

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAN

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In all the major political developments in twentieth-century Iran, from the constitutional revolution of 1906–11 and the nationalization of the oil industry in early 1950s to the political upheavals of early 1960s and the 1979 revolution, workers were major participants and demonstrated a high level of militancy. However, governments of diverse persuasions, from the Pahlavis' modernizing dictatorial monarchy to the liberal nationalists, and the Islamists' pre-modern theocracy, have ignored workers' legitimate demands and suppressed their dissent. Many factors account for this failure, not least of them being the qualitative and quantitative weaknesses of the working class—a result of the specific nature of capitalist development and industrialization in Iran. Because of its own internal weaknesses, the workers' movement has depended historically on left social democratic and communist movements both organizationally and intellectually. In fact, socialist and communist ideas about the workers' right to form unions and emancipate themselves preceded the emergence of the working class itself. Yet dependence on external leadership made Iranian workers susceptible to the theoretical and political wavering and internal conflicts of the country's left intelligentsia. As well, the continuous suppression of the left by successive dictatorial regimes inevitably also affected the militancy and organizational efficacy of the working-class movement.

In this context, it is reasonable to argue that the progress of the working-class movement has been and continues to be directly linked to the movement for democracy and social change. Removing the political obstacles standing in the way of independent trade unions and other forms of labour organization remains the working-class movement's most immediate task. But this is not

possible without achieving other democratic advances, including full freedom of expression and association and a free press, and other constituent elements of political and economic democracy. Without this the left intelligentsia cannot develop effective communicative and political links with the workers' movement, and that movement, in turn, will be confined to sparse, sporadic actions at the factory-level, as it is today.

EVOLUTION OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Ideas about workers' rights and organizations emerged in last decades of the nineteenth century.¹ Several Iranian intellectuals formed the first Social Democratic Party in 1903; its programme called for, among other things, the right to unionize and strike, and an eight-hour working day.² They also tried to make connections with socialist leaders in Russia. This was exemplified by the 'Iranians' Letter' sent by Chalangarian to Kautsky in 1908 and the latter's response.³ Initial efforts to establish trade unions began in 1906, at the peak of the Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911), with the formation of the printers' union in Tehran. The return to power of the supporters of the absolutist monarch in 1908, and their defeat by the constitutionalists in 1910, predictably led first to the suspension and then the resumption of trade union activities. The first decade of the twentieth century marked the actual organization of the printers' trade union and the publication of its newspaper, Unity of Labour (*Ettihad-e Kargaran*); their successful strike has been called 'the first manifestation in Persia of a collectivist or socialist movement.'⁴ Encouraged by the printers' success in improving their working conditions, including an eight-hour day and overtime pay, between 1910 and 1922 several other unions were formed including a bakers' union and unions of postal workers, shoemakers and dressmakers. In the 1920s Iran's first Communist Party, *Edalat* (Justice), was also started.

In this period, both trade union activities and the political movement for national independence got their inspiration from revolutionary developments in Russia. Socialist and labour activists among the Iranian diaspora in Russian Azarbaijan, and the formation of Iran's first communist party in Baku, played a determining role in the upsurge of labour activism in the homeland. The first congress of the party held in Anzali in 1920 emphasized the rights of 'Iranian toilers' to organize their own trade unions and urged the party's local branches to work in that direction. This led to the emergence of the all-Union Council of Tehran (*Showray-e Etehadiehay-e Tehran*), consisting of three representatives from each union and representing 20 percent of all workers in Tehran.⁵

Reza-Khan's British-backed military coup d'état of 1921, his eventual seizure of the throne in 1925, and his brutal suppression of left activists struck severe blows to the primordial labour movement. Yet Reza Shah's reign also marked the emergence of modern industries and a significant increase in the size of the industrial working class. This eventually led to the second major period of labour activism which, with the direct involvement and support of the

Iranian communists, came about after Reza Shah's removal from power in 1941. In fact, the period 1941–1953 was perhaps the most important period in the history of the labour and trade union movement in Iran. The oil workers syndicates, led by the Yousef Eftekhari group, achieved enormous success in organizing workers in the oilfields of southern Iran.⁶ Workers constituted 80 percent of members of the newly formed Tudeh Party (the pro-Soviet Communist Party); by 1942, the Central United Council (CUC) (*Showray-e Motahedeh Markazi*), organized and led by the Tudeh Party, claimed a membership of 400,000 workers through 186 affiliated unions.⁷

The state's response to the growing demands and political influences of the unions and the Tudeh in the post-war period was essentially coercive. In 1949 the CUC was banned and many of its leaders were detained. But the period also saw the rise of the nationalist movement against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the coming to power of Mossadeq's nationalist government. This was a period of constitution-based government and a free press, leading to greater political awareness and activism on the part of large sections of the middle- and lower-middle classes and working classes, and the growing appeal of the socialist ideas and programs promoted by the left. But the Tudeh Party turned the labour unions into appendages of the party in the service of its short-term agenda, influenced mainly by the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

The return to power of Mohammad Reza Shah through the 1953 CIA-induced coup d'état, and the brutal suppression of the Tudeh Party and labour leaders, once more forced a retreat of the labour and left movements. The Tudeh Party was declared illegal, socialist publications were banned, and all independent unions were disbanded and replaced by state-run syndicates. At the same time, there was major drive toward industrialization. In the absence of a strong domestic entrepreneurial class the government played a dominant role in directing industrialization, working closely with multinational corporations. The Shah's drive toward the industrialization and modernization of Iranian social and economic structures, however, did not permeate the political arena where no independent, voluntary institutions within civil society were allowed. Between 1953 to 1978, for twenty-five years, the working class remained effectively unorganized and lived under close surveillance by the SAVAK (the secret police). Of course, there were still sporadic struggles for improving pay and working conditions, and in the 1970s, after several major 'illegal' strikes, industrial workers achieved some of their economic demands. But the demands for the right to establish independent unions and to participate in management had to be put on hold until 1978, when the tide of the anti-Shah revolution swept away the state's coercive apparatuses and its agents.

With the weakening of government control and police surveillance industrial plants again became sites of labour activism. Strikes, particularly by the most privileged segments of the Iranian working class in key industries such as oil, communications, heavy industries and power plants, had a severe impact on the Shah's regime and brought the country to a virtual economic halt.⁸

Becoming aware of its own power and potential for united struggle, and influenced by left organizations that had resumed their activities, the working class rearranged and enlarged its demands. Initially limited to pay and working conditions, under the influence of the left its demands now included political and anti-imperialist measures such as the nationalization of the key industries and expulsion of foreign employees.

The establishment of united front organizations, such as the Workers and Employees Councils (*Showra-ye Kargarān va Karmandān*), during and immediately after the 1979 revolution provided a unique experience in self-management and democratic participation and had an enormous political and ideological impact on workers and the left organizations. The councils, one of the most fascinating outcomes of the revolutionary movement, were thought at the time to be an instrument for consolidation of political democracy in Iran. In various factories and plants they ventured to assert control over production, management and distribution, as well as enabling workers to participate in the country's political process. But these ambitious goals proved illusory. The divided ideological and membership configuration of the councils made them the locus of the hard struggles and conflicting agendas of workers and salaried employees. Both categories had membership in the councils. In addition, the councils were beset by constitutional and organizational ambiguities. The three major political currents in contemporary Iran, the socialists, the nationalists, and the Islamists, each to varying degrees tried to mould the workers' movement and bring it under their control. Lacking its own internal ideological and organizational cohesion, the Iranian working class was hampered by these diverse and hostile tendencies. Constant infighting within the councils added to the ideological confusion.

The gradual takeover of the councils by Islamic activists and functionaries of the Islamic state, and the expulsion and eventual suppression of secular left activists and their replacement with Islamic *Showras*, ended a major period of independent labour activism in Iran. Whatever their achievements, the divisive atmosphere of the early councils exhibits clearly the political and organizational weaknesses of the Iranian working class and the left generally. The causes of these weaknesses are manifold. In this essay we focus on three: the configuration of the working population; emerging mechanisms of Islamic state control; and the troubled relationship between workers and left political groups and organizations.

THE CONFIGURATION OF THE WORKING POPULATION

The relatively small number of industrial workers employed in large modern industries is a factor which inhibits the formation of a strong and united working class. Intense work segmentation and a weakly developed division of labour has not only created a highly fragmented working class within the manufacturing sector, but pre-capitalist crafts still continue to live side by side with

capitalist industrial enterprises. The vast majority of the latter are very small firms, while the larger enterprises, mostly established through licensing agreements with MNCs, are predominantly government-owned and controlled and have been the main arena for worker activism. However, this activist core is under constant intensive surveillance not only by the police but also by fellow workers of the factories' Islamic associations. Two decades after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, which promised to install 'the rule of the toilers' (*mustaz'afan*) and to create a strong, independent industrial sector and sustained industrial development, the new regime has failed to break the cycle of industrial weakness which is reflected also in weaknesses in the working-classes' organizational abilities.

Table 1: Configuration of Working Population (aged 10+) by Employment Category, 1996 ('000s):

Employers	Self-employed	Wage/salary earners private sector	Wage/salary earners public sector	Unpaid family workers	Co-ops and others	Total
528	5199	3270	4258	797	520	14572
3.6%	35.6%	22.4%	29.2%	5.4%	3.5%	100%

Source: Adapted from Statistical Centre of Iran, *Statistical Yearbook: 1996–97*, Tehran, 1998, p. 79.

As in other developing countries, the traditional left in Iran has tended to lump together all working people (with the exception of the peasants) and to call them the working class or proletariat. This conceals the heterogeneity of the living and working conditions and demands of a very diverse population and is theoretically meaningless and politically misleading. A closer look at the employment categories show that wage and salary earners constitute about half of the working population. According to the latest census data (1996), out of a total population of over 60 million, 14.5 million people aged ten or over are working. Of these about 3.2 million, or 22.4 percent, are wage and salary earners in the private sector, and about 4.2 million, or 29.2 percent, are wage and salary earners in the public sector. The five million self-employed are the still largest category, constituting 35.6 percent, not counting the over 5 percent (just under a million) who are unpaid family workers (see Appendix and Table 1).⁹

Even among those who sell their labour as wage and salary earners, moreover, there are enormous differentiations in economic, social, political and cultural conditions with very real consequences in terms of alliances and combined political actions. Indeed, the working population really falls into three distinct class categories. First, there are the 40 percent of the working population who are traditionally petit bourgeois, or old middle class, made up of the self-employed and unpaid family workers, the majority of whom work

under pre-capitalist relations.¹⁰ Then there is the diversified and problematic ‘new middle class’, which technically includes everyone from managers to professionals, and to salaried clerical and retail employees. We may exclude the 2 percent who have senior executive occupations who clearly fall within the capitalist class, or are directly in the service of value extraction.¹¹ The rest, which we estimate at 3.5 million people or no less than 24 percent of the working population, properly constitute a new middle class which needs to be differentiated from the working class, especially in a less developed country like Iran, because of their higher level of education, job security, income and social status. Only 27 percent of the total working population, 4 million out of 14.5 million, are wage workers. They are also differentiated in terms of skills, income and working environment, of course, but their similar overall condition and relation to capital justifies grouping them under the single category of the wage workers (see Appendix and Table 2).

Table 2: Configuration of Working Population (aged 10+) by Occupational Category, 1996 ('000s):

Senior officials	Professionals	Technicians	Clerical	Service, sales workers	Agricultural and fishery	Craft and trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elementary occupations	Others
325	1263	457	614	1480	3043	2942	1303	1931	1213
2.2%	8.6%	3.1%	4.2%	10.1%	20.9%	20.15%	8.9%	13.2%	8.3%

Source: Adapted from Statistical Centre of Iran, *Statistical Yearbook: 1996–97*, Tehran, 1998, p. 80.

In addition to its small size, the Iranian working class is highly differentiated and segmented. For example, the industrial (manufacturing) workers, the most politically significant section of the Iranian working class, are scattered in over 360,000 industrial establishments, 91.6 percent of which are workshops of less than five workers and employees. Of the 1.2 million wage and salary earners in the manufacturing sector, over 269,000 work in these small workshops alongside hundreds of thousands of unpaid family workers. Over 279,000 work in small-/mid-sized factories of 6–49 workers and employees, and about 69,000 in factories of 50–99 workers and employees. At the other pole, however, over 1,200 factories and plants have over 100 workers and employees and in total employ over 580,000 wage and salary earners.¹² These workers form the core of the Iranian working class and are the focus of attention of labour activists, and as such are the main targets of the Islamic regime’s ideological and repressive apparatuses.

A further significant aspect of the situation of the Iranian working population relates to the millions of unemployed. The latest sample data of the 15– to 64-year-old working population show the percentage of the unemployed to be

13.1,¹³ which is far below the actual number. The vast majority, or 57.9 percent of the unemployed, are in the 15 to 24 age category. This fact partly explains the continued youth unrest and activism in present day Iran. There is, additionally, a large ‘sub-proletariat’ of shanty town dwellers, the ‘*zaghe-neshinan*’, mostly made up of the displaced rural population who live under precarious conditions. During the revolution Khomeini and the Islamists, unlike the left that almost solely focused its activities on industrial workers, successfully mobilized this large population of urban poor by addressing their specific concerns.¹⁴ All these factors—the high percentage of the traditional middle class, the existence of a sizable new-middle class, the relatively small percentage of wage workers and their dispersion in large number of small and medium workshops and factories, as well as the persistence of millions of unemployed and the growing size of the shanty town sub-proletariat—have serious implications for the kind of political agenda that can be credibly put forward by and for different social classes, including workers.

Table 3: Configuration of Female Working Population, 1976–1996 ('000s):

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1996</u>
Female Population	16,352	24,164	29,164
Economically Active Population*	9,796	12,820	16,027
Females Economically Active	1,449	1,307	2,037
Employed Female Population	1,212	975	1,765
Senior Officials/managers	5	13	16
Public Sector Wage and Salary Employees	245	407	698
Private Sector Wage and Salary Employees	322	99	249
Self Employed	130	181	347
Unpaid Family Workers	495	212	366
Co-ops and Unspecified	12	70	87

* This includes unemployed seeking work.

Source: Calculated on the basis of the population census results, Iran Statistical Centre, *Iran Statistical Yearbook*, 1977, 1987, 1997, Tehran, pp., 29, 31, 58, 70, 80, and 81.

Another major aspect of the configuration of the working population relates to gender. The sexual segregation of the work force is a persistent policy of the Islamic state, and under Islamic rule the share of women in the total economically active population dropped from the pre-Revolutionary figure of 14.8 percent in 1976 to 10.2 percent in 1986.¹⁵ Although this percentage increased in the mid-1990s to 12.7 percent, the female participation rate remains below the pre-revolutionary figure (see Table 3). Much of the increase in female

employment relates to the government sector. Female employment in the public sector as a proportion of total female employment increased from 20 percent in the pre-revolutionary period to 31 percent in the mid-1980s and 39 percent in the mid-1990s. Two factors explain this increase. First, dramatic population growth, which sharply increased the demand for new female teachers. Women are overwhelmingly dominant in the staff of sexually segregated educational institutions (82 percent). Ideological and political considerations also account for new female hiring. Employed in the public sector are large numbers of female family members of government officials, martyrs (*Shohada*), veterans (*Janbazan*), and the war disabled (*Ma'lulin*). To these, we should add an even larger number of women who since the revolution have been recruited into such institutions as the all-female morality squads, Islamic associations of government and semi-government agencies, the *Pasdaran* Corps, the Society for Islamic Propaganda (*Howzeh-ye Tablighat-e Eslami*), the Martyr's Foundation (*Bonyad-e Shahid*), the militia (*Basij*),¹⁶ and the special women's committees in neighbourhood Mosques—all charged with disseminating Islamic values through indoctrination and intimidation. Thus, most of these women are employed in state and para-state apparatuses designed to control and police other women.

In the industrial manufacturing sector, women comprise only 5.2 percent of all wage workers and salaried employees.¹⁷ In the post-revolutionary period, the number of female self employed and unpaid family workers increased dramatically. This trend has both economic and ideological causes. First, in many cases, men have replaced female workers whose employment, otherwise, would add to day-care costs. But beyond this, ideologically, the Shari'a-based Iranian Civil Code, by recognizing the man as family head and putting him in charge, has enforced his responsibility 'for providing for the wife' (Article 1106) and has promoted the perception that women's paid employment is not necessary for the family's upkeep. This and other legal provisions, such as the husband's right to prevent his wife from working in jobs which he considers 'against the family's interest' (*Masaleh-e Khanevadegi*, Article 1117) are 'anti-female-labour force participation messages.'¹⁸ Of course such messages do not prevent women from doing paid work without which increasingly family's survival is impossible. Yet, the messages work to legitimize women's inferior status in work and pay hierarchies. The combined impact of economic and ideological factors has increasingly pushed female workers out of the large urban industries which are covered by the provisions of the Labour Law. Female industrial workers at present are found in three different categories: large industries, small workshops with less than ten workers and women working at home (piece-workers). The last category, according to one study, comprises the majority of female urban workers, who are excluded not only from the provisions of the Labour Law, but from work statistics as well.¹⁹ Obviously, this situation negatively affects the organizability of the employed female population.

The segmentation of the working population on the basis of class, gender and work is intensified further by the ideological and religious differentiation imposed by the Islamic state. From its inception, the regime's indoctrination and manipulation of the people's (including the workers') religious beliefs drove an ideological wedge between them. Earlier decades of dictatorial rule and anti-socialist propaganda had already helped to inoculate the vast majority of workers against infection by socialist ideas. The organizational splintering and intellectual and political isolation of the left movement made the workers even more vulnerable to Islamic ideology. Through intimidation and deceptive rhetoric the Islamists managed to construct a wall separating both the working poor and organized labour from socialist ideas and projects. The Islamic regime turned the 'opium' of the masses into the steroid of the masses. But responding to overpowering demands for social justice, promoted by the left, the Islamic regime, while violently attacking the 'atheistic' language of the socialists, nevertheless appropriated some of the ideas and jargon of the outlawed groups. One faction of the ruling bloc even started to identify itself as 'left' to differentiate itself from the conservatives, which they identified as the 'right'. Parallel to the creation of separate students' associations, women's organizations and professional groups, each faction has established its own workers' association whose main task has been to support its parent faction when the need arises. The formation of the Association of Islamic Councils, the House of Labour, and an Islamic Labour Party (*Hezb-e Eslamiy-e Kar*), with the pretext of facilitating 'the participation of productive forces in political power'²⁰ are cases in point.

Despite this ideological manipulation, however, objective realities and the harsh conditions of life which Iranian workers must endure began to strip away illusions about the Islamic regime. During over two decades of Islamic rule industrial workers, the unemployed and the urban poor have confronted the regime through sporadic protests, sit-ins and strikes, demanding an improvement in wages and working conditions. Workers suffered most in the early post-revolutionary period, particularly during the harsh working conditions imposed by the regime as a result of the long war with Iraq. Such measures as the extension of the working day, reduction of wages, forced fund-raising for the war by the Islamic workers councils and associations, involuntary transfer of workers to the front, and inadequate bunkers during bombardments of the factories are cases in point. The workers resisted these measures as best as they could through such actions as signing petitions to the authorities and organizing sit-ins and protests within the confines of their factories. In many cases they boycotted the general meetings of the Islamic councils, demonstrated against the Islamic associations in the factories and in some cases resorted to strikes. Workers' protest would reach its height whenever the news of war casualties involving a fellow worker on the front was received in the factory.²¹

With the war ending, the workers became bolder in their demands, and moved their demonstrations to the nearby streets or highways. Major issues for the workers in the post-war period have been delayed wages and benefits, lack

of occupational safety standards, job classification schemes, and layoffs. Labour activists have recorded about 90 cases of strikes in large industries alone in 1998, including strikes in the Isfahan Steel plant, Behshahr Textiles, the Hamedan Glass manufacturing plant, and most important of all several strikes and demonstrations by workers in the oil industry at the Abadan Refinery, and in Gachsaran. Most of these protests involved the blockages of major highways, followed by brutal responses by the police and military.²² Other examples of such actions include the co-ordinated strike of thousands of workers from the National Industrial Groups, General Tyre and Arak Industrial Groups.

In other cases, workers have used the regime's rhetoric and celebrations against it. For example, under pressure from workers the 1999 May Day celebration was organized by the House of Workers and the Ministry of Labour with the participation of parliamentarians from the regime's pragmatic faction as speakers, in defiance of an explicit ban by the Ministry of Interior. At the rally staged in Tehran (which started with a recital of the Quran and concluded with the Shi'i ritual of chest beating), the workers seized the opportunity to protest against a new bill which had been introduced in the parliament. This bill, initiated by the conservatives, exempted small workshops with fewer than three workers from provisions of the Labour Law but, faced with such severe resistance, it was postponed. However, the outgoing conservative majority, even after its overwhelming defeat in the parliamentary election in February 2000, later passed the bill, now amended to exclude workshops with less than five workers and employees from the provisions of the Labour Law.

MECHANISMS OF CONTROL UNDER THE ISLAMIC STATE

The Islamic government replaced the Shah's regime at a time when all the major industrial plants and public and private institutions were under the control of the workers' and employees' councils (*shouras*). The councils were the outcome of strike committees that had emerged during the 1979 revolution, and which in the absence of the owners and managers were in control of these institutions. The major councils, in many cases, were either formed by or were under the ideological influence of the sympathizers of different left organizations, or the Islamist Mujahedin.²³ Early in the post-revolutionary period the councils were supportive of the new regime. All of them followed Khomeini's back-to-work decree. However, confrontation with the Provisional Government, headed by the liberal nationalist/Islamist Bazargan, was inevitable. The government's policy was to try to preserve the *status quo* in the industrial sector, while the councils had radical demands including the immediate improvement of working conditions and wages, the nationalization of industries, and workers' participation in management. The liberals in government were too slow in responding to the demands of the councils; the councils had no patience for waiting for gradual reforms. After the hostage crisis, the fall of the Provisional Government and the consolidation of the clerics' monopoly

of power, the situation changed. The regime tried to bring the pluralist and independent Showras under its control, and failed. This failure led to the suppression of the councils and the establishment of the yellow 'Islamic Showras'. The role of these councils, along with the 'Islamic associations' which mushroomed in most major plants and institutions, was similar to the *Arbeitsfronts* in Nazi Germany and the *Sampo* in Japan during wartime fascist rule. While creating an atmosphere of terror in the workplace, they moved towards a thorough-going ideological indoctrination of workers and employees.²⁴

The new regime's labour policy was one of its most contentious preoccupations, second only to the clerics' gender crusades. Under intense pressure from the left organizations and workers in the early months of the revolution, the regime annulled the *ancien régime's* Labour Law. With the demise of the councils and workers' militancy, the first version of a new Islamic Labour Law, based on a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, was designed by an arch-conservative Labour minister. This draft, among others, implicitly envisaged the worker (*kargar*) as a semi-slave who 'rents' himself/herself to the employer (*karfarma*), and who must therefore remain under the almost absolute control of the employer. The draft created such an uproar that it was shelved after intense infighting within the ruling bloc. Faced with the realities of a society that had experienced capitalist market relations and associated impacts, the regime had to retreat and make some concessions with regard to the rights of workers—as it also did in its gender politics. Even in the absence of the left and pro-workers opposition which, by then, it had already brutally suppressed, the regime's rhetoric of being a government of the dispossessed could be manipulated by workers and the ruling populist faction to force the government to come up with a less outrageous law. In the end, it took about twelve years for the Islamic Republic to devise and approve its Labour Law.

As in other social and political domains, pragmatists in the regime, responding to internal and international pressures, had learned to adopt seemingly acceptable legislation knowing that they are not bound to implement it. After years of going back and forth between the Parliament and the Council of Guardians, the new draft was eventually approved by the Expediency Council in 1990.²⁵ Cleverly drafted, the new Labour Law is not only far more advanced than the pre-Revolutionary Law, but in many of its provisions it is among the most progressive labour laws in the Middle East. For example, the law makes layoffs very difficult and increases compensation at termination (Articles 21–33). This had been one of the workers' major concerns. It also reduces working hours from 48 to 44 hours a week and to 36 hours for hazardous jobs (Article 51, 52). The minimum working age was increased to 15 (Article 79). Annual paid leave was increased to 30 days (Article 64).

The pre-Revolutionary provision of 'equal wages' for men and women 'for performing work of equal value' (Article 38) was confirmed, with an added proviso prohibiting wage discrimination on the basis of 'age, gender, race,

ethnic origin and political and religious convictions.’ Pregnancy leave was increased from ten weeks (six weeks before and four weeks after child-birth) to ninety days (Article 76).²⁶ These provisions are more woman-friendly than the pre-Revolutionary Labour Law, at least on paper. However, actual practice, as also seen in the case of promised but not delivered day-care provisions, effectively cancels out the progressive legislation. In fact, many employers would stop hiring women if they had to be paid the same wages as men. Studies conducted by researchers in both the pre- and the post-revolutionary periods show that, intimidated by the employers’ layoff power, female workers hesitate even to disclose their wage and working hours to researchers.²⁷ Pregnancy leave, amounting to two-thirds of the last wage, as in the past, applies only to workers who have paid the employees’ share of insurance. It needs to be borne in mind, moreover, that only a tiny minority of female workers are employed in industries which are covered by the Labour Law.

The area where the new law deliberately and significantly falls far short of the old law is in its attempt to restrain workers’ right to organize. In fact, with regard to the right to form labour unions and to negotiate collective agreements as well as the right to strike—that is, in the most important three areas for guaranteeing workers’ rights—the Islamists’ Law is more reactionary than the Labour Law enforced by the Shah. Fearful of labour unions, their legacy and their historical links with the left, the new Law has even avoided using the familiar terms of *Sandika* (syndicate) or *Etehadieh* (union). Instead, it has invented ‘Guild Societies’ that workers ‘may establish’ to ‘protect the legitimate and statutory rights and interests of workers and employers (sic) ...’ (Article 131). To add to the confusion, two other types of organizations are seen as representing workers; one, the notorious ‘Islamic associations’, whose aim is ‘... to propagate and disseminate Islamic culture ...’ (Article 130), and the other, the ‘Islamic workers councils’, the yellow councils that replaced the genuine workers’ and employees’ councils. Each factory or plant can choose only one of the three types of organizations, each of which can only be established under strict supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The irony, however, is that even these rudimentary and strictly controlled organizations, as a result of intense pressure of the workers, have come to create problems for the regime. Because of the provisions that are favourable to workers the Labour Law has become a major source of tension between the populist and hard-line factions of the ruling bloc. Both public and private sector managers have called for major revisions of the Labour Law. They want easier provisions to facilitate layoffs.

The Islamic republic’s other ‘progressive’ legislation included a Social Security Law (which on paper expanded the coverage of the insured), as well as a law compelling the sale of a total of 43 percent of the government’s shares in public companies to their wage workers and salaried employees (financial support for the purchase of shares was provided through the creation of co-operatives but, notably, most of the purchases have been of shares in money-losing companies).²⁸

But overall the Islamic State's policy in relation to the Iranian working class has been in line with its overall repressive political strategy. In its over two decades in power, the regime has developed the most powerful and intricate array of coercive, ideological, and economic apparatuses to suppress dissent. It is not an overstatement to claim that no other type of state, including fascist regimes, has ever succeeded in establishing and employing such diverse apparatuses of control over a deliberately weakened civil society. In addition to apparatuses typically available to other states, such as the police, the army, the courts, the mass media and the educational system, the Islamic regime in Iran has incorporated its traditional Shi'i structures, and a range of new institutions, at various levels of civil society.

In the early years of the post-revolutionary period, particularly during the eight-year Iran–Iraq war, the mosques became multi-functional. Residents in each neighbourhood had to maintain good relations with its clerics and functionaries. Apart from their traditional function of being a place for prayers and religious propaganda, the mosques distributed coupons (*bon*) for subsidized and rationed food on which the vast majority of the people depended for their survival. A certificate of good morals was also needed by job applicants, and receiving it depended on their participation in prayers and other activities. Although their non-propaganda functions have since diminished, the mosques—now estimated to number 50,000—continue to be a base for the regime in every neighbourhood. In addition to the mosques there have been Islamic revolutionary committees, one of the most feared and repressive institutions of the regime, formed by the lumpen proletariat and bullies of the neighbourhoods (these committees were later incorporated into the regular 'law-enforcing' bodies). At work places also, each plant and institution has an Islamic association. The larger organizations have a resident cleric, and, if necessary, a resident representative of the Supreme Leader, who makes sure that there is no deviation from the 'revolutionary' line. For major confrontations there are the elite Islamic revolutionary guards, *Pasdaran* and the Islamic militia, *Basiji*, in addition to the regular police, gendarmes and army. The Islamic Republic also has a most extensive set of ideological apparatuses, combining the traditional Shi'i institutions such as regular sermons delivered in mosques and the Friday prayers with modern mass media and the Internet. The most significant players are the clerics themselves, whose number has grown more than any other occupation and profession, as has the number of seminary schools in the holy cities of Qum and Mashhad.²⁹ Graduate clerics are employed in public and private organizations as prayer leaders or work in the growing number of mosques and prayer houses in factories and other institutions.

In addition to massive propaganda and ideological indoctrination, the clerics maintain control over their followers through economic means and the provision of social welfare. The largest fund of this type belongs to the late Ayatollah Khomeini, known as 'Imam Khomeini's Aid Committee'. Established in 1979 and now secured through more than 1130 branches throughout Iran, it

provides a vast array of social and financial services to needy followers. Over 1.7 million people are 'permanent' beneficiaries of this fund, mostly the working poor and the unemployed. The aid committee also provides health services through clinics, covering over 4.3 million people. It provides educational grants to over 769,000 students and has created over 850 youth centres in urban and rural areas to provide 'education, ideological guidance, and physical education'. It also gives allowances for the construction and repair of dwellings, marriage allowances, and interest-free loans.³⁰

In addition to clerics' funds there are also several extremely powerful religious/para-statal organizations, including the Mostaz'afan and Janbazan Foundation, the Martyrs Foundation, and the Fifteenth Khordad Foundation, which run the lucrative confiscated properties of the last Shah's Pahlavi Foundation and those of the richest families of the previous regime. The Mostaz'afan Foundation, one of the largest corporations in Iran,³¹ is the richest cash cow of the clerical establishment outside the oil-rich government itself. With links to the powerful bazaar, the traditional economic base of the clerics, this foundation has helped create a new bourgeoisie out of the Islamic elite, while at the same time providing assistance to poor followers, including disabled or sick veterans. Over 325,000 people receive 'permanent' allowances from the Mostaz'afan Foundation, and over 230,000 families are covered by the Martyr Foundation.³² The use of religious economic institutions and the provision of welfare to recruit or sustain followers has always been an effective way of maintaining and expanding followings in Shi'ite tradition, a policy now effectively used by many other Sunni and Shi'i fundamentalist groups in the region, notably HAMAS in the occupied territories, and Hizbollah in Lebanon. The difference in Iran, though, is that the Islamic clerics have amassed enormous wealth in their religious funds, endowments, and foundations, and at the same time are in control of the government and its enormous oil revenues.

Had it not been for the economic, social and political crises to which the clerical regime has repeatedly been subject, the existence of such extensive apparatuses of state control would destroy all hope for the liberation of the country from fundamentalist rule. But the same interrelated factors which account for these crises also prompt hopes for future change. First, this gigantic machine lost its leader: it could not replace Ayatollah Khomeini with an equally charismatic and powerful figure capable of maintaining a balance between different clerical factions within the ruling bloc. Second, unlike most post-revolutionary regimes, the ruling bloc has not been able to resolve its internal conflicts by the physical or ideological elimination of one faction by another. With the Ayatollah's death political differences continuously widened on economic, social, political and moral issues. These differences, moreover, represent less the contending opinions of clerics and their conflicts over the prescriptions of the Quran, than irresolvable contradictions stemming from the realities of running a society whose social and economic structures have undergone dramatic changes over several decades prior to the revolution. In

establishing its ideal state, a regime modeled after the Islamic golden age of the seventh century had to swim against the historical current. It confronted a society which had experienced a degree of modernization and modernity, and had had a long, though unsuccessful history of struggle for democracy and political freedoms, and could not easily be governed through a pre-modern political and legal system and an Islamic moral order.

Above all, in over two decades in power the Islamic government 'of the dispossessed' has failed to provide for the most deprived section of the population. The ever-widening gap between the working poor and newly rich, the evident corruption, outright mismanagement of the economy and the indisputable abuse of power by the clerics to accumulate wealth, which accompany their hypocritical moral crusades aimed particularly at women and youth, have severely discredited the regime in the eyes of a growing number of people. Continued and intensified political repression (which now affects even the Islamists within the system), and particularly the cold-blooded murder of intellectuals and writers (referred to as the 'chain assassinations') directly at the hands of high ranking officials who have gone unpunished, has done much to discredit the Islamists' projects and to delegitimize the regime.

THE LEFT AND THE WORKING CLASS: THE STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE

The left, historically the strongest supporter of the workers' movement in Iran, suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Islamists. This was partly a result of its own weaknesses and mistakes and its tendency to underestimate the robust mass-based coercive power of the Islamic state, and to overestimate the numerical and organizational capacity of both the left and the working class. Theoretical and analytical confusions led to fatal mistakes in formulating the immediate priorities of the left movement as well as a faulty agenda of demands under the Islamic state.

Almost from the inception of the post-revolutionary period, organizations in the highly diverse Iranian left exhibited two distinct orientations towards the Islamic regime. The first, represented by the Tudeh Party, and the Fedayeen *Axariat* (Majority), which was quite popular immediately after the revolution,³³ was characterized by a certain infatuation with the Ayatollah's 'anti-imperialism', and sought to ally itself with 'progressive' and 'revolutionary democratic' elements within the Islamic regime, hoping to direct it towards a 'socialist orientation'.³⁴ The other orientation, made up of smaller, more radical left organizations, such as the *Fedayeen Aghaliat* (Minority), *Rah-e Kargar* (Workers Path),³⁵ *Peykar* (Struggle),³⁶ *Etehadieh Komunistha* (Communist Union),³⁷ and *Komeleh*,³⁸ chose open confrontation with the regime, hoping to 'overthrow' it and to 'elevate' the revolution to the socialist stage. Both approaches have failed. The groups who sought an alliance with the 'progressive' clerics were discredited by excusing, and eventually even colluding with, the regime's brutal and anti-democratic policies; the organizations seeking the regime's overthrow

facilitated their own annihilation by confrontation with a ruthless, but, at the time, popular regime. In the end, both were brutally suppressed. Thousands of left activists were executed, imprisoned, maimed, or driven into exile. One devastating result of the left's defeat has been its loss of contact, perhaps even credibility, with the working class.

These two distinct political lines still dominate the discourses of the surviving left organizations in exile. The disgraced first group continues to seek an alliance with the 'moderate faction' within the ruling bloc, embodied in the person of President Khatami. It fails to appreciate the simple fact that so long as the clerical regime enjoys a monopoly of power it does not need and will not seek an alliance with any other force. It will concede such an alliance only when it faces a serious crisis of authority, and in any case, the alliance will include only the political forces ideologically and politically closest to the Islamic regime. That means, at most, a connection with moderate Islamist and liberal nationalist forces. Even if, as a result of a strange turn of events, the clerics were to look to the compromising faction of the left as an ally, it will not be treated as a major player (given the left's organizational weakness and its lack of credibility). Instead, it will be used in the service of the state. Similarly, the radical segments of the left who call for the overthrow of the regime in favour of establishing a socialist workers' state do not explain their strategies for achieving socialism or who their potential allies are. Their approach is obviously based on the assumed homogeneity and numerical predominance of the proletariat within the working population who are going to lead the socialist revolution. They do not seem prepared to recognize either their own organizational weakness and lack of linkage with the working class, or the strength of the present regime.

Organizationally weak, mainly based in exile, and having a minimal presence in political events inside Iran, the left, despite some name changes and new coalitions, remains sharply divided. The organizations inclined to compromise, such as the People's Democratic Party of Iran,³⁹ the Organization of People's Fedayeen-Majority, and the remnants of the Tudeh Party, retain hopes for reform within the clerical regime. Others such as the Left Workers Union, the Union of Peoples Fedayeen, the Communist Party of Iran, and the Workers Communist Party of Iran, herald an impending proletarian revolution. They emphasize their 'proletarian' character by adding an adjective, *Kargari* (of workers) to their names to differentiate themselves from the 'bourgeois communists'. Except in a few cases, the left movement appears to be operating within the old theoretical and organizational framework, without making serious efforts at self-assessment or self-criticism even when the Islamic regime is facing a serious political crisis and popular resistance is on the rise.

That such popular resistance is developing there can be no doubt. Frustrated by over two decades of political and cultural repression, corruption and economic deprivation, and benefiting from the Islamists' crippling factional divisions and in-regime conflicts, the Iranian people are learning how to resist

the regime in ingenious ways. The remarkable resistance of women, youth and various sections of the professional strata and intellectuals, as well as several major riots over 'illegal' building in shanty towns and ceaseless strikes and sit-ins in the industrial sector, suggest that, perhaps for the first time in modern Iranian history, the people have taken political initiatives without co-ordination and organized leadership. A good example is the 1997 presidential elections, in which voters participated enthusiastically and elected Khatami to the presidency, despite both the conservatives' fierce propaganda in favour of the other candidate, and the radical left's plea to boycott the elections. After this election, the people continued to force the regime to play according to the rules of its self-invented democratic game, taking advantage of the shifting forces among the Islamists and the emergence of a new coalition calling for a free press and democracy. On two other occasions—the 1998 elections to the city councils, and particularly the 2000 parliamentary elections—the people actively participated and voted in favour of less conservative candidates.

Yet the people's remarkable resistance, despite the human sacrifices it has involved, will not guarantee social and political change. For one thing, it is devoid of an organized, unified and clear-sighted leadership, and the opposition in the diaspora, including the left, is as divided as ever. In the absence of a democratic left alternative, debates over modernity versus tradition, democracy versus authoritarianism, social justice versus Islamic justice and the need for the separation of religion and state are carried out by a new breed of Muslim intellectuals, many of whom previously served in the repressive physical and ideological apparatuses of the Islamic state. These disillusioned Islamists who (unlike the secular intellectuals) have access to their own 'alternative' papers have become household names for their bold criticism of the repression, corruption and despotism of the conservative clergy. The danger, once more, is that the left, the working class and other progressive forces will lose the opportunity to mobilize the massive discontent around a secular democratic alternative.

The fact remains that despite the bloody suppression of the secular left opposition, and extensive negative propaganda by the regime, socialist and secular ideas are still influential. That they have become recurring themes in the oppositional Islamic liberal discourses prompts optimism that the left has a chance to emerge as an active part of the opposition and gain the support of the working classes for building a progressive alternative united front against the Islamists. The immediate goal of such a united front must be to remove the sacred halo around a corrupt and brutal regime and to fight for the transfer of power to a secular democratic state. It must represent the interests and the voices of various social classes, including new-middle-class professionals and the working poor alike. The segmentation of the working class by work and ideology has had a serious impact on the level of its involvement in the movement for democracy and social change. Thus it becomes clear why the main challenges to the Islamic regime in the last two decades have come from the women's movement, youth,

university students and from middle-class intellectuals, writers and professionals. If these movements are joined by the working class, they will become more effective. Only through such a broad, focused, organized, and co-ordinated struggle will the left prevent yet another interpretation of Islam embodied in the 'moderate clergy' and 'Muslim intellectuals' from emerging as the effective alternative to the faction of the clergy which now rules. Only by establishing the rights of all citizens to participate in political processes and to form their own voluntary organizations will the working class regain the confidence to represent its own interests which in a democratic system will be the interests of the most oppressed and the most deprived sections of the population.

APPENDIX

The 1996 census provides separate figures for employers, the self-employed and unpaid family workers, but does not distinguish between wage workers and salaried employees. However, it is possible to estimate roughly the numbers and percentages of these latter categories using the data of occupational categories, shown in Table 2, and the data of wage and salary employees in different sub-sectors of the economy, shown in Table 1. By looking at the detailed sub-categories of ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations) on the basis of which the data of Table 2 have been calculated, most of the occupational categories can be grouped under the three categories of social classes, the traditional middle class, the new middle class and the wage workers.

Aside from the Senior Officials and Executives, the Professionals (who include engineers, scientists, computing professionals, medical doctors, nurses, teachers, academics, accountants, social workers, writers, artists) and Technicians (who include electronic and communication technicians, draughts-people, photographers, medical assistants, building inspectors, faith healers, real estate agents) as well as the Clerical employees belong to the new-middle classes. Non-wage Agricultural and Fishery workers are mostly traditional middle classes, while the vast majority of Machine Operators (roughly 90 percent), and all the Elementary Occupations, form the wage workers. However, even within the category of Operators there are occupations, such as taxi drivers and truck drivers, that cannot be considered as wage workers, as many of them are the owners or co-owners of their vehicles.

The two categories of Service and Sales workers, and Craft and Trade workers, are more differentiated and fall under more than one social class category. Since detailed data for each of these categories are not available, by considering the descriptions of each of the occupational sub-categories we have assumed that the majority (80 percent) of Service/Sales workers, including travel attendants, transport conductors, restaurant services workers, to hair-dressers, fire fighters, police officers, etc., fall under the new-middle class, and the rest under Workers. The majority (80 percent) of Craft and Trade workers ranging from the non-wage quarry workers and bricklayers to carpenters, roofers, plumbers, welders, motor vehicle mechanics, and electrical and elec-

tronic mechanics belong to the traditional middle classes; the rest fall under the working class.

To cross-check the estimates of separate figures and percentages of wage workers and salaried employees, another set of data dealing with the wage and salary employees in different sub-sectors of economy was used. Of the 4,258,000 workers and employees of the public sector, 2,759,000, or 64.7 percent, are in the public administration sub-sector. The vast majority or 90.4 percent of this sub-sector are salaried employees, and only 9.5 percent are wage workers.⁴⁰ For other sub-sectors of both the public and the private sectors, such as agriculture and fishing, manufacturing and mining, construction, utilities, and commercial services, we have used the 20/80 'administrative ratio' for salaried employees and wage workers respectively. This is a low ratio for salaried employees in a third-world setting like Iran, which as a result of lower organizational efficiency has a higher administrative ratio or intensity than more advanced countries.⁴¹ On this basis, the total number of wage workers in both the public and the private sectors amounts to over 3,871,000, or about 26 percent of the total employed population, similar to the figure using the data of Table 1. The wage workers (WW) figure is calculated on the basis of the following: Public Sector WW = Agriculture (0.8 * 57,000) + Manufacturing (0.8 * 619,000) + Construction (0.8 * 63,000) + Service (0.8 * 586,000) + Public Administration (0.095 * 2,759,000) = 1,255,855. Private Sector WW (0.8 * 3,270,000) = 2,616,000; Public WW + Private WW = 3,871,855.

NOTES

1. The oldest (handwritten) document in this regard is Khan-e Khanan, *Political Treatise*, 1894, in which the author refers to the need for 'majma'ha' (associations), and labour 'rules' for regulating working conditions. See Fraidoun Adamiyat, *Ideologi-ye Nehzat Mashroteh (Ideology of the Constitutional Movement in Iran)*, Tehran: Payam Publishing, 1976, p. 282.
2. Saeed Rahnema, *Tajdid-e Hayat-e Social Democracy Dar Iran? (Re-birth of Social Democracy in Iran?)*, Stockholm: Baran Publishers, 1996, p. 17.
3. See J. Riddle, ed., *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, New York: Monad Press, 1984, pp. 60–65. Thanks are also due to Mehrdad Vahabi for his helpful comments.
4. Tarbiyat, cited in Habib Ladjevardi, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985, p. 3.
5. Asnad-e Tarikhi-e Jonbesh-e Kargari, *Social Demokrasi va Kommonisti-e Iran 1903–1963 (Historical Documents: The Workers, Social Democratic and Communist Movement in Iran)*, vol. 6, Florence: Mazdak Publisher, not dated, pp. 107–8.
6. See Kaveh Bayat, and Majid Tafreshi, *Memoires of Yousef Eftekhari*, Tehran: Ferdows Publishing, 1991.
7. Fred Holliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997, pp. 199–200.
8. Ali Rahnema and Farhad Nomani, *Secular Miracle*, London: Zed Press, 1990, p.12.
9. Iran Statistical Centre, *Statistical Yearbook, 1996–97*, Tehran, 1998, Table 3–7, p. 79.

10. These relations, to use Olin Wright's distinction, may entail both relations of domination and appropriation in the form of individual appropriation by the self-employed under his/her self direction and control, yet the individuals involved are not capitalistically exploited. The same is true of unpaid family workers who, despite the fact that their labour is appropriated and dominated by someone else, usually the family patriarch, are not exploited in the capitalist sense. See Erik Olin Wright, *Classes*, London: Verso, 1985, pp. 50–51.
11. This is true whether we consider Poulantzas' distinctions of ownership and/or possession, Olin Wright's notions of degrees of ownership and contradictory class location, or Carchedi's two-fold division of capitalist management and the unity-in-domination of the labour process and the production of surplus value. See Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, London: *New Left Review*, 1975, p. 180; Erik Olin Wright, 'Classes', pp. 42–51; Guglielmo Carchedi, *On the Economic Identification of Social Classes*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 8.
12. Iran Statistical Centre, 'Statistical Yearbook, 1996–97', pp. 200, 206.
13. Iran Statistical Centre, *Employment and Unemployment Data*, Tehran, 1997, p. 22.
14. Bijan Jazani, the founder and leader of the Fedai movement, writing from his jail cell, was the first left theorist to recognize the significance of the shanty town dwellers. See section by Mehrdad Vahabi in *On the Life and Works of Bijan Jazani*, Paris: Khavaran publishers, 1999.
15. For controversies over the decline or increase in female employment after the revolution, see Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Post-modern Analysis*, London and Islamabad: Zed and Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 111–115.
16. By 1994 over 300,000 militia (*Basiji*) were recruited to push back the 'West's cultural invasion' and 300,000 more were to be hired for ordering good and preventing evil (*Amr-e Be Marouf Va Nahy-e Az Monkar*). See *Iran Times*, 28 October 1993.
17. Iran Statistical Centre, 'Statistical Yearbook, 1996–1997', p. 206.
18. Mehrangiz Kar, *Eliminating Discrimination Against Women: Comparing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women With Iranian Laws*, Tehran: Parvin Publication, 1999, p. 252.
19. Maryam Mohseni, 'Kargaran-e Zan-e Khanegi' (Women Home Workers) in *Negah-e Zan*, Tehran: Touse'e Publishers, no. 1, 1998, pp. 9–14.
20. *Salam*, Tehran: 11 Ordibehesht 1378/1 (May) 1999.
21. For a detailed account of workers' reactions during the war, see *Rah-e Kargar*, nos. 37–48, 1987.
22. See, *Kargar-e Kommunist*, no. 1 (September) 1999, pp. 36–38, and various issues of *Rah-e Kargar*, and *Etehad-Fadaian*, 1999.
23. Mujahedin-Khalq originated from a radical Islamic guerrilla group fighting against the Shah's regime. After the revolution they followed their eclectic ideology, mingling some socialist ideas with their interpretation of Islam, were brutally suppressed by the clerical regime, and were reduced to a religious cult based in Iraq but with a large following in other countries outside Iran.
24. For workers councils in Iran, see Saeed Rahnama, 'Workers Councils in Iran: The Illusions of Workers Control', in *Economic and Industrial Democracy: An International Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1, February 1992. See also Asaf Bayat, *Workers and*

- Revolution in Iran*, London: Zed Press, 1987.
25. The Council of Guardians is a twelve-member body of Islamic jurists and lawyers that acts as an upper chamber and oversees the decisions of the parliament. The conflicts between the two, representing different factions of the regime had created a stalemate that led Khomeini to order the establishment of a new extra-parliamentary body, the Council of Expediency, to resolve the disputes and come up with final decision. See Saeed Rahnema and Sohrab Behdad, eds., *Iran After the Revolution: Crisis of an Islamic State*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1996, Appendix.
 26. Labour and Social Security Institute, *Labour Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Tehran, 1993.
 27. See *Huquq-e Zan Dar Iran (Women and the Law in Iran (1967–1978))*, 1994. Compiled by Mahnaz Afkhami, Women's Centre of the Foundation of Iranian Studies.
 28. Labour and Social Security Institute, *Law of Transfer of Government Shares To Workers*, Tehran, 1996.
 29. The Shi'i hierarchy works through recruiting young seminary students (*tolab*) as the tutees of a senior cleric or Ayatollah, who pays their *shahrieh* (allowance). A cleric's major financial source is the donations, *Sahm-e Imam*, that he receives from his followers. The *Sahms* are a sort of tax that Muslim believers must pay to the Imam of their choice. One of the functions of the tutee, acting as a sort of spiritual labourer, is to recruit new followers for the cleric by preaching in the rural areas and working class neighbourhoods. The more followers he finds, the higher will be his own allowance. The top clerics compete with each other to attract more tutees by paying higher wages, and use part of the income received for charities to help their followers. See, Sayed Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, *Khaterat (Memoir)* Volume I, Tehran: Hoseh Honary, 1997, pp. 112–19.
 30. The figures are for 1996, Imam Khomeini's Aid Committee Activities, cited in Iran Statistical Centre, 'Statistical Yearbook, 1996–1997', pp. 486, 487.
 31. S. Michel, 'Les Déshérités sont à vendre', *Le Point*, no. 1420, 3 December 1999, p. 41.
 32. Iran Statistical Centre, 'Statistical Yearbook, 1996–1997', pp. 488, 489.
 33. The Iranian Peoples Fedayeen Guerrillas was the leading left underground organization during the time of the Shah. After the revolution the organization dropped its armed struggle strategy and changed its name to Organization of the People's Fedayeen. Soon a split divided the organization into a radical hard-line Minority and a pro-Soviet Majority. Several other splits occurred in both groups. Details of the splits are discussed in Saeed Rahnema, 'Re-birth of Social Democracy in Iran'.
 34. On some of the populist positions of the Tudeh and Fedayeen *Axariat* (Majority) on political democracy, a free press and the democratic rights of women and ethnic and religious minorities, see Haideh Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism in Iran: Women's Struggle in a Male-defined Revolutionary Movement*, London: Macmillan, 1994 and 1996.
 35. Workers Path was formed by a group of prominent political prisoners after the revolution, advocating an immediate move towards socialism. It is still active in Kurdistan and elsewhere outside Iran.
 36. An extreme radical pro-Maoist organization that evolved out of the religious radical Mujahedin-e Khalq. The organization does not exist any more, though

some of the founding members are active.

37. This Maoist organization was formed by Iranian students abroad, mostly in the United States, who returned to Iran after the revolution. A section of the organization launched a rural guerrilla action which failed completely and was eliminated.
38. A radical Iranian Kurdish left organization advocating socialism for Kurdistan and Iran. After the revolution it joined several smaller groups and formed the 'Iranian Communist Party'. A group split off from within the organization and formed the 'Iranian Workers Communist Party'. The former is active in Kurdistan and the latter mostly outside Iran.
39. This party emerged out of a split in the Tudeh Party in 1987, rejecting Leninist policies and advocating political democracy and social justice.
40. Iran Statistical Centre, 'Statistical Yearbook, 1996–1997', p. 88.
41. See R. L. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, New York, 1992, pp. 160–161, and Saeed Rahnama, *Organization Structure: A Systemic Approach*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill/Ryerson, 1992, pp. 44–45.