authority. In the absence of unexpected events, Kurdistan will become the graveyard of its occupiers.

The Enemy's Enemy is Not a Friend!

We have already pointed out that the regime is simultaneously fighting against the Kurdish people's movement, the Iraqi reactionary forces, and the Monarchist mercenaries. A question that may arise is whether the struggle of progressive and reactionary forces against the government would indicate their practical concurrence. Another question is whether the war in Kurdistan would play into the hands of imperialism. The Fedaiis (organization of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas, the majority faction) provide the simplest answer. They side with the Pasdaran who fight against the monarchist supporters and place their forces in the western part of the country under the control of the Pasdaran. The basis of this naive approach is on the presumption that in the conflict between two reactionary forces, one should support the less reactionary one, namely the Islamic Republic, which is "independent" and composed of an "anti-Imperialist petit bourgeoisie." Even if an anti-imperialist petit bourgeoisie is presumed to exist in a bourgeois state, the state in this unscientific approach is not considered as the defense organ of the ruling class. This outlook is also illogical from a pragmatic point of view, when indeed the very anti-imperialist petit bourgeoisie opens fire on the Fedaiis in Kurdistan.

The correct answer could not be provided by using the naive logic of "black" or "white." The proverb "an enemy's enemy is not a friend," is perhaps appropriate here. The Iraqi regime, being the enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is certainly not a friend of the Iranian Revolution. The crucial point in this analysis is not the occurrence of the war itself, but those reasons and interests which impose the war as a solution to the parties in conflict.

The reactionary nature of the Iraqi government, with its fascist policies towards the Arabs and Kurds and its support of the reactionary Iranian monarchists, indicates that the Iraqi attitude towards the reactionary regime in Iran originates from another reactionary position, which is in complete contrast to the interests of the Iranian toiling masses. The Iraqi government is an enemy of the Iranian people in their revolutionary struggle against the Islamic Republic.

The opposite is also true: The fact that the present government of Iran is an enemy of the Iraqi reactionary government does not make it a progressive regime. The Iranian regime's animosity towards the Iraqi government originates from the reactionary position of establishing an Islamic republic in Iraq and therefore it should not be approved by the left. Hence, the above mentioned proverb is again valid.

In a war between two reactionary forces, we must not defend one party over the other for the sake of political considerations; rather, we must struggle against the two from an independent position. The reader is referred to Lenin's writings on the positions of the Second International with regard to the Imperialist war. The experiences of Communist Party of Iraq's central leadership should also be recalled. One could, as well, go to Kurdistan and observe how, after announcing their new positions, the Fedaiis (majority faction) are treated in the cities; and how, in the villages, people refuse to offer food to the Fedaiis' Pishmargan. One can fight against both the Iraqis and their mercenaries as well as against the Pasdaran and the Islamic Republic army. The comrades of our organization, fighting for the past year in the front lines in Kurdistan, have shown that fighting the Iraqi mercenaries and monarchist reactionaries does not preclude fighting against the repressive forces of the Islamic Republic.

The Left and Kurdistan

The brief explanation above on adopting a rightist policy with regard to the question of war and sovereignty in Kurdistan was essential not only to expose the demagogical reasoning of the Fedaiis who deny the necessity of an armed struggle with the Islamic Republic in Kurdistan, but also to show that the oneness in the war would lead to future losses in the revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan.



IRANIAN PROVINCES



Kurdish revolutionaries fighting the Iranian reactionary regime to achieve "democracy in Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan."

In reality, today the left in Kurdistan is mainly concentrated in "the Revolutionary organization of the Kurdish toiling masses of Iran" or "Komoleh," whose rapid growth has resulted from its adoption of radical policies towards the Islamic Republic and the national question. Besides being a mass communist organization the Komoleh is based on peasant support and encompasses an ideological spectrum. The existence of the peasant base and the absence of a minimum theoretical homogeneity have turned the political formation of Komoleh into a "Front" of the left in Kurdistan. This front, with a united organizational collective and with a peasant base, by itself will not be able to unite the Kurdish people's movement with the struggle for a nationwide movement in Iran.

The political insistence of the Komoleh leadership on the necessity for a proletarian leadership in the movement in practice has manifested itself in the leadership of communist intellectuals over the peasant and toiling masses in the cities of Kurdistan. This inability of Komoleh, as a left front, to connect the Kurdish people's movement with an all Iranian struggle by itself and the lack of adequate efforts by these comrades to rid themselves of pragmatism and the justification of their pragmatism in terms of "the environment of our activity" (see their pamphlet "Revolt") and also their relatively significant quantitative growth in Kurdistan has had the practical result that their comrades--in spite of their views--have restricted their activities within the narrow limits of a national movement. Thus Komoleh accepts the probable deficiency of a national and peasant movement in the particular conditions of Iran. The theoretical aspect of these deficiencies will reveal themselves in the increasing significance of the "peasants" role and the "national movement" in the Iranian Revolution. Politically, the result would be the rise in the people's nationalist illusions and finally the movement being contained within Kurdistan.

The recent one-year-old war, the growth of nationalist sentiment among the Kurdish people, and the failure to present a social alternative when the cities were under the full control of the Pishmargan, and even until now when the villages are the most important centers of the Pishmargan's activities, are all consequences of this historical inability. The left is not solely responsible for the present situation as social realities function independently of the will of the people and their subjective ideas. These "social realities" in Kurdistan do not predetermine the destiny of the Kurdish people's movement, but they set the limits for

the advancement of the revolutionary struggle. The elimination of these limitations still seems possible, but in the past year the left in Iran has also neglected to defend the Kurdish people's movement and to expand it into a nationwide struggle. This negligence not only affects the fate of the Kurdish movement, but also the fate of the movement throughout Iran.

The Iranian left, in the past year, has considered the defense of the Kurdish people's struggle like many other cases not as a socio-political problem, but rather as a purely organizational one.

It is disappointing that the left, outside of Kurdistan, has only provided a few statements, newsletters and graffiti, one or two photo exhibitions on Kurdistan, and has refrained from expanding the protests or even organizing demonstrations. Though it is possible to argue that no other left organization except the Fedaiis had the ability to organize political demonstrations, our question is whether the left on the whole could form a common struggle around such democratic slogans as "Democracy in Iran, autonomy in Kurdistan" or "withdrawal of forces from occupied Kurdistan." Before forming a social movement for the defense of the Kurdish people's struggle, the left was preoccupied with organizational propaganda and was unable to propagandize the outcomes of the Kurdish people's movement and to expose the numerous crimes of the regime in the region. Sectarianism and the absence of any plan have been apparent in the defense of the Kurdish people's movement.

Many of the left tendencies in their limited organizational defense of the Kurdish people's movement ignored communist principles and forgot that one of the most important aspects of this defense is to critically confront the development of the political movement in Kurdistan. Instead of critically defending the Komoleh, many of the forces in the Third Line (Maoist tendencies) have only praised the Komoleh. Under such conditions, these forces could not effectively support the advancement of the political struggle in Kurdistan and throughout Iran, and they were not able to influence the Kurdish movement politically.

It appears that these admirers, who have forgotten that communism is a science of criticism, continue to claim the leadership of the communist movement in Iran.

Consequently, the role of the Komoleh in the left movement of Kurdistan, and the nationwide role of the left in the Kurdish movement

has reinforced Kurdish nationalism more than at any moment in the recent history of the Kurdish people's movement (except Qazi Muhammad and the Mahabad Republic). After a year of vicious struggle, this nationalism has aggravated the negative aspects in the Kurdish movement. (This attitude, if not corrected, could negatively affect the future growth of the Kurdish people's movement.)

Other Aspects of the Kurdish People's Movement

One of the important developments in the Kurdish people's movement, especially after the recent war of Sanandaj, Saqez, Marivan and Baneh, is the impressive growth of the Komoleh. The Komoleh gained prestige and respect in Iran, particularly in Kurdistan, as a result of its participation in the face-to-face fighting in Sanandaj. As the Komoleh's Pishmargan increased rapidly in numbers and acquired war booty, it became an important military force and a strong rival to the DPK. Due to the spirit of the DPK and the subsequent crushing of the party myth, and the concentration of the Komoleh's political activity in Mahabad (traditionally a center of the DPK's activities), the Komoleh attained such a remarkable influence in Mahabad that the DPK could no longer remain indifferent to its growth. As a result, there were political and military confrontations between the forces of the two organizations, especially in the Sardasht area. These confrontations (particularly the Nalin incident, which started over the DPK's support of the local feudal lords and the Komoleh's support of the peasants) have worsened relations between the two organizations, minimizing the possibility of cooperation in the near future. Fortunately, these incidents did not extend further, thus disappointing the reactionaries' desire for a domestic war in Kurdistan.

The growth of the Komoleh and its political and military prestige have important implications for future developments; as it proves to be an obstacle to the rightist tendencies within the DPK, it will force the party to play a more active role in future wars.

Other important developments include: the dissolution of the Kurdish People's Representative Body and the weakening role of the Fedaiis and Sheykh Ezedin Hoseyni (the progressive spiritual leader) in the political events of Kurdistan. Following the war in Sanandaj, a military solution became the only alternative for the regime, and the possibility of peace negotiations was diminished. The Kurdish People's Representative Body, which was essen-

tially founded to coordinate the different factions of the Kurdish movement in their negotiations with the regime's Good Faith Mission, lost its raison d'etre and ceased to exist.

The Fedaiis (majority faction) in Kurdistan are no longer considered a political-military force. Their rightist positions and collaboration with the "anti-Imperialist" wing of the Islamic Republic (known to the Kurdish people by its phantom missiles) have deprived the Fedaiis of their extensive activity. While the Fedaiis can be proud of their glorious past in the Iranian movement, they will have no future in the Kurdish people's movement with such positions.

The war has taken a critical form following the recent events in Sanandaj, Saqez, Marivan and Baneh. The independent role of Sheykh Ezedin in the Kurdish people's movement has also diminished due to the lack of military force, the impossibility of negotiations, and the dissolution of the Kurdish People's Representative Body. In fact, those forces which could have participated under the banner of Sheykh Ezedin joined the ranks of the Komoleh and DPK. The deceiving role of Sheykh Jalal (Sheykh Ezedin's brother) must at once be ended--a task which should have been accomplished earlier. To tolerate Sheykh Jalal, who maintains good relations with the fascist regime of Iraq, not only damages the prestige of Sheykh Ezedin, but also is harmful for the future of the Kurdish people's movement. Sheykh Jalal's anti-communist positions, his narrow-mindedness on the national question, and his constant connection with the Iraqi government should not be ignored. Such connections and positions, whatever reasons lie behind them, are rejected by the progressive and revolutionary opposition in Iran.

What Is To Be Done?

Besides political and military activity against the reactionary Islamic Republic, the Iraqi regime, and the monarchist mercenaries and exposing the conciliators, one must take steps towards fundamental change in the liberated areas by forming peasants councils, fighting against the feudal lords and big land owners, organizing local defense councils all over Kurdistan and demonstrating to the masses that the Pishmargan forces are not merely military forces, but are also social forces who participate in productive, social, and cultural activities. It must be shown that the Pishmargan can participate in agricultural production as well as in teaching the young and reconstructing the cities and villages. A definite and

firm alternative to the ruling government must be created. These matters have been neglected so far, and yet all these efforts are insufficient.

For victory the Kurdish people's movement should not be confined to national boundaries, but should be extended to a nationwide movement. The Iranian Kurd can not alone provide a progressive solution for the Iranian revolutionary movement, or even for Kurdistan itself. The importance of the national aspect of the Kurdish people's struggle, the low level of social evolution in Kurdistan, and the fact that realization of autonomy in Kurdistan and democracy in Iran depends upon the victory of the socialist revolution, all necessitate a strong link between the Kurdish people's struggle and the struggle of the toiling masses all over Iran. Such a connection means not only the participation of non-Kurds and nationwide organizations in the Kurdish people's movement, but also the participation of the Kurdish fighters in the nationwide Iranian movement. It is an organic relation that can replace the national and scattered class movements with a social movement, a movement which will gain political power in the interest of the toiling masses of the society. It seems that the conditions to create such a nationwide struggle in Iran are becoming more favorable: the regime's weakness, the daily growth of public dissatisfaction, exposure of the true face of the Islamic Republic to the masses and the existence of a rather broad protest movement in the society accelerate the emergence of a nationwide socio-political movement. Organizing such a movement could be considered as an attempt to create a political alternative to the society. The basis of this social movement and the guarantee of its victory in the first place are bound to the cooperation and coordination of all the political tendencies of the left who want a revolutionary transformation of Iran. This cooperation could begin right away with support for the self-determination of the nations, while the reactionary regime is preparing for a new offensive against the heroic Kurdistan. Ultimately this could be extended to cooperation around the vital problems of the revolution.

★ IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY:

EXAMPLE OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

The following is a short biography of Abu-Shaheen, a member of the O.C.U. who was killed in the battle of Sanandaj, in defense of the Kurdish people's right to self-determination. An extended biography appeared in Raha'i, no. 33 entitled, "9 Years of Struggle Against Imperialism and its Clients," (May 1980) from which this is taken.

Among the casualties of last year's fighting between Iran's autonomy seeking Kurdish guerrillas and the armed forces of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime was Morteza Seyyed-Esmaeel, a revolutionary worker whose life and death represent an example of the internationalist spirit of the struggle against imperialism, zionism, and the reactionary regimes of the Middle East.

Seyyed-Esmaeel was born in a poor Afghan family which was constantly travelling throughout Iran, Pakistan, and Iraq in search of work and better living conditions. He himself had been a worker since his early childhood, working in bakery shops in Baghdad and supporting his family.

At the age of 18, Seyyed-Esmaeel made contact with the Communist Unity Group, an Iranian organization that was active in the revolutionary struggles of several Arab countries. After two years of intensive political education, in which he had to start by learning to read and write, Seyyed-Esmaeel was transferred to a PLO base for military training. He then returned to Baghdad where he was arrested and tortured by the Iraqi secret police and was freed only after progressive Palestinian groups intervened on his behalf.

In 1975 Esmaeel went to Lebanon and joined the armed struggle against the Israeli and Lebanese rightwing forces. He left behind a heroic record in the Beirut fightings and was wounded several times. While in the hospital for treatment of his wounds, Esmaeel wrote The Memoirs of a Worker in the Lebanese Civil War, an eyewitness account of the house to house battles of Beirut.

By this time, the revolutionary mass movement against the Shah's regime was rising in Iran, and Esmaeel became active in the Iranian movement. He made several secret trips to Iran, helping in the transfer of arms and revolutionary cadres through Afghanistan

and Turkey to Iran. As soon as the Shah's regime was overthrown, various leftist organizations began to prepare for resistance against the reactionary moves of the new Iranian regime. Esmaeel was among the communist cadres who went to Kurdistan to join the Kurdish guerrillas who anticipated an invasion of the region by the forces of the central government. This happened very quickly. In a few months Kurdistan became the center of armed conflict between the revolutionary left on the one side, and the combined forces of the deposed Shah's army and the Islamic Republic's right-wing guards on the other side.

Acting as a military organizer, Esmaeel took part in the battles in Sanandaj, Marivan, Sardasht, and other Kurdish cities, where he achieved recognition as a leading figure of the guerilla movement. Finally, on April 24th, while defending a front line in Sanandaj, Seyyed-Esmaeel was caught by the enemy's heavy fire and was killed in his foxhole. Thus ended the life and struggle of an Afghan worker who had become a communist activist in Iraq, fought alongside Iranian and Palestinian revolutionaries in Lebanon's civil war, and died in defense of the Kurdish people's right of self-determination in Iran.

The revolutionary movement in the Middle East will carry on Esmaeel's and other fallen comrades' struggle to final victory.



Morteza Esmaeel (Abu-Shaheen)

★ Class Struggle and the Women's Question

The following article appeared in Raha'i, no. 14, December 1979. Written in response to developments within the women's movement at that time, it represents in capsule the Organization's views on the women's question. With the spontaneous mass women's movement that began immediately after the Revolution, the left was jarred awake from its insensitivity to the women's struggle and forced to consider the question seriously.

A century ago, when the women's question was posed in the west in a serious manner, many of the so-called socialist forces initially saw it as a deviation. In many instances, they were justified. Yet, they failed to see that they themselves were one of the sources for this deviation. They failed to see that the women's question relates just as much to men as it does to women. Immersed in self-deception, they often rationalized that since the question would be solved in socialist society, there was no need for undertaking any specific actions to deal with it. A concrete example of this kind of approach emerged last week. What followed here was a discussion and condemnation of the lack of support and cooperation given by some left organizations, principally the O.I.P.F.G. to a woman's meeting held in Tehran on the 4th of November 1979. This meeting, which was a protest conference on the constitution and Women's Rights was the first of its kind in Iranian history. It was organized by the groups and organizations represented by the "Women's Solidarity Conference" which included: Society for the Liberation of Woman, Militant Women's Society, The Women's Commission of the National Democratic Front, Revolutionary Union of Women, the National Union of Women, Independent Committee of Teachers, Society for the Awakening of Women, Organization of Women from the Ministry of Planning and Budget, and the Progressive Committee of the Central Bank among others. The O.I.P.F.G., after the time and date of the Conference had been publically announced, called for a demonstration and march at the same time on the same day. Nevertheless, the Conference was attended by several thousand and was one of the first victories for the progressive women's movement. A brochure including some of the major speeches and messages as well as a complete list of supporters is available in Persian.

The struggles of the oppressed have always been a part of human history. When these struggles focus on class contradictions, they make history, shaping the development of humankind. Mass struggles, whether with a class content or with the appearance of a democratic

content, are all a direct consequence of the internal contradictions of class societies. They inevitably manifest themselves on the social level (at a stage of development of these societies). History testifies to the fact that these struggles, which have their roots in the womb of the internal contradictions of society, are initiated and present themselves independent of the desires of this group or that organization. If those who are organized and struggling consciously are able to nurture these history-making seeds and give them direction to grow then by heightening the level of struggle and transforming them into conscious currents, they can accelerate a final victory for the working masses. Otherwise, separated from the vanguards, these mass movements will travel their own roads and will often evolve into movements for the realization of the reactionary desires of backward-looking classes and strata.

The struggle of large sectors of oppressed women in the capitalist countries is among such struggles. There are many instances in which the just struggle of women has been led astray and fallen into the laps of bourgeois feminists. If the experiences of women in these countries is not understood, and if this understanding is not put to practice in the analysis and direction of the women's movement in Iran, the danger of deviation will also be great here.

The domination of capitalist relations was established in Iran according to the needs of world imperialism and at the hands of its local servants. In the search for cheap labor, women were inevitably liberated from the slavery that existed in their families into the slaves of capital on the social level. The inescapable results of the growth of capitalist relations in Iran were the daily increase in the number of women in the job market and their entrance into most branches of production and services.

If capitalism separates women from the relations of slavery in the family, it does so not to liberate them but to further exploit them. The working woman in a capitalist society is not only exploited by capital alongside and even more than the men in her class, but she must still carry the burden of all the reactionary traditions and the slave work of the house. She loses the economic protection of her father and husband while they still remain her master. At the same time, in the labor market, she receives a lower wage for supposedly having less need. And when she returns home from the exhausting work in factories, offices and schools, she must spend the rest of her time in the kitchen to meet the needs of her family.

But, just as the internal contradictions of capitalism grow in the process of its development, the conditions for women become entangled with the same inevitable contradictions. A woman who has been liberated from the relations of slavery in the house will not remain the slave of capital for long. She will constantly try harder to further liberate herself from her old bonds as well as to liberate other women and men from the grips of capital. It is here that the dual character of the women's struggle, stemming from women's double exploitation, manifests itself. The working woman has no alternative but to struggle on two fronts, since she is oppressed from two sources. In the arena of democratic struggle, women are one of the most active social forces because they suffer from the longest, most painful reactionary family and social bonds. On the front of class struggle, they also determinedly struggle shoulder to shoulder with their brothers because, as working women, they have also felt the exploitation of capital.

Unfortunately, in many instances the dialectical relation between these two kinds of struggle is not understood by the conscious forces. By mechanically separating these two, many left forces interpret the democratic struggle of women as a kind of bourgeois struggle. Consequently, they do not support or take part in it. But, in reality, this short-sightedness on the part of some of the progressive forces and their inability to recognize the social basis for the democratic struggle of women is instrumental in leaving this struggle open to the bourgeoisie for its use. It is true that the struggle of bourgeois women for political and social freedoms eventually leads to feminism and the posing of women as competitors against men. But, the reason for this is that the entrance of a bourgeois woman into political relations in society places her in a position of being a competitor of the bourgeois man. She enters the internal relations of competition within the bourgeois class. Naturally, the bourgeoisie is not happy about new competition on the scene. It is because of this internal competitive nature of the bourgeoisie that the majority of bourgeois men are the most ardent opponents to women's freedom and equal rights.

But, in connection with the democratic struggle of working women, the situation is entirely different. The working woman fights to obtain her political and social freedom because in order to freely take part in the process of production, to be able to share an equal role in production with the men of her class, and to struggle against the exploitation of capital, she needs democratic freedoms. The working woman does not enter the arena of production and the economic,

social and political struggle as a competitor of, but united with, the working man. The conscious elements of the working masses and especially the vanguard proletarian organizations are ardent supporters of women's freedom and equal rights for women because they welcome energetic new comrades to the arena of class struggle.

Although the democratic struggle of working women will at times become united with the struggle of women in general due to a minimum of shared goals, the rejection of this struggle by progressive forces is an evasion of responsibility. This lack of involvement by the progressive forces will lead this vast force of struggle to be wasted and to be led to deviations by the bourgeoisie, rather than the minimal shared demands being elevated to the maximum demands of working women.

The most recent example of this situation can be seen in the mass struggle of women in Iran immediately following the Revolution. This struggle developed spontaneously in opposition to the reactionary decisions taken by the new ruling strata. Due to the fact that it lacked organization by progressive forces and individuals, in a short while, it was usurped by reactionary forces including some of the supporters of the previous regime. The analyses of and actions of many progressive and left organizations was exposed during this bitter experience, but fortunately the groundwork for the activities of other more conscious elements was laid. As a result, progressive organizations were formed for organizing the democratic struggle of women.

The democratic struggle of women finds its real enemy in the reactionary stratas and classes, particularly the bourgeoisie and the fanatic and short-sighted petty-bourgeoisie. Since the bourgeoisie is unable to answer the democratic demands of women, it tries to reduce these demands to superficial ones and attempts to put women's freedom in line with those freedoms which are consistent with bourgeois values and culture.

On the other hand, the traditional petty-bourgeoisie which has entered the arena of struggle because monopoly capitalism has threatened its economic and social life, once it has grasped political power, proposes the solution to the exploitation of women by capital and their degradation by the corrupt values of bourgeois culture to be that of returning women to the slavery relations of the family which existed before capitalism. This is true to its reactionary and limited perspective which also views the struggle against big capitalism as that of the breaking of machines and the returning of society to pre-capitalist relations.

By putting its finger on the nature of capitalism to exploit women and by raising empty slogans about respect for women in traditional societies, the traditional petty-bourgeoisie tries to spread its ignorance throughout society, making women believe that the bonds of slavery are actually weapons against oppression.

If in a capitalist society the working woman puts her labor at the disposal of the capitalist and suffers exploitation, she then struggles to liberate her labor and the ownership of the fruits of her labor not to leave the process of production. Labor develops human character and spirit; the history of humankind is intertwined with its value and development. The working woman welcomes the opportunities which capitalist society provides for entering the process of production, since participation in production is her only road to liberation. The struggle of women involves not the destruction of the possibilities for work but the enhancement of them. The goal of the democratic struggle of women is in fact to destroy the traditional forces which have enslaved women in kitchens and in atmospheres where they have had no possibilities for developing their social beings. Women desire to be free along with men in order to participate in social production and struggle against relations which exploit all working people.

The only road to liberation from the double exploitation that women suffer is that of destroying the economic basis for their added exploitation. This can only be done by uprooting capitalism and by socializing domestic labor; by creating communal possibilities for performing the private duties of housework and childcare; and by forming educational facilities. Communal dining rooms must be established for all sectors of society and what remains of housework must be divided equally between men and women. This can only come about by creating a proletarian culture where the relation between men and women will change to one of two comrades, two colleagues, and two equal people rather than the present master and slave. The amount of time that a woman spends performing exhausting work in the four walls of her home must be reduced to a minimum in order for her to be able to participate freely in production as a member of society. This is how she may develop her personal creativity and make her social history.

Any step towards the uprooting of capitalism and the victory of a socialist revolution is a step towards the complete liberation of women. But, while the end of slavery is impossible without a socialist revolution, slaves cannot make one. The two travel the same road, organically linked to one another.

★ Islamic Republic's Record on Women

The following article was published by the Women's Liberation Association in commemoration of the International Women's Day, March 8, 1981. It was reprinted in Raha'i, no. 69.

The following is an account of the Islamic Republic's attempts towards restraining the political and social rights of women since its takeover of power. Although millions of masses and in particular the working women of our country have with their sweat and blood experienced the real nature of the regime's slogans of the so-called "government of the needy" and "respect for the rights of women," the regime's report card for the past two years in connection with women can help women to understand the true nature of this regime. All facts are taken from the press and with a few exceptions are reported without analysis. The facts speak for themselves.

1. Family Rights

- * March 1979 - According to a letter from the office of Ayatollah Khomeini, the law of protection of the family¹ is abolished.
- * March 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini: "In Islam women are entitled to divorce if they ask for this right at the time of marriage."
- * April 1979 - Mahdavi Kani²: "Since, according to Islamic rules, the man has the right of divorce and by Ayatollah Khomeini's ruling the law of family protection has been abolished; thus the man can unilaterally and easily divorce his wife."
- * October 1979 - The bill proposed by the Ministry of Justice on the formation of special civil court that was agreed upon by the cabinet was passed by the Islamic revolutionary council of Iran. Third article, Note #3: the man has the unilateral right of divorce. Minimum age for marriage for women was decreased from 18 to 13 years.³
- * October 1979 - Women's demonstration against unilateral divorce rights for men.
- * November 1979 - Women's gathering in the courtyard of the Ministry of Justice protesting the formation of the "special civil court."
- * October 1979 - The women's solidarity committee announced its existence. This committee was formed by political organizations and political trade unionist groups. Their first cooperative ef-

fort was the joint women's conference.

- * November 1979 - Joint Women's Conference took place under candlelight. Despite the sabotage and cutoff of electricity by those who were opposed to the conference, it took place and in it the Islamic Republic's constitution in connection with the question of women was severely condemned.
- * August 1980 - Hojatol Eslam Rabani Amlashi, a member of the supreme council of judges: "The special civil courts will be formed all across the country." (up to now they were limited to take place only in Tehran)

Finally, the latest reactionary laws: A new bill about punishment and its rules has gone to the Majlis.

2. Mandatory Veiling of Women

- * March 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini: "Women are not forbidden to work in offices but are required to wear the Islamic veil."
- * March 1979 - "Women's Day." Thousands of working women along with other politically conscious women gathered despite the cold weather and snow in the streets around the University of Teheran to commemorate the International Women's Day and protest the suppression of their democratic rights. Ayatollah Eshraghi⁴: "The Islamic veil does not necessarily have to be the chador (the traditional Iranian head to toe veil)."
- * March 1979 - Women's demonstration against mandatory veil at the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Justice.
- * March 1979 - Women gathered in front of the headquarters of the Iranian national radio and television to protest their lack of coverage of the women's demonstration. Ayatollah Taleghani⁵: "Nobody is forcing women to wear the veil." Ayatollah Khomeini: "Taleghani's view on the veil is correct."
- * March 1979 - Women demonstrated and marched at Teheran University, Freedom Square, and the headquarters for national radio and television. Women's march in Tabriz in connection with opposition to the mandatory veil turns bloody.
- * July 1979 - From a government spokesperson: "The rumors about harassment of women who do not wear the veil in the month of Ramadan and their expulsion from government offices is denied."
- * February 1980 - Spokesperson for the Ministry of Health announced that it has been reported that in some of the private and public health organizations nurses and nurses' aides are prevented from wearing Islamic uniforms. This is due to influences of the

old regime. The Ministry of Health strongly announces that use of Islamic uniforms in hospitals and health centers is not only allowed but is recommended and those in charge at these health institutions are responsible to carry out this order.

* May 1980 - In two days five girls without Islamic veils are stabbed in Orumieh. Among them there were women from religious minorities who do not adhere to Islamic law. They were attacked by bands of motorcycle and bicycle people carrying knives.

* May 1980 - In an interview with radio and television in Orumieh Ayatollah Bahonar⁶ said: "Several women in Boushehreh refuse to sell goods to women without veils."

* June 1980 - The mayor of the city of Tonekabon (old Shahsavari) and a group of merchants marched protesting the lack of veils on women tourists. They threatened to close for three days the stores of merchants who sell goods to women without veils.

* June 1980 - Hojat Eslam Tabatabai, a revolutionary judge of the Mazandaran Province: "There is no legal security in Mazandaran Province. The merchants refraining from sale of goods to women without veils is an illegal act. (Later we found out how illegal acts become the law.)"

* June 1980 - Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the implementation of the bureaucratic revolution⁷ and with it the mandatory veil for women in government offices including women teachers.

* July 1980 - Based on the report from military revolutionary court, women working in the Army are not allowed in the military bases without the Islamic veil. One informed source in the public relations of the Ministry of Justice said: "Following the ruling by the governing committee of the Ministry of Justice regarding the Islamic veil for women employees of the Ministry of Justice, an inspection committee has been formed which will travel to various regions of the country."

* July 1980 - Following Ayatollah Khomeini's directives and the orders of the ministers and executives of various ministries, the wearing of Islamic veils in various government offices was enforced. Women workers of the Offices of the Ministry of Roads and Transportation will have to come to work with Islamic veils from now on. Steps are taken to ensure that Islamic veils are worn in the offices of the Ministry of Public Guidance.

Ayatollah Kani: "Ladies should be informed of the need to preserve their true character."

* July 1980 - By order from the Ministry of Health female personnel in the hospitals and health centers have to use Islamic veils. Based on official circulars from ministers and organizations, Islamic veils will be enforced in all ministries and offices. Some

organizations announced that they will not allow women without Islamic veils to enter.

* July 1980 - Women gathered and demonstrated in front of the Prime Ministry building to protest mandatory veils.

* July 1980 - Ruling from Ministry of Education regarding purges:

- a) All co-educational schools will be closed.
- b) Religious appearance whether clothing or behavior will be intensely enforced and those who do not comply would be expelled.
- c) Women would be exclusively hired in girls' schools and men in men's schools whether teaching or doing administrative work.

The objection of a revolutionary guard who was a passenger in Zahedan airport to the lack of Islamic veils on a stewardess caused a delay of a few hours of an airplane with destination Yazd and Teheran.

* July 1980 - Demonstrations in front of the Office of the Prime Ministry which ended in several women's arrests.

* July 1980 - Notice of the President and the revolutionary council regarding the wearing of veils by women in government offices and organizations.

- a) All sisters employed in government offices are notified to observe Islamic conditions in their clothing at their place of employment.
- b) In case of disobedience their entrance should be prohibited.
- c) In case of persistence in disobeying this rule, they should be pursued legally.
- d) Warning of the general prosecutor of the revolution: "The wages and benefits of those women who do not obey Islamic rules in clothing should be terminated."

* July 1980 - 131 women who wore black as a protest to the forced wearing of the Islamic veil at government offices were expelled from the army.

* July 1980 - From the head of Center for Struggle Against Sin, ten instances in connection with the religious month of Ramadan were demanded. The fifth one is: "We ask our sisters who are not employed in offices to not wear sexy and provocative clothing during these hot days. Otherwise they will be prosecuted."

* July 1980 - Iran's representative in the Women's Conference in Copenhagen: "Iranian women are free to choose the Islamic veil."

In Lengeh port following protests of foreign personnel of the Fatemi Hospital against forced Islamic veil the hospital was practically closed. This included the operating rooms, examining and radiology rooms.

- * July 1980 - The form of student uniforms and the color of women teachers' clothes were announced.
- * August 1980 - The form of official clothing of women in education in Teheran:
 - a) Uniformity of color and form of teachers' clothing is not necessary.
 - b) Form of clothing: open front with buttons, long sleeves, gathered sleeves at wrist, and below the knee (pockets are optional).

3. Women in the Legal Profession

- * March 1979 - Women are prevented from becoming lawyers and judges.
- * April 1979 - Abdol Karim Lahigi, spokesman for the Iranian Committee in Defense of Human Rights, states: "Legal status has been denied to women interns in the Justice Ministry and they have been told to occupy themselves with government work."
- * May 1979 - The swearing in ceremonies for legal interns takes place without women's participation: "We, legal intern women, were confronted with slanderous and irrational behavior by those in charge when we reported to take part in the swearing in ceremonies; our presence was ignored."

The Ministry of Justice: "According to the needs of this office, assistant and administrative positions have been anticipated for the women legal interns."
- * June 1979 - Women legal interns stage a sit-in on the second floor of the Justice Building in response to the preventing of women's participation in the swearing in ceremonies.
- * June 1979 - Women's meeting in the Justice Ministry - reading of the resolution and termination of the five day old sit-in.
- * November 1979 - Approval by the Council of Ministers that women lawyers in the Justice Ministry will be transferred to offices in other ministries.

4. Executions and the Supposed Struggle Against Prostitution

The Islamic Republic claims that it wages a struggle against prostitution, but everyone knows that it itself is a propagator of legal prostitution by way of "sigeh" (concubines). In any case, it views the struggle against prostitution as that of executing prostitutes, that is, in other words, killing and destroying the effect and ignoring the cause.

- * August 1979 - A woman in Behshahr is executed on the accusation of adultery. The lover of this woman was condemned to 100 lashes. The woman's name was Narges Jabari and she was 18 years old. The man was 22 years old. His name was Haji Baba Sabeghi. This woman was pregnant at the time of the execution.
- * October 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini interview with Oriani Fallaci is printed. An inkling of his views is reflected in this interview:

"The law that a man can have 4 wives is very progressive and is written for the well-being of women because the number of women is much more than the number of men. A man needs a woman. So what can be done in this world where there are more women than men? Other than to marry a man with several wives? In my opinion, it's not right that single women become prostitutes because there are not enough men."

Question: "Another example, an 18 year old pregnant woman was executed in Behshahr last week because of adultery."

Answer: "Pregnant? It's a lie--just like they say that women's breasts are cut. Such things don't happen in Islam. They don't kill pregnant women."

Question: "It's not a lie. They wrote about it in the newspapers and a round table discussion was held on Iranian TV about why the man got 100 lashes."

Answer: "If this is so then maybe she had it coming. What do I know? Maybe that woman did something else. Ask the courts that condemned her. Let's not talk about this any more. I'm tired."

And in another part of the interview, concerning the participation of women in the Revolution, Khomeini says: "The women who participated in the revolution were women who had an Islamic veil or have one now--not chic and made-up women like you who go here and there."

- * October 1979 - The League of Lawyers in Iran submit charges against those responsible for the execution of the woman in Behshahr, who was charged with adultery, to the Ministry of Justice. According to the letter dated September 1979, Narges Jabari's parents, Afsaneh Sha'banpour and Ahmad Jabari, brought witnesses from the town to refute the charges on these grounds: First of all she

never committed the supposed crime. Secondly, even if she had committed the crime she should not have been executed according to Islamic law for two reasons. One, she was a minor; two, due to a fall she had become mentally unbalanced.

* July 1979 - Three women are executed for promoting prostitution and corruption.

* November 1979 - By an order from the Center for Struggle Against Corruption of the General Revolutionary Prosecutor, the red light district of Teheran was closed down. The women from this area staged a small demonstration in which a worker from the neighborhood was killed by an unidentified person.

* November 1979 - A woman was executed in Ahwaz, accused of running a house of prostitution.

* December 1979 - A woman prostitute executed in Ahwaz.

* January 1980 - Accused of prostitution and smuggling, two women and a man are executed. The names of the women are: Eshrat Gudrazi and Fetneh Damghani.

* January 1980 - A woman in Ardebil is executed twice. Farideh Baba'i is executed twice for adultery while married.

* February 1980 - The Center for Struggle Against Sin announces that in the case of repentance, where women start a family, the Center will provide financial assistance to those "mised" women. If they ignore the orders of this Center to quit their inhuman activities, they will be handed over to the Islamic Republic Court.

* April 1980 - The girl who was raped by one of the American hostages is killed by her brother. The girl's name was Azam - C. This girl was five months pregnant.

* June 1980 - Kerman - Ashraf Zohlallah is executed, accused of adultery.

5. The Constitution

* December 1979 - The notorious constitution of the Islamic Republic was put to referendum. In this Constitution, the rights of Iranian women are officially ignored.

Article 21 states: "The government must safeguard the rights of women everywhere according to Islamic principles." This article contained 5 items concerning women, the sum of which reflect a painful reality. These 5 items are the following:

- 1) Creating suitable conditions for the growth of the character of women and attaining her material and cultural rights.
- 2) Support of mothers, particularly during pregnancy and preserving of children, and support for orphans.

3) Creating a competent court for protecting the family (in other words, the same special civil courts).

4) Creating special insurance for widows and old women without guardians.

5) Giving custody of children to deserving women.

In the opinion of the experts, women's social rights are limited to one thing: "right of mother and wife." In other words, the society in which women must live is limited to the four walls of their houses and the government holds itself "responsible" for protecting their rights in this respect. What a gracious gesture.

Article 23: "Everyone has the right to choose any occupation that they desire and that is not in contradiction with Islam and the social good and the rights of others. The government must, by considering the needs of society for different occupations, create the possibilities for employment and equal conditions for the filling of occupations."

Of course, the hiring of a woman without the consent and notification of the husband is against Islamic principles and because the laws are completely religious, then this article must also be "observed according to Islamic principles."

And Article 33 concerning the requirements for judgeship: "The characteristics and conditions of a judge will be determined by law according to religious principles" and we all know that according to religious law a woman cannot become a judge.

6. Sports

* March 1979 - "The manner of dressing for sportswomen must not contradict the general decency." The proposal for segregating women's sports from men's is put forth.

* March 1979 - Women are forbidden to enter international competitions.

* April 1979 - Shah Hosseini⁸ states; "All coaches, referees, and other administrative personnel of women's sports must be female; no men will be admitted to such administrative positions."

* July 1979 - The plan to segregate the beach at Shamsavar is implemented.

* June 1979 - Four women are whipped for swimming in the men's section at Nowshahr beach.

* November 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini says: "Because Islam gives women special privileges, free women hostages." One might wonder why revolutionary women in Iran are not covered by these "special

privileges" and hundreds of them remain in the prisons of the Islamic Republic, their fates unknown.

7. Forced Unemployment of Women

Unfortunately the news about forced unemployment of women is not dated because these news items are gathered from here and there and have not been published in any official publications since the regime does not want to admit it.

* September 1980 - Ninety-nine teachers of the Ministry of Education of the 19th district (Shahr Rey) are forced into early retirement with no reason given.

* In Sanandaj thirty women teachers are fired and in their dismissal notice the reason given is prostitution.

* In the Office of Communications those women whose husbands work in the same office are fired without any legal basis. This has been happening for a long time.

* In the National Oil Company several women are put on obligatory leave without pay. In the city government several women were fired with compensation.

* In the knitting factory of Saveh out of 35 women workers all but five were fired and replaced by Afghani men.

8. Attack on the Dormitories

* August 1980 - Twenty-six women students are thrown out of the student dormitory of Mashed and sent to Evin prison.

* December 1980 - The girls' elementary school, Mehregan, in Ghom is closed.

* December 1980 - Mozghan Azsadi is killed as a result of bullets fired by a group of Hezbollahis⁹ into a crowd of people who went to the Office of Education to complain about the problems of the schools.

* January 1981 - Repeated attacks and storming of the girls' student dormitories of Sharif University by a group called the "Islamic Society of Defenders of War Areas." This attack left fifteen wounded.

* January 1981 - Attack on Dormitory No. 5 of Teheran University, leaving seven wounded.

* January 1981 - Attack on the girls' Dormitory No. 5 of Teheran University by 200 organized persons resulting in 30 wounded, two of whom were left unconscious in the first few minutes and taken to the hospital.

* January 1981 - Two men and one woman in Arak accused of prostitution and condemned to death are executed by the Islamic Revolutionary Court.

* December 1980 - One woman accused of adultery is executed in Resht. Her name was Tagizadeh. Her partner was given 100 lashes and sentenced to one year in prison in Semaran.

Footnotes

¹The law of protection of the family, although not sufficient, did give some protection to women against unilateral divorce exercised by men.

²Mahdavi Kani is the Minister of Interior, an Ayatollah and one of the leaders of Islamic Republic Party.

³Actually, according to Islamic law, a 9 year old girl can marry.

⁴Ayatollah Eshraghi is Ayatollah Khomeini's son-in-law.

⁵Ayatollah Taleghani was one of the relatively progressive religious leaders who spent many years in the Shah's prisons and died after the revolution.

⁶Ayatollah Bahonai is one of the leaders of the Islamic Republic Party and Minister of Education.

⁷The bureaucratic revolution is supposed to eliminate traces of the Shah's regime in government offices.

⁸Shah Hosseini is the former head of the national office of athletics.

⁹Hezbollahis are right wing religious gangs who usually shout: "the only party is the party of God and the only leader is Khomeini."

★ Appeal to the Left and Communist Forces

. . .the most painful thing for any conscious and committed person is that a great many people, in hopes of bettering their situation, are still following the regime--either its dominant or "dominated" faction--instead of the immediate experience of these two years along with the educating by progressive forces and elements having resulted in their rejecting the total "Islamic Republic" regime. Now we see that a part of the discontented people have assembled around another image, centered on one of the elements and symbols of this regime--Bani Sadr. Was this pre-destined, or is the opportunism and deceptiveness of Bani Sadr the real reason for this situation, or is it that we too are to blame? Hasn't this question arisen for each and every one of us: why haven't the discontented people moved towards the left?; and why is it that they move with every new image?; and is it God given that the left, possessing as it does the possibilities for propaganda and agitation despite the attempts of the regime cannot mobilize an important part of the people? Again, in all this, are we not responsible?

More distressing than this is the realization that a great many of the people who turn away from the Islamic Republic due to the lack of a real alternative turn towards the cursed and once-experienced alternative of the past--the scum of the Pahlavi regime--and in their hearts, if not with their words, hope for a return to the past. And these people, comrades, are not all bourgeois and the agents of imperialism. In their midst we can find many working people who, as a result of their unbelievably difficult living conditions and their not seeing any bright future, are pulled in this wrong direction. And here, does the blame also lie with the "people" or does it lie with those who couldn't or didn't want to break out of their narrow perspectives and feel the pain of the people and propose a real alternative.

Now, the different exploiting and suppressing factions of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, collaborating in power as well as the odious remnants of the past, each do have amidst their planlessness a plan and are hastily occupied with "loading up" and gathering strength and unity. The scope of these unifications and compromises grows every day. Each alternative is consolidating and making itself more presentable. The internal and external battles of these factions lead the people from one column to another, not because these battles have not been exposed

or are not known for what they are, but because of the non-existence of a real alternative in opposition to them.

There is no society in which there is as much discontent as there is in ours. There is no society in which there is as much social movement as there is in ours. There is no society in which the regime is more unstable. . . .Nevertheless, there is no society in which the movement towards the left is as dull as it is in ours. Why? Who but the left can and must present the left to the people? Who can and must present the left alternative?

Comrades! Left Comrades! Communist Comrades!

We live in a world separate from the people. Our programs and actions are not for educating and mobilizing the people but are based on our sectarian desires. We have not done enough to free the people, to enlighten them about the Islamic Republic, and, most importantly, to introduce ourselves to the people. We have fallen into tens of sects, groups and splinter organizations. Unfortunately, the people are for us only "the closest people to the organization." The left organizations give and take away "people" from each other, and the circle thus remains closed: they tend to their own business and we to ours. Because of this we are deceiving millions of people and we place millions and millions in their hands, remaining on the edges of our "theories." We have become the commentators of history. Comrades. What have we done and what are we doing to change things?

We believe that the Iranian left is not known to the people; otherwise the great bulk of the people would not be falling behind this or that faction or, worse, the remnants of the old regime. We believe that the left, despite its weaknesses, can present a more people-oriented and realistic alternative. We fully realize the necessity of the fact that our people, our working people, must come to know the programs and positions of the left, that these programs are closer to their real interests than to those of the exploiter.

We believe that a great part of the left understands this, that despite the disagreements and battles, in its heart it realizes this: that it is isolated from the people's movements. It knows it must change things, not remain an observer and witness to reality. What, then, comrades has prevented us from presenting a real alternative other than ourselves, other than having our heads

in the clouds and drowning in our personal--read "organizational" --problems? When the entire left has not been able to present an alternative, is it not traitorous for each one of us to imagine that we alone can give the alternative? To naively wish that any one of us alone would become so big as to be able to plan the way for all working people? This is nothing but self-deception and treason to the people. This is nothing but helping this or that faction of the regime--despite all our repeated claims.

If today each exploiting faction is capable, despite everything, to work with others, what factor--with due respect for our differences--prevents our united action? The comrades know well that we firmly believe in ideological commitments and understand conciliation as the epitome of a lack of principle. We neither want the left to put aside its internal differences on positions, nor do we think this is possible, nor do we even think it would be to the movement's benefit. But at the same time we do believe that, despite the preservation of differences, we can and we must bring about cooperation and collaboration amongst our activities. Ignoring this necessary issue or disrupting attempts towards making it a reality is nothing more than traitorous towards our people. Our people will never forgive that communist movement which, already two years after the revolution, is still unknown and unshown.

Drawing up the lines upon which the entire left could become a social alternative is neither within our capability nor is it our responsibility. It is the responsibility of the entire left which, by working together and exchanging views, can draw up the social framework of this program--the line and program upon which this movement could be shown to the people, could be useful for their mobilization, and could not only expose anti-people alternatives but reject them with its own program.

Based upon this belief, we invite all left and communist forces who share the understanding of this necessity to take a step towards realizing it. We will not neglect our share of the responsibility. We welcome any positive step taken by any organization, and we like all our comrades hope that we will witness a movement which will show the people what the left says is correct and that the left does have the power to change the existing situation.

* Expand the United Action of Left and Communist forces

- * Down with the Domination of the Ruling Factions over the Destiny of the People.
- * Down with World Imperialism.
- * Forward to Becoming a Real Social Alternative.

O.C.U. March 1981

★ Second Anniversary of February Uprising

The following appeared in Raha'i, no. 63, February 1981.

Two years ago our peoples overthrew one of the most bloodthirsty tyrannies of this century. Their armed uprising showed once more that the oppressive rule of the "Guardians of Capital" and reaction can only be ended by the force of arms. But subsequent events have also clearly proven that without the leadership of the working class, at midcourse the revolution has no destiny but to fall to this or that wing of capitalism.

The bloody uprising was mounted at a time when a shattered order could no longer continue to exercise its systematic, all-out dictatorship over society because of the ever-increasing capitalist world crisis; the export of this crisis from the imperialist countries to the dominated countries; the deepening recession; unemployment and the extension of widespread dissatisfactions within the toiling masses in 1977-78. Meanwhile, with each and every step, the mass movement was pushing the monarchy and its chief partner, dependent monopoly capitalism, closer to their downfall.

From another direction, the private sector of Iranian capitalism, which for a long time was shut out of political power because of the domination of the bureaucratic-military wing of imperialist dependent capitalism (the Shah and the high court), saw the opportunity to ride on the tide of the popular movement and to contain it within its own goals. At the same time, the traditional petty-bourgeoisie, which was in contradiction with the absolute rule of the Shah and the high court, was trying to exploit the people's religious beliefs in order to gain control of the movement and use it to its own advantage. In addition to these three forces, there were the working class and the working masses, who, in practice, became the passive element, subject to being lead by others due to the lack of political self-consciousness and their own organization.

At the end of 1978, the workers' strikes, especially the courageous, historic strike of the oil workers, not only showed the immense and decisive power of our proletariat, but also provided an opportunity for the private bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie to bargain with the imperialism in their behind-the-scenes

negotiations. As long as Iran's communist movement was suffering as before from weakness and division, however, the Bahman uprising naturally could not end but in a halfway political revolution and the new rule by the owners of capital. It was thus that the people of Iran, with years of a history of struggle, pain, torture and massacres behind them, found themselves faced with a rule that, from the very first days, denounced the arming of the people as treason against Islam and a conspiracy of imperialism: the barracks and institutions of the infamous imperial army, which was almost destroyed by the power of the people, were reconstructed hurriedly. The disarmament of the masses and the repair of the machinery of oppression such as SAVAK and the police became the first priority for the new rulers. Persecution and torture of revolutionaries, this time legitimized as defending Islam (!), restarted.

The new authority tried using organs of oppression such as the army and the pasdars (revolutionary guards) to uproot the revolutionary aspirations of the oppressed nationalities, the Kurds, Turkomans, Arabs and others. The masses of Kurdistan, who were seeking their most basic rights, have since withstood the most savage assaults of reaction. Massacres, mass murder of revolutionaries, robbery of property and bombardment of villages and civilian targets became a daily routine.

The attempts of the working class to form its own class organizations (councils, unions, etc.), many of them formed during their struggle against the Shah's imperialist dependent rule, from the first steps were frustrated by the new wave of oppression. Soon the working class lost its right to have its own organizations.

When the theatrical "occupation of the U.S. embassy" began, the "revolutionary" council passed a law according to which striking workers or those attempting sit-ins were to be tried as counter-revolutionaries with harsh penalties. Strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations of unemployed workers, street vendors, fishermen and women were bloodily suppressed. Offices and centers of revolutionary organizations became the target of black bands of club wielders and their government cover (the pasdars) and were closed. Every newspaper which did not support one of the two ruling factions of the government (bourgeoisie or petty-bourgeoisie) ceased to publish because of the most reactionary censorship (press laws). T.V., radio and other mass media became an apparatus for mass deception and the internal struggle of one wing of the

government against the other. Revolutionary communist workers were fired from factories and trade unions, and yellow, government-sponsored Islamic councils replaced the workers genuine councils. The firing of and physical attacks on revolutionary teachers and students reached an unprecedented dimension.

On the other hand our toiling people, who had expected the continuation of the struggle against imperialism and capitalism with the fall of the Shah's bloody tyranny, gradually began to realize the true nature of the new rulers and lose trust in their "legitimacy." The disillusion process was reaching its height when the Islamic Republic Party and its allies, who viewed the growing dissatisfaction of the people and the strength of the competing wing as a serious threat to their rule, presented the occupation-of-the-embassy show as an anti-imperialist struggle. This gave the opportunity for the petty-bourgeoisie to reinforce its faltering position and to push the so-called liberal bourgeoisie of the provisional government (most of whose members suddenly (!) turned out to be spies of U.S. imperialism) out of the circle of power, though only temporarily. Also, the petty-bourgeoisie aimed to further enhance the deception of the people (which was losing its effect by then).

However, since both of the ruling wings had no aim but rescuing Iran's troubled and crisis-ridden capitalism and since in today's world there can be no struggle against imperialism without struggle to end capitalism and establish the rule of the toiling masses, it did not take long for public dissatisfaction to grow again and put the government in an even deeper political-economic crisis. Within this context each of the rival factions of the ruling elite tried to weaken the other group's positions and consolidate its own grip on power.

Meanwhile revolutionary and communist forces, though still suffering from longstanding divisions and political confusion, tried to channel the dissatisfied masses who were tending towards the ultra-reactionary gangs of Bakhtiar and the traitorous monarchists toward revolutionary directions. Continuation of these efforts could doubtless have ended in the regime's fall. Thus the day of attacks on left centers and universities and the cold-blooded massacre of students by the guardians of capital and reaction was called the "day of government sovereignty." Thus the reactionary Iran-Iraq war, which brought nothing but poverty, destruction, disease and death to the toiling people of the two countries, be-

came an instrument of the government to regain its lost prestige and finally, with "the great victory of the oppressed people of Iran" over the "world oppressor," to end one of the most deceptive lies of history (the hostage situation).

Before the uprising, the Fedayees articulated a revisionist thesis of people's government and obliquely favored a united anti-dictatorial front, thus condemning themselves to follow the bourgeoisie. After the uprising they considered the "democratic support of the Bazargan government" to be their duty. Immediately after the occupation of the embassy they called for the "war against the liberals." With the Iran-Iraq war the central committee of the Fedayees "majority," thanks to its reactionary, anti-revolutionary policies, practically dissolved a large part of itself politically and organizationally within ruling capitalism and turned into unpaid agents of reaction. The leaders of the struggle against the so-called "guerrilla way", who one day sunk in the dirt of economism, because of their hatred for armed struggle, after loudly saying "the more left the better" now in their real steps suddenly ended up on the right!

It is clear, therefore, that under these circumstances the revolutionary left in order to stand against ever-growing repression from the regime on the one hand and opportunism and revisionism on the other must break its sectarian shell and choose a path of its own unity through ideological struggle by reaching toward the working class.

* * * * *

Now at the dawn of the second anniversary of the splendid Bahman uprising the present reactionary government has rebuilt the organs of repression--the army, police, gendarmerie, SAVAMA (the new SAVAK)--created the pasdars (guardians!) force, rehabilitated the traitorous generals of the imperial army, employed the coup d'etat (of 1953) and has poured American and Israeli shells from land and air on the struggling Kurdish people, this time under the palest shades of the chauvinistic sentiments of a portion of ignorant people.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the uprising our toiling masses have not forgotten that the same anti-people army aided by the mercenary anti-revolutionary pasdars viewed the massacre of the heroic peoples of Turkoman, Naghdeh, Khorramshahr, Tabriz and

Kurdistan to be their "holy" duty, and, thanks to the treachery of the "majority" of the central committee of the people's Fedayeen, eliminated the peasants councils of Turkoman and other provinces.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the Bahman uprising our workers and toilers remember that wherever their undeniable rights were at stake, wherever the issues were the genuine councils, the right to strike, sit-ins and protests of the regime's anti-labor policies, establishment of labor laws by workers, pay raises, extra wages for extra work during the war and the right of social and medical insurance, the counter-revolutionary pasdars--guardians of the order of class injustice, guardians of those troubled by the future destruction of capitalism--and the present regime never hesitated to suppress the workers.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the Bahman uprising our people witness this regime terrified by its own imminent end. In order to cover up its uncountable murders all over this yet unliberated land, after denying the most basic democratic rights of the people and suppressing the progressive and left press, is going to eradicate the remaining accomplishments of the Bahman uprising with the new bill to ban activities of the revolutionary organizations.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the bloody Bahman uprising the same jails and dungeons of the infamous monarchy which fell to the mighty hands of the toilers of Iran and were supposed to become "museums" of the crimes of the imperialist Shah and his masters, now present "manifestation" of the crimes of the Islamic Republic and its statesmen and are filled with revolutionary and communist political prisoners.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the Bahman uprising revolutionary personnel of the armed forces remember that all attempts to sustain the councils of the soldiers and noncommissioned and minor officers to stand up against reactionary fascistic methods of the mercenary military commanders met with suppression, arrest, and firing.

At the dawn of the second anniversary of the revolutionary Bahman uprising our toiling masses remember that the revolutionary movement of students and progressive teachers supported by the revolutionary organizations met with the organized assault from offi-

cial and unofficial armed gangs guarding darkness and ignorance. Our people remember how exposing the reactionary policies of the present rulers in war and helping the war-stricken people were labelled as activities of an imaginary "fifth column."

But what is proven by all this? Large masses of our people expected fundamental social changes, but achieved nothing but repression, mass murder, poverty, disease, execution, torture, inflation and lack of any security. But is the day not far away when the mighty call of the proletariat, which will shake the rule of reactionary capitalism and world imperialism over every inch of this land, will be "forward to another revolution"? All this places left and revolutionary forces facing crucial tasks which, if not fulfilled, will herald even graver events than during the 1941-1953 period. Under present conditions, when the establishment of either of the ruling groups will mean an immediate onslaught against the revolutionary forces and toiling masses, the basic task of revolutionary forces must be an all-out effort to: expose the reactionary, anti-worker policies of both groups and fight both sides of this fake coin; organize the workers and toiling masses independently; extend the ideological struggle with the wide spectrum of left and revolutionary forces and from there start on the path toward unity; also make total preparation to withstand the future onslaught of the regime.

Struggling to fulfill the high dreams of the martyred toilers of Bahman is the only way to keep their memory and struggle alive forever.

Long live the armed Bahman uprising!

Forward to protect and extend the accomplishments of the Bahman uprising!

Death to the U.S. - led world imperialism!

Forward to preparation of the socialist revolution!

★ The Necessity of United Action

The following is from Raha'i, no. 43, August 1980. The problems that the Iranian left has had and continues to have in relation to cooperation and united action are well known to those familiar with its history. This article examines the factors behind the disunity of the left in Iran today and proposes some possible solutions from a realistic perspective.

Eighteen months after the bloody uprising of the 19th of Bahman (February 10, 1979), the issue of united action by the left forces has once again been raised by many political forces. The intensification of pressure and repression on the part of the regime, the extensive and systematic attacks by the ruling group on democratic freedoms, the growth of general dissatisfaction and the polarization of different political forces within society have all added a special importance to united action.

Although this issue was raised many times in the past by different organizations including our own, and despite the fact that certain steps were taken in its direction, none of these past efforts led to any positive or practical results. The sectarianism and authoritarianism of the left tendencies, the fact that many misperceived the future of the left as a boundless one when in reality it was very circumscribed, and the difficulty of recognizing the imminent danger of an intensified repression originating in the new regime which by various maneuvers was even successful in confusing political forces into vascillation from their radical positions--all these were factors that led to a situation where the disunity of the left seemed to be "genetically determined." But now, with the passage of time, things have changed; many of these factors no longer appear to be intractable.

The Left and the People

The people's illusions concerning the "Islamic Republic" are steadily evaporating. The ineptitude of the ruling group, the internal disputes between the different ruling factions, the fact that the most elementary social problems have been left unsettled, and the exposing by the democratic and political forces of the true nature and direction of the "Islamic Republic" have all worked together in bringing the people closer to a complete distrust of the regime. Perhaps, if the "leadership" had not been

able to exploit the benefits it gained from being recognized as "the destroyers of the Shahanshahi order" as it has done until now, even the chants of "allah Akbar" (God is Great) would not be heard as extensively as they are today. In fact, that which appears as a "mass base" for the regime here and there has not arisen due to the fulfillment of the people's demands which would have given this base the character of a material defense of a regime that represented these demands, but rather arose from a "trust" that the people had in the person of Ayatollah Khomeini and the perceived possibility of fulfilling some of these demands through his efforts.

In any case, it is a fact that the "mass base" of the regime is severely threatened and a lack of trust towards the ruling group is quickly growing. It is true that this "lack of trust" in many instances has been transformed into apathy, that a great many people do not display a real concern about what is happening politically, and that in some cases, a desire to "return to the past" and other "golden dreams" has even found a place in the hearts of many. Nevertheless, it is also true that the left and democratic forces have made relatively successful strides in mobilizing the people. Although this relative success was insufficient when compared to the extremely fertile conditions that exist for political work amongst the people and although the left, due to its own shortcomings and disunity which further circumscribe its power, could not take complete advantage of the favorable conditions, this success did, in many ways, build the left politically and gave it valuable experience.

This relative success taught the left many things. The Iranian left, which was still made up of small, basically intellectual circles even up to the days before the uprising, and had had the main part of its political experience limited to work in team houses and face to face confrontation with the Shah's regime, was confronted with a completely new set of conditions after the uprising. Obstacles like those of the past no longer existed to block attempts to contact the people, to attract and mobilize supporters and to expand organizationally. Left intellectuals no longer needed to employ complicated tactics that yielded limited results for the purpose of going amongst the people. In every corner of Iran, the possibility for political struggle now existed and a great sea of opportunities for struggle lay before the Iranian left.

Under these conditions, due to its lack of political experience

under relatively democratic conditions, the left, instead of initiating a principled policy of cooperation for furthering the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles, became consumed with sectarianism. Each political force went after only that which was good for its own organization and that which would propagandize its own line of thinking. There was no attempt to bring about a central unifying political tendency. The left did not have the experience to understand that unity in action was not only not in contradiction with the individual growth of different organizations and tendencies in the movement but was in fact also actually a guarantee for the continuation of the left's activities and the safe-keeping of those gains which would allow each political tendency to continue its independent work more easily.

This "growth" and "expansion" however brings with it its own special limitations for the left political tendencies, especially when society as a whole is in turmoil. One of the natural consequences of such a growth for any political organization or line of thinking which seeks to learn from its practice is the clarification of the limitations on its own political and organizational capacity for undertaking a general, all-encompassing, extensive struggle. When the confusion that comes with quick growth is replaced with the acceptance of the reality of each individual force's lack of completeness for the extensive mobilization of the people, by necessity, changes begin to take place within the ranks of the left. It seems that the trend of political events has been such that each political tendency has had to "grow" to a certain extent and has had to add just so many supporters to its ranks before it could grasp the fact that the relative growth of each tendency and its quantitative expansion did not necessarily answer the needs of the movement.

In addition to the existence of confusion arising from the possibility of the massive expansion of individual left forces who eventually placed the principle of independent work in opposition to political cooperation and thus rejected the dialectic of independent work and cooperation between different forces, other impediments also existed, blocking the way for a principled cooperation between left forces. The Organization of People's Fedayee Guerrillas, by following an authoritarian line in its relations with other forces, played an essentially disruptive role in response to any attempt undertaken for cooperation between left forces. The O.I.P.F.G.'s understanding of cooperation between left forces was not a principled one based on accepting the existence of different views between political organizations and the

need for independent work by each tendency according to its beliefs and the promotion of cooperation between them despite their differences. Rather, it was based on a self-centered perspective that practically understood cooperation to mean the towing of its own policies by everyone else. O.I.P.F.G. believed that they could either isolate other forces or pull them under its banner by relying on bureaucratic principles and refusing to acknowledge the existence of other left forces.

This reached its culmination in the electoral policy of the O.I.P.F.G. and was reflected across the social scene. But this "impediment" also was not able to withstand the internal changes taking place in the left movement. The authoritarianism of the O.I.P.F.G. came to be criticized from within by the "minority" and from without by other left forces.

The disintegration of the "Unity Conference" which showed the excessive haste of the participating organizations for a "Principled Unity," also helped to confirm the necessity of considering "unity in action" before any hurried move or "unity from above." The division of the "Unity Conference" into three different tendencies (Razmandegan, Peykar and Revolutionary Unity) and the consequent cooperative actions between Razmandegan and Peykar with "Rah Kargar" during the past few months has shown to many that the process of "unity"--especially that between organizations which have not yet found their ideological homogeneity and strength--must start with "unity in action," or at least the cooperation of different political tendencies within the left movement around the most basic positions.

The Platform of "Unity in Action"

Another of the impediments to the "unity in action" of the left forces in the past has been the insistence by some of the forces upon a "specific and all-encompassing" platform. The comrades who were previously organized in the "Unity Conference" believed that the prerequisite to unity in action was a specific and complete program. Although these organizations, after the experience of the "Unity Conference," put this prerequisite aside and some of them began to organize cooperative actions with Rah Kargar, the idea for the necessity of such a platform lingers still amongst many Iranian political forces. In our opinion, when social conditions demand the unity in action of the left more than they have at any other time, such a platform must not be so "specific" that in practice it blocks any cooperation between the militant left

political organizations. The most fundamental issue that the platform for left unity in action must concern itself with is that of taking an uncompromising position concerning the ruling clique

In our view, any left political force--regardless of the kind of theoretical orientation or ideological position it holds--can cooperate with other forces in the practical struggle around the most basic democratic and anti-imperialist slogans as long as it has a clear and explicit position concerning the reactionary ruling clique.

Obviously, pointing out the unimportance of a "specific and all-encompassing" political platform at the present time and condensing all that is necessary into the taking of a position "against the ruling clique," does not mean ignoring such a platform at a later time. Such a platform can only be constructed after different political tendencies have united in action in the most basic and essential senses of the word. The first step never begins with a "specific and all-encompassing" political platform. One must start with the first steps and after appraising the first experiences, take later steps.

The Iranian left movement has a long way to go before reaching such later stages and thus it must begin from the most basic and possible means in order to undertake the difficult road ahead. Perhaps in the history of the last eighteen months since the revolution, the issue of unity in action of the left forces has never been as seriously on the agenda for the political forces as it is today. And perhaps the impediments to the "unity in action" facing the political forces have also never been so few. And finally, perhaps the social conditions have never so urgently called for the necessity of such cooperation. Yet, these suppositions can only be proven once the left political forces, far from all forms of sectarianism and feelings of self-importance, understand the "sensitivity of the present conditions" and the need for "unity in action" and each of them does its share to take a step forward.



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Kurdish Revolutionaries being executed by forces of the Islamic republic regime.