

A Note onThe UCI & the Amol Uprising 1972

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Active in the Iranian student movement outside Iran, the **Organization of Communist Revolutionaries (Marxist–Leninist)** was founded in 1970 and adopted 'Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought'. It was one of a number of Iranian Maoist organization formed in opposition to the Shah regime in Iran Throughout its organisational changes, it has always self-identified as a Maoist party line and maintained that Iran is not a Capitalist society but is a “semi-colonial-semi-feudal” one, and generally saw the US threat to Iran’s sovereignty as the immediate danger to the revolution.

In 1976, The Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) was formed after the merger of the Organisation of Communist Revolutionaries and the Pooya Group. The term "Sarbedaran" was used later in 1981 after the organization armed its members in the forests near Amol in Northern Iran.

Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)

ناری ای ایتسی نومک هی داحتا

Prior to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, the Union of Iranian Communists were active amongst the student movement outside Iran. In the heightened struggle of the early years of the Islamic Republic, UIC, like other Iranian left parties, were based inside the country engaged in the fierce, and often bloody clashes against the regime. A number of smaller leftist groups operated in Iran during the years after the 1979 revolution. They included Maoist groups such as the Toufan Marxists-Leninist Organization, the Toilers Party (Ranjbaran), Komala, the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran), Rah-e Kargar (Kargar) and the Marxist Mojahedin, which after several permutations became known as the Combatant Organization on the Road for the Emancipation of the Working Class (Paykar). As it expanded its activities inside the Iran after 1979, other groups such as “Group of struggle in the path of working class liberation” and “Red Battle” rallied to the UIC.

“The UIC (S) did participate in some workers struggles at this time, such as “project syndicate of Abadan” and “Union of worker councils of Gilan” and also joined the war against the Islamic Republic in Kurdistan (and formed a guerrilla organization in Kurdistan named “Tashkilate Pishmargeye Zahmatkeshane Kordestan”). UIC (S) did also participate in peasant struggles in Turkaman, Sahra and Arab protests in Khuzistan. It also formed front organization

such as “Militant Women Society” and “SETAD (Revolutionary Mass Organization of university and school Students)”.” [Source: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

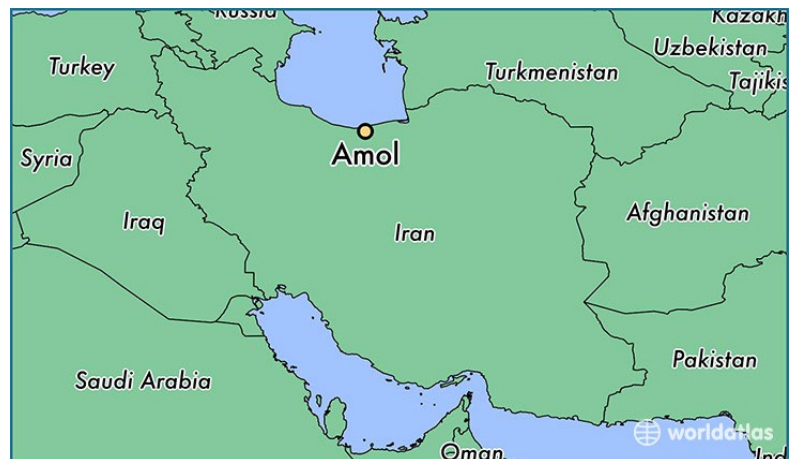
There were internal struggles in the organisation that the Islamic regime had lost all its progressive characteristics that despite the regime’s defiance of the United States, its attacks on non-Islamic forces inside Iran meant that opposition to the regime would be the principal characteristic. There were expression that sought retrenchment rather than adventurism, or the approaches to other militant groups. One ‘close fit’ identified as potential unity target was Peykar, in the West often referred to as the Marxist Mojahedin. It was a secular splinter group from the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI), the largest of Iran's guerrilla groups. Its members broke away from the PMOI to support of secular Marxism Leninism, rather than the Leftist Islamist modernism of the People's Mujahedin. Maziar Behrooz – sympathetic to the the *Fadaiyan*, one of the many Marxist organizations that fought to bring down the Shah of Iran, concludes that with the failure to reach agreement with the Peykar over a possible merger, UIC “had become a minor player in the movement”.

[Source: Behrooz, Rebels With A Cause: The failure of the Left in Iran. London: I. B. Tauris, 2001.](#)

From exile in Paris, Mujahedin leader Masoud Rajavi was instrumental in the establishment of the National Council of Resistance (NCR) emphasizing a Programme of democracy to work for the overthrow of the Khomeini regime. Within Iran armed opposition with bombings and assassinations continued. In the aftermath of the Mujahedin uprising in September 1981 uprising the struggle within Iran took on a clearer picture with smaller left-wing opposition groups, including the Fedayeen (Fedayân in Persian language), and the Maoist Union of Iranian Communists engaged in small-scale insurgency against the forces of the Islamic Republic..

Amol Uprising

The Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) adopted people's war as a line of struggle of the party. Around 200 of the group members went into hiding in the forests around the Caspian town of Amol in September, 1981 to set up a base area. They staged sporadic attacks on small civilian targets stealing food and necessities until Nov, 9 when they closed the Haraz Road 15 km to Amol in Mazandaran Province.



Although Iran was in the middle of a war with Iraq, on November 13th, Iranian armed forces dispersed the group which had to retreat further into depths of the forest. Some casualties were reported on both sides. As a result of this serious encounter, the group lost nearly half of its members. Two days later, another communist group attacked a military post 30 km from Amol. On Dec, 21, 1981, the guerrillas attacked a newly established military post, but were forced to retreat. On Jan, 3, 1982, during clashes with the Pasdaran – the Informal name for the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (the Iranian Revolutionary Guards) - one of the guerrilla leaders was killed.



1982 Amol uprising

1982 the UIC (S) mobilized forces in forests around Amol and launched an armed uprising on 25 January 1982, led by Siamak Zaim. The first target was the Basij building that housed the paramilitary volunteer militia established in 1979 by order of Ayatollah Khomeini. Then they started building barricades and making announcements asking people to join them. Their expectation to stage a public uprising did not find much support. People backed the military and took arms against the communist guerrillas killing eleven in front of the Basij building. But the civilian death toll was reportedly also high at 40 people.

The uprising was eventually a failure and the group went through a difficult period with most of its leadership and cadres arrested or killed. Zaim was arrested by the Revolutionary Guard after they retook Amol by force, and eventually executed in 1984.

The analysis of the Amol Uprising from another leftist perspective was, not unsurprisingly, more critical than that of the UCI and its successor organisations.

[See: Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) *"History has proven who are the real imperialist lackeys"*: The 32nd anniversary of the Amol uprising].

“The ill-prepared operation was intended to ignite mass uprisings throughout the country, but was instead disastrous. Calling themselves the Sarbedaran (literally ‘those who are ready to be hanged’), the attackers carried out the operation at a time when differences within the organisation had reached fever pitch, the vital disagreement between those proposing retreat and those calling for an offensive against the IRI (EROL - the Islamic Republic of Iran). The 1982 operation showed the latter had the upper hand, but the fiasco engulfed both factions. After 48 hours the attackers retreated into the jungle, and by the summer were uprooted by IRI forces, over 250 members were arrested and later executed. Among those executed were such notables of anti-Shah activity abroad as Siyamk Za’im, Abdol Rahman Azmaiesh, Hosein Riahi (alias Puya), mastermind of the military operation, and Farid and Vahid sari’olqalam.”

Source: Behrooz. *Rebels With A Cause: The failure of the Left in Iran*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2001.

Aftermath

The UCI were not the only left-wing group to be militarily defeated by the forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the government responded to the armed challenge of the guerrilla groups by expanded use of the Pasdaran in counterintelligence activities and by widespread arrests, jailings, and executions. Further campaigns in 1983 reduced rebel control over the countryside, and the Kurdish Democratic Party had to move its headquarters to Iraq, from which it made forays into Iran. By the end of 1983, key leaders of the Fadayan, Paykar (a Marxist-oriented splinter group of the Mojahedin), the Union of Communists, and the Mojahedin in Iran had been killed, thousands of the rank and file had been executed or were in prison, and the organizational structure of these movements was gravely weakened. Only the Mojahedin managed to survive, and even it had to transfer its main base of operations to Kordestan, and later to Kurdistan in Iraq, and its headquarters to Paris.

The pro-Soviet Communist Party of Iran, the Tudeh party had secured itself a measure of freedom during the first three years of the regime by declaring loyalty to Khomeini and supporting the clerics against liberal and left-wing opposition groups. But the party's position deteriorated in 1982, as relations between Iran and the Soviet Union grew more strained over such issues as the war with Iraq and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The government began closing down Tudeh publications as early as June 1981, and in 1982 members of the Tudeh as agents of a foreign power. In February 1983, the government arrested Tudeh leader Nureddin Kianuri, other members of the party Central Committee, and more than 1,000 party members. The party was proscribed, and Kianuri confessed on television to spying for the Soviet Union and to "espionage, deceit, and treason."

In the early days of the Islamic Republic's campaign against leftist organizations, the smaller groups bore the brunt of the clerics' attacks. The regime arrested and executed party leaders, decimating their organizational structures well before the interrogations, torture, executions and forced disappearances of political prisoners during the summer of 1988 constituted a widespread and systematic effort by the Islamic Republic to eliminate all political opposition. The exact number of prisoners executed is not known. Estimates deaths range from the regime's official declaration of "fewer than a thousand" to "estimates that 4,500 to 5,000 prisoners were executed that summer".

[Source: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.(2009) Deadly *Fatwa*: Iran's 1988 Prison Massacre. New Haven, Connecticut]

In spring 1983 the 4th council of Union of Iranian Communists was held attempting to re-organise the organisation, however state repression resulted in most of the leadership and cadres being arrested and shot in that year's wave of repression unleashed by the regime. The UIC, along with the other Iranian leftist forces were disrupted and neutralised within the country. In 1985 the UIC had again tried to organize militant struggle against the Islamic Republic but, again, this ended in failure. After this year they mainly operated in Kurdistan and abroad. Although *Wikipedia* reports that "In the late '80s they dropped some of their old slogans and strategies such as "Peoples' war in rural areas and uprising in cities", "Revolution Path" etc. Instead they launched a new strategy and their slogan became "Protracted People's War: siege the cities via Villages".

In 1984 the remnants of the UIC in exile were active in the re-groupment of Maoist organizations from all over the world, in the founding of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. It was central to the publication of Jahani Baraye Fath (جنتف یارب یناهج), a Persian translation of the RIM publication 'A World to Win'. UIC militants in London were active in maintaining the organisational task as a central contact for RIM. Politically they followed the development within RIM – signatories to the 1993 Declaration Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism! that formulated their current political stance. UIC members held the 'Founding Congress of Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-

Maoist), duly established on May Day, 2001, publishing the magazine *Haghighat* (تقیق, Persian for 'Truth'). It has an internet presence with English language pages
<http://cpimlm.com/brows.php?cid=1032&pgn=1>

In the new century the successor organisation CPI (MLM) supported the new synthesis of “communist theory” by the RCP,USA leader Bob Avakian that resulted in the disintegration of RIM.
