

On the verge of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Organisation of Fedaian(Minority)

Our organisation is about to become 25 years old. Now, as we are going to accomplish a quarter-century of the Organisation of Fedaian(Minority)´s life-struggle, it is worth assessing the organisation´ s positive and negative experiences. Because of the role and importance which our organisation has had during this time, we will review this period of its activities and struggles and assess the positive and negative experiences which have been valuable lessons for the Iranian communist movement.

The circumstances under which the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerillas was formed

A scientific and objective assessment of the OIPFG´ s struggle, role and importance in the communist and labour movements and of its positive and negative experiences cannot exist, unless we have an exact knowledge of the situation and conditions under which our organisation came into being, and the stage which the communist and labour movement was in at that time. Therefore it is necessary to return to the 1960´ s and consider the objective and subjective conditions of this period. This was a period in which the Iranian society witnessed a series of objective and economical changes. The Shah´ s regime´ s bureaucratic reforms, for instance the Agrarian-Reform, paved the way for the growth and extension of capitalist relations, the ever-growing export of imperialistic capitals and the extension and development of large capitalistic enterprises. So the mode of capitalist production became the dominant mode of production in Iran. Together with these changes in the spheres of economic and production relations, there were other changes which took place in the social and class spheres. Consequently some contradictions were solved, others become weakened and some new ones were created with the death of feudalism. Feudalism, because of the changes during the decades before these reforms was already dead, and landlords had completely lost their power and influence and the comprador-bourgeoisie, which had gained remarkable power before that, now became the primary power. Contradictions between the peasants and the feudal were completely solved and the smallholding mode of production became dominant in villages. A large group of peasants who hadn't any land, flocked to towns and joined the ranks of the working class. Another group of small peasants, which had large expectations of the reforms when they began, were even given a piece of land.

With the extension of capitalist relations in villages and the aggravation of class polarisation amongst peasants, and under the financial pressure of the state bureaucracy, these peasants had gradually been ruined. A group of them who were employed in capitalist enterprises (especially in towns) joined the working class. Another group settled in town suburbs and, as the inhabitants of the towns, constituted a part of the workforces reserve army. The traditional petty-bourgeoisie of the towns, which with the beginning of the reforms had been in grave danger, had been ruined because of the extension and growth of large capitals and a large number of them joined the ranks of the working class. But the modern petty-bourgeoisie had to some extent grown. These reforms were also the final straw for the rest of the so-called "national bourgeoisie". It was only the working class, which together with increasing of its role in production,

vastly increased its number. The forementioned changes had begun to temporarily soften the contradictions of society. By the late 1960's the situation was relatively quiet and the mass movement experienced a standstill. Nevertheless, by the second half of the 1960's, together with the aggravation of contradictions, the open protest movements had gradually grown. The first manifestation of this growth was the student movement, which developed a "mass characteristic". The death of Takhti and protests against the rising price of bus tickets in Tehran showed this "mass characteristic". However, as yet there were no signs of a spontaneous labour movement.

In this situation the tendency towards socialism was extended, especially amongst the activists, and the communist movement began to consistently grow in number. The matter of an organised struggle, the relations of communist and labour movements, and the necessity of proletarian leadership were the most important questions on the agenda.

Concerning the labour movement at this time, we should say that the working class, because of the dictatorship and the repression of the Shah's regime and the betrayal of the Tudeh party, and because of the fullness of the working classes' ranks with peasants and urban petty-bourgeoisie lacked the minimum level of independent class organisation and consciousness, and there was no relation between this movement and the communist movement. Because of reforms and economical ruin, the petty-bourgeoisie had joined the ranks of the working class, but did not yet have a complete proletarian characteristic. Though the communist movement had grown constantly during this period, it had also suffered from an internal crisis. Tactlessness, confusion, and passiveness were the general characteristics of the all groups which had been formed in this period. After the defeat and dissolution of the Tudeh party, two tendencies were formed by its opponents. One branch recognised the matter of defeat and betrayal of the Tudeh party, not because of its reformist and conciliatory line but because of the betrayal of its leadership. So it tried to reorganise the party with a new leadership.

The another branch apparently made a distinction line between the Tudeh party's reformism and revisionism, but it still kept the essence of the Tudeh party's way of thinking. The latter group followed the mirage of the long term mass war and the capturing of the towns from villages, just as the Chinese model did. For a while both of these two branches gained remarkable support. But since they were not able to break definitely off from the afterthoughts of the Tudeh party and produce a new revolutionary line in accordance with the new conditions, they rapidly lost their credibility. The groups and circles which came into being often lacked even a minimum level of experience. Before they could establish any contact with the working class they were crushed by police attacks. These attacks had a negative effect on some of these groups, and it was used to justify the passiveness, which the Tudeh party propagated. It was claimed that nothing could be done for the time being, and that there should be an end to intervention,: "we should keep ourselves safe and wait for better times". These groups also became rotten from this passiveness and dissolved after a while. Generally the constant attacks of the police, the confusion of the different groups, the inability to find answers to questions which the new conditions created, the inability to establish a connection with the working class, the disagreements in the international communist movement and finally the passiveness, which was dominant amongst these groups all played a part in aggravating the existing crisis.

Under these circumstances, which books cliché as an attempt to copy Russia and China's experiences, these attempts ended in defeat. The question remained - what should be

done in order to leave this vicious circle of passiveness and crisis. Some of these groups did not want to condescend to existing conditions and wanted to break the existing deadlock and intervene revolutionary in the class struggle. Using revolutionary methods this was not possible unless a concrete foundation of economical, Social and political conditions was created, on which a new mode of struggle and form of organisation could be obtained. These duties were undertaken by those who became the founders of our organisation. For the first time a concrete assessment of Iran's condition was produced. In the sphere of economics, the domination of the capitalist mode of production was shown. The importance of this foundation was immense because it became a solid foundation for the forthcoming activities of communists in Iran. On the one hand the confusion and disorder which had been created by the pro-China groups because they still represented Iranian society as a half-feudal - half-colony society, was ended. On the other hand, by showing the role of the comprador-bourgeoisie and imperialism, the opportunist claims of the Tudeh party said that the Shah's regime's measures had had a progressive characteristic cancelled. It was shown in the political sphere that, despite the domination of the capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois political superstructure, there were no changes in the reactionary character of political rule and the reasons and role of the open dictatorship in Iran's comprador-capitalism were explained. A concrete answer was then given for the classes' position and role in society, and the revolution of Iran and its motive power.

In this sphere a distinction line was also drawn between the existing tendencies which were propagated by the Tudeh party and divided streams. The illusion, that the so called national bourgeoisie could have a revolutionary and progressive role, was eliminated. Comrade Ahmadzadeh propounded that, despite the revolutions democratic character in the first stage; *"struggle with the imperialist dominion, i.e. the world capital, has some elements of struggle with the capital itself"* and *"Therefore some elements of a socialist revolution are also born in this struggle. This anti-imperialist struggle is starting to grow up while the struggle is going on"*. So the national bourgeoisie essentially can not be constant in such a struggle and because of the historical conditions of its existence and its relations with the foreign capital are wavering and unable to mobilise the masses". He even took a step further and talked about its absolution: *"the national bourgeoisie has weakened under the pressure of the foreign capital before it grows at all, it is missing the possibility of class organisation and will finally die away gradually"*. On the role and position of the petty-bourgeoisie it is also said that *"because of the material conditions of its production, it can never constitute an independent political power, so it should either be lead by a proletariat or give itself to the bourgeoisie"*. And finally attention is paid to the role and position of the proletariat and it is concluded that *"the proletariat is numerically weak, but because of its quality and possibilities of organisation, it is strong"*. Here the proletarian leadership of movement is presented as the condition of every revolution victory. *"The more the state has become bourgeoisie, the more the socialist elements of revolution become increasingly important, both internally and externally and the struggle with the domination of the world capital becomes more a struggle with the capital and the necessity of a proletarian leadership becomes clearer"*.

Regarding the level of communist movement at that time, this socio-economical and political assessment was a great creation and an important step forward. Therefore, it was not without reason that it soon become the dominant theory of Iran's communist movement. But the aim of this assessment, as we said before, was to find a way out of the existing crisis. The question was somehow to *"Go further from the simple gathering"* of the communist movement forces, continuity, connection with the working class and the

revolution's proletarian leadership. In this period the question of foundation of the class party of workers was not general but concrete and immediate. Comrade Ahmadzadeh explains: *"So we accepted that our and other communist groups' aims should be to found the Marxist-Leninist party. This question immediately asserts itself to what should be done in order to organise such a party? Then these two tasks stand behind us : on the one hand we and the other groups should train the forthcoming party's cadres and on the other hand we should prepare the conditions of this party amongst the masses"*.

Yet we have not seen that the necessity to found this party has shown itself, without the very same practical process of struggle demanding it and without preparing its background between workers and non-worker masses".

At that time, when there was no sign of a spontaneous workers movement, no sign of a connection between the communist and labour movement and no sign of an elaborate proletarian program or tactics, the foundation of the party was unrealistic. Today, many years later, the working class has passed through a revolution and the communist and labour movements are at a different level. Nevertheless, the difficulty of founding such a party is our movement's present problem. It is obvious to everyone that this achievement was unrealistic at that time. Even though our comrades were not among that group of so-called socialists that merely talked and did not put their talks in action, their commitment was not merely a superficial acceptance of Marxism and proletarian aims, and they tried to put their aims into practice. For them, Marxism-Leninism was an instruction to revolt and a means of ending the existing crisis and putting an end to the rift between theory and revolutionary practice. Therefore, with regards to the question of founding the party they didn't become confused and passive. They rapidly corrected their mistakes and concluded that there was a long way to go in order to found a working class party: The solution which they produced to achieve revolutionary intervention in a revolutionary struggle, was to unite the military and political activities.

From Siahkal to the uprising in February 1979

The forementioned events explains how the deadlock was broken. The vast majority of the Iranian revolutionary communists were gathered and organised around the OIPFG. Day by day, more and more vanguard workers and revolutionary intellectuals tended towards the OIPFG and were recruited into its ranks. Despite the savage dictatorship of the Shah's regime and several assaults on the OIPFG, the continuation of the OIPFG's struggle was preserved to such an extent that until the 1979 February uprising it was the only active Marxist-Leninist organisation in Iran. When commenting on the effect of the OIPFG's struggle in society and its role in the communist movement, it is enough to say that during the 1979 February uprising it became a powerful mass organisation and the largest communist organisation, not only in Iran, but also in the whole of the Middle-East.

Despite all of the results achieved and the positive role that the OIPFG had played in the revolutionary movement until that time, it had made some mistakes which had partly come from a lack of experience and a relatively low level of communist consciousness and knowledge at that time. Another problem arose because of the influence of the populist tendencies in the OIPFG.

From its very beginning, the OIPFG had an inaccurate view of the objective conditions of revolution. In contradiction to the applied economist view at that time which gave an absolute role to economic factors and premature contradictions and overlooked the role of open and savage dictatorship and its negative effect on spontaneous movements, comrade Ahmadzadeh saw matters from a different angle.

He did not pay attention to the prematurity of conditions and gave a decisive meaning the dictatorship's restraining role. It was claimed that the contradictions had grown enough, and that dissatisfaction and protest levels were large enough for the objective conditions of revolution to exist. It was only dictatorship, which blockaded the wide stream of spontaneous movements and the overthrowing of the Shah's regime. It resulted in some sort of voluntarism against economism and ended a left turn in the OIPFG's struggle. This attitude was rejected after a short time by the OIPFG. Nevertheless, it had neither a considerable effect on the OIPFG's general view on the question of dictatorship nor on the OIPFG's tactics. It is correct to say that the OIPFG, with the acceptance of comrade Jazanie's theories, rejected the existence of the objective conditions of revolution at that time. But again it emphasised an armed tactic as a central tactic. So despite the emphasis at that time, which concentrated on the political struggle and activity amongst the working class, acceptance of this tactic could not have a positive effect on the OIPFG's political activity amongst the working class. On the other hand, the views on dictatorship were not only not corrected but it was also emphasised by comrade Jazanie's theory to such an extent that it outlined more than ever the contradiction of labour and capital and struggle against dictatorship being transformed into a strategic stage. Therefore, comrade Jazanie's theory was a step back in comparison to comrade Ahmadzadeh's. If Ahmadzadeh believed that "*struggle with the imperialist - i.e. the world capital - dominion, has some elements of struggle with the capital itself*" and "*Therefore some elements of a socialist revolution were also born in this struggle*". Now the struggle with the dictatorship transforms into a separate strategic stage. This theory strengthened the OIPFG's populist tendency. The struggle of the people against dictatorship overshadowed the struggle between workers and capitalists and the working class independency was altered. This danger always exists in countries which, because of objective and subjective reasons, have two types of struggle taking place simultaneously. These struggles are different in their nature, aims and social compositions. One is the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class to overthrow the capitalist order and establish a socialist society, and the other is the people's struggle, that is to say workers and the petty-bourgeoisie's common struggle against state-power and imperialism for a series of delayed democratic, welfare and anti-imperialist demands. As we know communists have to aggravate both struggles and lead them. Likewise, every disregard of the workers and petty-bourgeoisie's common struggle can be ended in sectarianism, the isolation of the working class, driving petty-bourgeoisie towards the bourgeoisie, the overemphasis on this struggle in comparison with the struggle of labour and capital, the lack of a clear and solid distinction line and the disregarding of the strict preservation of working class independency can all lead to negation of working class independency and the dissolving of this class into people's movement.

The fact is that our organisation could not make a clear connection between these two types of struggle during that period. The working class's struggle against capitalists, which aims towards communism, was disregarded, but the people's struggle against imperialism and the Shah's regime's open dictatorship was overstated. In addition, in the very same "people's struggle", no clear and perceptible distinction was made which

could completely separate the working class from the petty-bourgeoisie. Nor could it preserve working class independency and place emphasis on the contemporary nature of this unity. The negative results of these ideas and the populist tendencies of the OIPFG had shown themselves, especially in the 1979 February uprising and shortly after in the seizing of political power by the Islamic Republic, and in the growth of right-opportunist tendencies in the OIPFG and the following of the Islamic Republic by a large part of OIPFG's sympathisers. Nevertheless, in assessment of the OIPFG's mistakes and deviations before the February uprising we should not overlook the fact that these deviations were still just a tendency and did not affect the OIPFG's revolutionary and communist character. Because of this revolutionary and communist nature the OIPFG attracted almost all of the vanguard workers and revolutionary communist intellectuals into the ranks of its organisation. With the all-out exaltation of mass movement it was transformed into the most powerful and influential organisation among workers.

From the 1979 February uprising to Today

During the period of the uprising and a short time after the overthrow of the Shah's regime, conditions in which the OIPFG had the opportunity to have free and legal activity, appeared. The OIPFG thus played an outstanding role in organising and increasing the consciousness of workers in almost all the large fabrics and industrial enterprises. In addition thousand of vanguard workers joined the ranks of the OIPFG.

The role which the OIPFG played in spreading the idea of socialism in society was also unique. It should be said, without any exaggeration, that at least 90 percent of the Iranian revolutionaries who joined the communist movement at that time, were under the influence of the OIPFG's struggle, activities and communist beliefs. Nevertheless, as we said before, with all these struggles and activities the existence of the petty-bourgeoisie populist tendencies and also the lack of a clear program and proletarian tactics meant the populist tendency became stronger and transformed into a full and complete opportunism, which was the so-called stream of "Majority". This stream, with the same populist theories which existed in the OIPFG and now had grown, supporting nonsenses like "the rule of revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie" and "the national-anti imperialist revolution" led a large group of the OIPFG's forces to follow and support the bourgeoisie and Islamic reaction. The distinction lines, which the OIPFG had with revisionism as a whole, and revisionism of the Socialist Camp, were put aside by the "Majority" and, in short, it accepted the attitude of the Tudeh party. Against this current stand the "Minority" which was the Marxist-Leninist wing of the OIPFG, defended the OIPFG's revolutionary communist traditions and the aims and interests of the working class. "Minority", unlike the opportunist wing, disclosed the reactionary and contra-revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisie-clerical rule of the Islamic Republic and came with the slogan of mass mobilisation to overthrow the regime. With a dialectical critique of the OIPFG's past and negation of populist deviations, the "Minority" defended working class independency and stressed the political-ideological dividing line between revisionism and reformism both nationally and internationally. In an internal struggle which took more than one year, it became clearer than ever before that there could be no unity between the two streams and divisions. The OIPFG lost a remarkable number of its cadres and sympathisers because of the damage which opportunism caused. The reaction with aggravating the atmosphere of repression and oppression didn't give any time for our organisation to reorganise itself under these

fearful conditions of class struggle. Nevertheless, the "Minority" continued its struggle against the Islamic regime and organised workers to become an influential mass organisation again. Obviously, during this struggle the regime executed hundreds of our comrades and a large group were imprisoned in the regimes medieval "black holes". But the struggle continued. The rightfulness of the working class, its mission and role, and its interests were defended and the revolutionary traditions of the OIPFG were maintained. During this struggle the organisation was promoted both politically and ideologically. It compiled its aims and demands in a clear program form and achieved consistent strategi and tactics. These results were not obtained easily, and after the "great division", our organisation had suffered great damages. The assaults which the organisation had suffered were partially due to mistakes and lack of experience and partially because of the deviations which we hadn't been able to correct. Between 1981 and 1985 repressive assaults caused massive damages to the organisation. In one barbaric attack in 1981 the majority of the central committee and a large number of the organisation's outstanding cadres were either murdered in a direct battle with the regime or arrested and rapidly executed. During 1982-85 a number of other assaults affected the organisation. The Majority of the arrested comrades were executed and many others got long prison sentences. The regime's barbarism did not stop here. A large number of sympathisers were also executed because of their activities among the workers or merely because they distributed our organisation's publications. Nevertheless, in 1985 we were the only political organisation which published and distributed our central organ - KAR - in Iran and the organisation was still active in fabrics and living quarters. After the assaults during these years, the activities were restarted with a new organisation. Nevertheless, the regimes successive assaults not only decreased the organisation's militancy but also weakened it internally, and created new problems which resulted in further divisions. The 1982 division was the first example of these. When the 1980 "great division" happened, the fact was that a wide spectrum of the "Majority" 's opponents, on the basis that the minority assessed the Islamic Republic as counter-revolution, had joined the "Minority". During this period the "Minority" had no time to create a concrete program to clarify its dividing lines with other organisations and, on basis of this program and tactics, could strengthen its internal unity. Therefore several tendencies existed which sometimes even negated the attitude of the "Minority".

For instance the petty-bourgeoisie tendency, which appeared in the OIPFG in 1981, could not remain in the OIPFG because of its principally different ideological and political attitudes. Therefore after the organisation's first congress, this tendency prepared a division, and when the regime started to attack the organisation from every side, these organisation-hostile activities increased confusion and the disintegration within the organisation. This petty-bourgeoisie stream which had apparently left slogans, propagated passiveness in reality. After the division it was disintegrated because of this very same passiveness. Nevertheless, it had hit the organisation from two sides. This experience showed that without a clear and concrete program and without a series of compiled tactics and agreements on this program and these tactics, there could be no permanent unity. Therefore, the immediate preparation of this program was put on the agenda. Another question was, despite both the assaults of the regime and the different divisions damages to the organisation, our method of working which was one of the major problems in our practice. From 1981 to 1985, while the regime had started an all-out oppressive attack, we used all of our efforts to be active in the political sphere and class struggle. Therefore after every assault hit the organisation we rapidly tried to reorganise and remobilise our forces in the struggle. Sometimes our activities were

combined with some sort of petty-bourgeoisie propaganda and ostentation. Before thinking about our continuity and organisation strength we thought about how we could show that we were still active on the political sphere. The assessment of the organisation's first congress in this issue is clear enough: *"Repeated assaults by the police have been one of the factors which have decreased our activity but these assaults are related to our organisation's form and methods of activity. Organising a class struggle and actively intervening in this struggle first of all demands a solid, disciplinary and constant organisation among workers. Only this kind of organisation is able to preserve itself against the attacks of the police and so fulfil its tasks"*. But at that time, our organisation lacked rules and conditions which should be present in every organisation so that it can preserve its continuity. Before thinking of establishing a firm, restricted, disciplined and consistent organisation amongst the workers, we superficially and incorrectly extended the organisation. At this time the organisational boundary lines were constantly altered and it became more and more impossible to control it.

This organisational method was combined with a incorrect mode of activity. The continuity and consistency of a struggling communist organisation required a communist method of work and activity. This method of work requires patience to organise, and the ability to avoid momentary activities and propaganda jangles. Instead of working with such a method, we have constantly tried to organise and extend the size of the organisation, and reorganise the damaged parts to show that, despite the regime's constant repression and damages, we have unceasingly continued our struggle and that we are active in every way. Under the most difficult circumstances our leaflets and news papers have still been distributed. This method of work, which has more of a propaganda based nature with a non-proletarian spirit, has not only opposed the consistency and continuity of our organisation in struggle, but has also exposed the organisation to the police's constant attacks. To have an active presence in a struggle is very necessary. An active intervention in a class-struggle is also a vital matter. But these require a precondition, which means having a firm organisation amongst the workers, patience, a consistent and continued method of work, and activities which are far away from the petty-bourgeois jangles and ostentations. This method of work reflected itself in our organisational life, and combined with our pre-party organisational system, caused the organisational crisis and consequent divisions. Despite the fact that advances took place in the organisation's political and ideological approaches for some years, the pre-party organisational forms still existed in the OIPFG. This itself created a crucial contrast between the advanced party nature and the undeveloped pre-party form of organisation. The party rules and mechanisms which could provide a healthy relationship and principal solution of contrasts did not exist. On the one hand there was "circle and centrifuge mentality" and on the other hand a one sided centralism and bureaucratic methods were used to solve problems. A party programme required a party organisational system and structure based on Democratic-Centralism. Lack of this structure can lead to an organisational crisis and divisions within our organisation. These were the problems that existed from the formation of the "Minority" until today. All of these experiences have been valuable lessons for us. We now tried to avoid these problems and every kind of vacillations. What forms our principles and determines the way of our movement today, is a clear programme which provides a compass for our activities and clearly explains our aims. Our compiled tactics determine the methods and forms of our struggle. Our statutes explain our organisational system and the rules which govern our internal relations.

The result is that what our organisation has achieved today is the product of 25 years of activities and struggles, advances and withdrawals, defeats and victories and learning from errors and faults. We are not emphasising the services which we have contributed to the workers - and communist movement. What we have done was and is our duty. Concerning the organisation's faults and errors during these 25 years it is enough to point that they have not been the outcome of passiveness or superficial claims, but they have originated from our practice and struggle. One who merely talks and does not fight of course commits no error. But the stream which actively intervenes in the class-struggle is obviously going to make some mistakes. The important thing is that these errors and faults are treated critically and that lessons are taken from them. The errors are a very positive product and we hope that we can continue to carry out our duty with regards to the organisation of the working class. We aim to increase awareness of the working class in order to create a social revolution and establish the humanistic order of communism. We honour the memory of all of the comrades who have fought and fallen for socialism from the formation of our organisation until the present days.

Gholamreza Takhti : World wrestling champion and one of the opponents of the Shah's regime. In 1968 the Shah's regime announced that Takhti committed suicide in a hotel in Tehran. In protest to his suspicious death a large demonstration was organised in Tehran.

Masoud Ahmadzadeh : Comrade Masoud Ahmadzadeh was one of the leaders and founders of the OIPFG. His book called " Armed struggle, both strategic and tactical" explained the OIPFG's aims and tactics in the first years of its existence. In 1971 he was arrested and shot by the Shah's regime.

Bijan Jazanie : Comrade Bijan Jazanie was one of the OIPFG's leaders who was arrested along with some of his comrades in 1968. His works, which were written in prison, especially on the question of strategy and tactics, determined the OIPFG's political line until the armed uprising in 1979. In 1975 he and his comrades were murdered in prison. The Shah's regime announced that they were killed while they tried to escape from prison.

Coup : In 1953 a military coup took place in Iran, which was organised by the CIA. With this coup Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's Prime Minister, who nationalised the Iranian oil industry and wanted to limit the power of Shah and court, fell from power. After that the Shah came back to power as an absolute monarch.