

Excerpt From:

Armed Struggle: The Road To The Mobilization Of The Masses

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The Characteristics of the Present Revolutionary Movement

In a condition of extensive and systematic oppression, in the absence of spontaneous general struggle, and at a time when armed struggle is the mainspring of liberation movements around the world and through which other forms of struggle may crystallize, groups of revolutionary vanguards in our country adopted armed struggle as their central tactic in order to break the absolute oppression imposed by the regime; to break the deadlock facing the liberation movement; and to pave the way for a general mass movement. Armed struggle gave the vanguard the chance to withstand the most bestial treatment meted out by the "monarcho-fascist" regime of the Shah and stand up and fight against it.

Here we deal with those features of armed struggle that have been overlooked by individuals and organizations outside the armed movement and to which not enough attention has been paid by elements inside it. These features are:

1) The form of armed struggle employed by the vanguard makes it possible to fight a bigger enemy force with a much smaller and compact force.

2) In the absence of a general mass movement, the main tasks of these revolutionary forces are: (a) to inform and to rouse the masses; and (b) to mobilize and to organize them. In such a struggle every military blow is designed, not to annihilate a part of the enemy's forces, but to show the enemy that he is vulnerable and thereby to dispel the sense of helplessness and despair which have been the lot of our people for so long.

3) Armed struggle is a long and continuous process which aims to mobilize the masses. It is not designed to strike occasional disconnected blows against the regime (and especially its head and its leading personalities.) The armed movement does not intend to transfer power to the people by annihilating members of the regime individually. It is not an individual struggle in which a "hero" is able to change the course of history and free the people. The armed struggle is merely the start of a general mass movement. The revolutionary armed movement has unconditionally accepted the Leninist principle that "without the workers, all the explosives in the world are manifestly powerless." For this reason the armed movement has no other aim from its military actions than to mobilize the masses. The ultimate value of the armed struggle lies in its ability to support the masses in their fight against the ruling class.

There is a definite and well-defined demarcation line between terrorism and armed struggle. Armed struggle is a tactic employed by vanguard revolutionary organizations against ruling classes and their foreign allies. Military tactics are aimed at various targets and the selection of targets is based on scientific knowledge of the enemy. These blows constitute a special channel through which the movement informs the people, but it is not the only channel and the movement does not confine itself to it.

If, in the process, some of the regime's hated personalities are killed, this is not meant to destroy part of the regime's power. A total war waged by the masses will nibble away at the power of the regime and will ultimately destroy it in a final confrontation. And the power that replaces it will take shape through a lengthy process. It is thus that armed struggle is able to transfer the power to the masses. Otherwise it is obvious that the position of one hated person in the regime will be filled by more elements; or, taking it a step further, a ruthless gang will be replaced by a more ruthless lot. This is precisely the reason why people will never be able to achieve power through terrorism.

Those elements in the regime who are directly involved in oppressing the people are suitable targets, whose liquidation proves the regime's vulnerability. If the regime displays anger at such times, it is not because a pawn has been lost. In present conditions the regime enjoys relatively limitless possibilities and can easily replace a pawn or a number of pawns. Rather, its anger stems from the fact that the blows against it by the movement - be they against a pawn, a military base or any other target guarded by the regime - will reveal its (the regime's) weakness before a fighting force whose revolutionary nature is there for everyone to see, and who is engaged in disclosing the true nature of the regime and inciting the people to rise against it. The regime is also angry because the continuation of guerrilla activities will have an informative effect on the masses and draw them into the struggle.

Here lies the strategic importance of a continuing armed struggle for the growth of the movement and for achieving the aim of the first stage, i.e., the mobilization of the masses. The continuing existence of a

guerrilla struggle is the necessary condition for the development of the movement and for winning the confidence of the people in a struggle whose standard bearer the guerrillas are. Hence the regime's eagerness to announce the decisive annihilation of the guerrillas.

4) Armed struggle cannot turn into a mass movement in the first strategic stage. The workers and other urban proletarians are unable to join armed struggle during this stage. The fact that the more progressive elements of this class take part in armed struggle is no indication that the struggle has become a mass movement.

Armed struggle in rural areas is initially dependent on urban forces. The composition of a rural guerrilla unit has the same features as those of an urban unit. The aims of a rural unit are also the same as urban ones: winning the confidence of rural people and mobilizing them. Hence the continuing existence of the guerrillas, as well as their durability in the face of the regime's military force, are the necessary conditions for winning the confidence of the rural masses.

Even during the second stage when urban and rural guerrilla forces are on the increase, armed struggle may not be considered to have become a mass movement. The increase is merely an indication of a fully developed vanguard and its success in assuming the leadership of the masses. In this stage, urban populations engage in anti-regime protest movement; political and economic struggles begin to appear; but armed struggle is still employed exclusively by the vanguard. It is also during this stage that a political atmosphere pervades all urban areas; waves of guerrilla operations in the countryside as well as in towns begin to rock the rural areas. Yet the masses still do not take up arms to destroy their enemy. That is why the armed movement attaches so much importance to those tactics that will have a direct bearing on the mass movement.

Therefore, the armed movement, while believing in armed struggle as an important means of guaranteeing the continued existence of the vanguard, and through which it confronts the enemy, also paves the way for a mass movement during the two preliminary stages, with special reference to military tactics. The mass movement will be channelled through economic and political struggles, and the armed movement will try to assume leadership of these struggles with a view to their development.

To remain content with military tactics, especially through the first two stages, without considering the ever-extending channels that could contain the increased force of the masses is tantamount to creating an unbridgeable gap between the vanguard and the people. If we just accept that the bulk of the workers and other urban masses are unable to partake in guerrilla struggle, as is done by progressive elements, and that their role is limited to expressions of sympathy and admiration for the guerrillas, or help that will not have a decisive effect on the mass expansion of armed struggle, this in effect means that armed actions managed to create sentiments and emotions that were not taken advantage of in the fight against the enemy. In this case, public emotion is condemned to a perpetual embryonic existence and the movement will lose its revolutionary characteristics. The necessity to adopt tactics that are capable of absorbing the mobilized support of the masses - tactics that can achieve material popular support - follows from this.

5) The armed movement introduced itself to the people through a process of struggle, and the correctness of armed strategy was propagated in the whole of the liberation movement through practice. However, inside and in the environs of groups preparing for armed strategy, revolutionary theory played an important role in paving the way for the struggle. In the preparatory stage, politico-military groups discussed their strategy within the groups and immediately outside them. In the present changed situation, however, it is the duty of these groups to use every opportunity to talk with the people. Not only should the people understand the armed movement and the nature of the guerrilla struggle, they should also learn to know their own tasks in the struggle.

The movement must avoid giving exaggerated and distorted account of itself to the people, since this creates unjustified expectations. The people must be made to realize that the movement is merely a standard bearer that can overcome the enemy only with the active support and help of the masses. They should know that the guerrilla is not a "champion of liberation" who will achieve victory over the "ogre" in the forefront of the people. They must know that should they remain a mere witness during the process of struggle, the "champion" will be put to rout.

If the movement fails to employ means through which the people's passive sympathy can be transformed into active co-operation, if it fails to assume the leadership of the masses in a revolutionary struggle, then it will also fulfill its revolutionary tasks.

If the guerrillas promise victory over the regime without active participation on the part of the people, if not in theory, then at least in practice, they fail to grasp the historical role of the masses and fail to guide them in an extensive struggle against the regime; then not only will the movement fail to enlist their active support, but the masses will lose faith in methods of struggle that are feasible and will not turn to armed struggle. This in effect ensures their exclusion from struggle and their relegation to the status of spectators.

If the movement is unable to follow a line that will lead to the eventual mobilization of the masses, then despite an increase in mass sentiments and despite the guerrillas' spectacular sacrifices, it will fail.

6) The armed movement has undoubtedly put forward various new forms of struggle. These reflect the present conditions and the failure of past methods of struggle. There are, however, some organizations who reach conservatively to these new forms. In the working class movement there are some dogmatists who will only settle for methods established in the past, and are therefore condemned to a permanent nostalgic view of the present situation. They flip through the classical works of Marxism to discover anything that might be written against the new methods of struggle. These dogmatists somehow manage to transform a revolutionary theory into a counter-revolutionary one. On the other hand, these groups shut their eyes to the events of the past two decades and deny the achievements of armed struggle and the obvious transformations that have taken place. They wish to achieve overnight what the liberation movement failed to achieve in successive periods. They are wondering why the masses have not already taken up arms and why the regime is still powerful and has stayed put. This kind of approach to the problem not only lacks fundamental rules, it is also blatantly spiteful.

Armed struggle does not possess the magic power to achieve overnight, against all social odds, what might rightly be expected to take a hundred years; neither can it rectify a negative equilibrium in favor of revolution with a few "clever" military moves. The new methods of struggle have got to be adapted to historical conditions and the position of the society in practice. The old methods of struggle, i.e., those which people, through experience, found to be effective against the regime, cannot be rejected en-masse and put aside. There has got to be a dialectical relationship between the new and old methods. Armed struggle should fall into its natural mold in our society and old methods of struggle should be used alongside it. If we decide to import tactics, whose effectiveness has been proved in other societies, with no regard to the conditions of struggle in our country and the special features of our society, then we must prepare ourselves for many defeats. The defeats will continue until we produce a creative method of struggle.

Grounds for the Appearance of Adventurism in the Armed Revolutionary Movement

The main threat from within the revolutionary armed movement is, at the present time, a tendency to adventurism. To ignore this phenomenon and to fail to attack it will make the movement vulnerable and lead it to defeat. Here we shall try to analyze, in brief, the different facets of this deviation.

A) The Origins of Adventurism in the Movement

1) The conservatism and collusion of some traditional movements - especially the Tudeh Party and the National Front - are liable to cause a violent and misguided counter-reaction within our movement. The absence of comprehensive knowledge together with a lack of deep understanding about past struggles produces a superficial evaluation of these two movements. Some groups, because of their persistent rightist policy, have been pushed into a position of blatant liberalism, theory-peddling and fabrication of political groups. Their incorrect stand and their sporadic outbursts against armed struggle are further causes for reaction. Both these sets of reactions provide fertile grounds for adventurism in our movement.

2) There is, at the present time, no experience revolutionary working class vanguard which undertake to spread the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, as well as propagate the revolutionary path among the working class. In this context, disjointed group activities help to create deviationary alternatives. Thus the absence of a unified and experienced working class vanguard on the one hand, and the prevalence of various disconnected forms of struggle on the other, is another ground for the growth of adventurism in our movement.

3) When there is an absence of the sort of movement that embraces the whole population and the total burden of fighting the enemy of the people falls upon groups of vanguards, there is a danger that these groups may fall prey to sectarianism and be deflected from the principles of the struggle. This will in turn create conditions in which people are apt to attach little importance to the masses and help create an atmosphere of avant-guardism. The present vacuum created by the absence of an extensive mass movement, therefore, provides suitable grounds for the growth of adventurism.

4) At the present time, groups of vanguards are mainly composed of intellectuals and relatively conscious petit-bourgeois individuals. The relative ignorance and historical backwardness of the working class in our exploited society has effectively reduced their numbers amongst the vanguards and in the revolutionary armed movement as a whole. This objective state of affairs can help the growth of adventurism, deviationary ideas and petit-bourgeois tendencies.

5) In the world as a whole, a number of petit-bourgeois ideologies have appeared during the past decade that believe Marxism to be outdated. Deviation from creative Marxism-Leninism, which at the present

time has developed as revisionism and dogmatism inside the world working class movement, has paved the way for the growth of petit-bourgeois tendencies. Thus, those forces who should logically be expected to enter revolutionary struggle under the banner of Marxism-Leninism are being pushed towards these petit-bourgeois ideologies....

B) The Main Forms of Adventurism in the Armed Movement

1) To ignore the objective conditions which are relevant to the growth of the revolutionary movement; to consider the role of the vanguard out of its context; and to peddle the notion that the sensational sacrifice of some elements of the vanguard will immediately (or in a short time) attract the support of the masses, or even encourage their active participation in the struggle, is adventuristic. Such conceptions about armed struggle should be replaced by a Marxist understanding of the dynamics of society and of the revolutionary movement in general. Today, we live in conditions where all factors are combined against the revolution. To believe that all these factors are amenable to change by one single factor, namely, the role of the vanguard - a vanguard in its most elementary form, for that matter - is an unscientific approach to society and to the movement. To persist in such a theory is to deny the role of the masses in the movement. To deny the masses their role in the movement - although those guilty might vehemently deny this - is the main form of adventurism.

2) Paying scant attention to revolutionary theory, concentrating only on "practical" and delimited actions, and attention to tactical matters while ignoring strategic questions, are all forms of adventurism.

When we fail to recognize that a guerrilla is an informed individual who performs a military assignment armed primarily with revolutionary theory; when we pay little or no attention to political studies and hurriedly try to exploit the excitement caused by a revolutionary action and wish immediately to transform whosoever may join the movement into an exemplary practitioner; and when we imagine that revolutionary theory is merely about tactical questions and sensational literature, then we are only revealing our adventuristic tendencies, and this can be reflected in the revolutionary movement as a whole.

3) An absolute insistence on armed tactics of a particular nature in urban guerrilla struggle; making dogmas out of these tactics and under-estimating the value of other tactics besides armed tactics, is only a form of adventurism. To put too much value on sensational tactics, and to pay no attention to tactics that can excite the physical support of the masses for the movement, can alienate the former from the latter and ultimately defeat the movement.

Too much emphasis on the role of the "Fedae"; resorting to constant invocations of "martyrdom" to offset the absence of a mass movement, and the belief that the sacrifice of blood is sufficient for the start of the revolution, are aspects of adventurism.

4) An incorrect knowledge of the potential forces; seeing the struggle merely within the limits of available forces, employing tactics that can only satisfy the latter; disregarding genuine revolutionary forces merely because these will turn to struggle at a later date, are deviationary phenomena. Marxist-Leninist organizations are liable to succumb to the temptation of putting aside the special features of their ideology in order to get hold of the available forces offered by certain sections of the petit-bourgeoisie. Such acts can effectively cut the organizations off from the proletariat. This, in effect, means that they will have to make do with a limited force and ignore the potential force in whose hands the revolution will triumph; this is another form of adventurism.

5) Expressions of weariness about the struggle, demonstrations of impatience when the struggle drags on, and complaints about the masses which can turn into pessimism about them, is an aspect of adventurism. To employ vengeful tactics in order to offset the absence of a mass movement and to make continuous demands on the members for more and more sacrifices to fill such a vacuum, is a natural consequence of the same thing. To merely examine small tactical matters in an attempt to find the causes of defeat; to explain away the fundamental shortcomings of the movement by looking only at one part of the whole picture; and to blame one-self for the movement's inadequacies, is also adventurism.

6) Under-estimating the enemy, indulging in self-satisfied expressions because of some victories, exaggerating one's power and ignoring the power of other forces who face the ruling cliques and imperialism, is a further form of adventuristic tendency which will prevent us from making a continuous effort in looking for new tactics, correcting the old ones and recognizing our shortcomings.

7) Adventurist tendencies can also appear in various other aspects of our work, e.g., in understanding and evaluating the real potentials of different individuals and their political as well as ideological training; in our moral discipline, and in our personal and collective conduct.

The petit-bourgeois deviationary tendency, which manifests itself in the form of leftist and pseudo-revolutionary attitudes, is liable to keep us apart from those more straightforward individuals who come to the movement. It can also drive us towards hypocrisy and false humility and prevent us from carrying out fundamental ideological training.

These are the main forms of adventurist tendencies in groups and organizations attached to the armed movement. The less experienced an organization, the more exposed it is to the dangers of these tendencies. Some forms of leftism have a great attraction for inexperienced Marxist individuals, and it is quite true that "leftism" is "an infantile disorder" within the revolutionary working class movement. Left to itself, the disease can spread throughout the whole movement. Those comrades who prescribe the fatal medicine of leftism in order to cure an allegedly "rightist attitude," those comrades who in any way "criticize" a "leftist stand," which in practice is nothing short of an encouragement of this disease, are in effect the most dangerous protagonists of adventurism.

A determined fight against adventurism, in whatever position, the recognition of what are deviationary tendencies and a timely war against them, and a sober defense of revolutionary policy and ideology constitute the central task facing all elements and groups who are attached to the working classes. Failure to do this is tantamount to leaving the fate of the movement to unforeseen future events.

The Revolutionary Armed Movement and the Mobilization of the Masses

A clear Marxist understanding of the relation between theory and practice compels us to avoid making dogmas out of forecasts. These forecasts must be corrected and developed in the course of practice bearing in mind that the more distant future actions they describe, the more general they will inevitably have to be, thus becoming more subjective at the cost of objectivity. It is only by involvement in each stage of the struggle that our ideas will come face to face with the realities of a situation and thereby develop their objective and practical aspects.

Today, the armed movement ought to pave the way for the mobilization of the masses, and we are in possession of concrete data that can reveal the features of the next stage of the struggle. The better we are able to understand and analyze these facts, the more objective will be our forecasts.

In preceding chapters, sufficient emphasis has already been placed on the importance of a total mobilization of the masses in an armed struggle. Here, we merely touch upon a few important questions.

The tactics employed by the movement in the second strategic stage of the struggle are mainly of two kinds: military and political. Military tactics will continue to be the cornerstone of the struggle and will play the important part of expanding and developing the movement. Even if political tactics fail to achieve the desired expansion, military tactics and armed organizations will retain their pivotal importance and strategic role.

The pivotal role of the armed struggle is illustrated in the following ways:

a) Whereas political tactics can organize some forces in a struggle against the regime, the continuation of such a struggle and its employment for the final defeat of the ruling cliques will come about only through military tactics. The expansion and development of a mass struggle from the economic and political level to a military one, depends entirely on the continuing growth of armed struggle in Iran.

b) Armed struggle is the determining factor in rousing the masses against the regime. Although at any specific stage the people cannot be said to be able to take part in armed struggle, nevertheless, their pull towards a struggle against the ruling clique is directly influenced by armed struggle. Thus, the armed movement plays the main role in drawing the masses into the struggle.

c) The armed movement plays a fundamental role by standing up to the ruling groups, neutralizing their preventive tactics and ultimately suppressing them. If the struggle discontinues, the regime can easily suppress all economic and political movements. This is done firstly through counter-revolutionary brute force; and secondly, by employing suitable tactics, the regime will conceal its true nature from the despondent and defeated mass of the population. Thus, stagnation and oppression will rule over political and economic movements.

The armed struggle will, on the one hand, neutralize counter-revolutionary force with revolutionary force; and on the other hand, reveal, in the best possible manner, to the people and the world in general, the true color of the ruling groups. This will cause the masses to rise up after every blow, and at the same time stop the regime's oppressive rule over society. This is another aspect of the crucial role of armed struggle in the movement.

That is why political tactics are apt to develop and realize their true values in conjunction with military tactics. Hence a deep understanding of the revolutionary armed movement and its tactics is a must for all politico-economic groups.

The Spread of Political and Economic Protests by the People and the Growth and Development of Armed Struggle

Some individuals and groups attached to the armed movement are still under the impression that townspeople will join the urban guerrilla warfare in the near future, thus expanding the existing organizations and drawing the mass of the urban population into armed struggle. The consequences of such a belief are two-fold: firstly, it attaches no importance to armed struggle in the rural areas; and secondly, it is heedless of any form of mass political struggle in the urban areas.

If we assume that urban workers, artisans and intellectuals will directly join armed groups and take part in urban guerrilla struggle, then what need is there of guiding these forces into an economic struggle? Taken one step further, such a belief could mean that the organization and expansion of political and economic, or any other non-military, struggle, is inconsistent with the revolutionary armed movement.

We believe this to be a false assumption. We further believe that armed struggle will not become a mass movement in the urban areas. The tactics employed by armed struggle have some features which rule out the mass participation of urban population in it. This struggle will be limited to progressive and conscious elements, be they workers, intellectuals (i.e., professional classes), or others, in urban areas. The participation of workers and other non-intellectuals in the movement at the present time is a clear example of this basic trend. The composition of guerrilla organizations is liable, at some future date, to be changed through an increase in the numbers of progressive, working-class elements. However, the presence of these conscious elements in the armed movement must never be taken as proof of a mass participation in the struggle.

Armed struggle is bound to grow, despite the inevitable ups and downs which are natural in the development of any movement. Urban guerrilla organizations will expand and armed struggle will assume bigger dimensions and more effective forms. Nevertheless, the following impediments prevent this form of struggle from becoming a mass movement:

a) Urban guerrilla tactics are, from a technical point of view, extraordinarily complicated. In such a struggle every guerrilla will have to be a highly experienced commando. A complete command of the technicalities of struggle against the police - technicalities that continually become more and more complicated - and an extraordinary mobility are an absolute must for every guerrilla. The workers and urban proletariat who have not had sufficient training are unable to use these tactics. The use of these tactics will also be fraught with danger for an ordinary intellectual.

In an urban guerrilla war it is not possible to accept volunteers from amongst the workers and hope that a few experienced comrades will be able to command them. A commander in such a situation has limited possibilities to guide his men, who require leadership at all hours of the day in their various assignments. In such a struggle, every man plays a decisive role in protecting himself and his comrades-in-arms. The great mass of people turn to a struggle in large numbers and suddenly. Hence the above-mentioned features effectively rule out their participation in an urban guerrilla war.

b) Even the largest towns in our country have a limited capacity to accommodate guerrillas. A guerrilla force in Tehran, which is an exceptionally large town, cannot exceed an estimated number of a few hundred - between one and two thousand, if we include the auxiliary units. If we look at the way in which an urban guerrilla unit operates, we will realize that this figure represents an extraordinary force, and is the optimum capacity for military assignments in a town. If the capacity of a town for military actions and concealment is such that the actions of two or more groups overlap each other or cause problems for other groups, thus depriving them of important room for maneuver in the face of possible enemy search and destroy operations, then the continuation of a guerrilla force is a detrimental factor for us. Those who believe that townspeople will eventually join urban guerrilla organizations in the thousands, or tens of thousands, have, unfortunately no clear picture of the masses; nor do they have a clear understanding of the characteristics of our struggles. These are the people who occasionally start to murmur about a liberated zone in urban areas.

Urban guerrilla groups and their reserve units (i.e., sympathizers) are formed from conscious and progressive elements. The masses, despite their tremendous size and quality, are unable to partake in urban armed struggle.

c) The intellectuals are better prepared than workers and other proletarians to take part in this struggle. That is why the main force of the guerrilla struggle is composed of revolutionary intellectuals. This composition, with some increase in favor of the workers, will on the whole be maintained through the next stage of the struggle.

In contrast to these limitations and shortcomings, the armed struggle has the following possibilities in the mountains and rural areas.

In the countryside, ordinary rural elements can turn to struggle and, after an initial training by experienced cadres, take part in direct actions. There is no impediment to accepting the rural masses into armed combat units, and the reason for dispatching urban guerrilla units to the rural areas is because of the

military unpreparedness of the rural population. Not only farmers, but also workers and other urban elements, can engage in rural armed struggle and develop their potentialities in such a struggle.

The limitations of armed struggle in the towns and its expansion outside do not contradict the primary role of the urban areas in the first stage. In this stage, towns have various advantages over rural areas. These advantages were noted and emphasized by the movement with considerable results. These limitations of urban guerrilla struggle and the possibility of better opportunities in the rural areas, are being analyzed in relation to the armed struggle becoming a mass movement. (Since armed struggle outside the towns is vital to the future of the movement and also because it is very important in the total mobilization of the masses in an armed movement, we have devoted the last chapter of this book to the analysis of this problem.)

Thus, the present realities of the situation manifest themselves in two essential ways.

The first is that, parallel to the growth of armed struggle, the urban masses will become active through participation in economic and political movements, the continuation of which will depend on the growth of armed struggle. The second one is that armed struggle will become a mass movement in the rural areas. With the expansion and development of armed struggle in the rural areas, the urban and rural masses will join the struggle. Therefore, we shall in the future - i.e., at the end of the first and throughout the second stages - witness the increase of political and economic protests by the urban population. The expansion of these protests is a result of the growth in social contradictions, and the effect that armed struggle will have on these contradictions in order to reactivate them.

The revolutionary movements should not leave these waves of protest to look after themselves. The movement must actively organize these waves towards the realization of a general strategy.

At the same time, armed struggle in the urban areas will in the future enjoy a quantitative as well as a qualitative growth, and armed struggle in the rural areas will begin to expand. This will enable the urban masses to resort to political and economic struggle under the guidance of progressive elements from the revolutionary armed movement, while armed struggle in the countryside continues its growth with the participation of the bulk of the progressive forces.

This is the main feature of the movement's second strategic stage, that of mass mobilization. It is essential to complete this stage before the subsequent one, which will see the beginning of total military engagements with the mass participation of all peoples in Iran.

The Formation of a Political Front Within the Revolutionary Armed Movement

If we accept that the urban masses will turn to political and economic struggle as a result of armed struggle; if we further accept that the revolutionary armed movement should, with an emphasis on armed struggle, also exploit other forms of struggle for mass mobilization and for a total war in the future, then it follows that the seeds of political organizations attached to the revolutionary movement should be sown here and now. The organization of these forms of civilian entities is neither simple nor secondary. The task of these organizations will be mass protests in towns and the creation of a political front against the regime.

Even now some moves are taking shape in this direction. Those groups who have undertaken the organization of such are set on creating a political front which will support the armed movement. Should these groups and organizations clearly understand the pivotal role of the armed movement and set up a fundamental relationship with it, and at the same time adapt their policies to the definitive strategy of the revolutionary armed movement, then they will be regarded as the political wing of the movement.

We have already talked about politico-economic groups; publishing and propaganda units; and organizations abroad and their special features. This type of organizing is the main kind of formation, on the political front, which is taking shape in the present conditions. The most important tasks facing this front are:

- a) the organization of people's protest movements, which have economic connotations;
- b) the channeling of these movements along political lines;
- c) to introduce the revolutionary armed movement to the people;
- d) to reveal the nature of the regime and to inform people;
- e) international propaganda, in the interest of the revolutionary movement against the regime.

To accomplish these tasks we have need of conscious and progressive elements and various forms of organizations. The main type of formation would be politico-economic groupings. We have already mentioned the features of these groups and therefore here we merely deal with the kinds of tactics that must be employed by them.

These groups are so named because their members are conscious, politically minded and belong to a particular profession or branch of employment. And since all their activities are aimed at achieving political goals, the groups are as such regarded as political entities. Such a groups may comprise up to thirty to forty members, depending on the size and extent of its area of operation. The most important factor in the

formation of these groups is the clear understanding by their membership of the tasks undertaken by the groups. These tasks are specifically determined in relation to the revolutionary armed movement. These groups are exposed to the danger of being transformed into intellectual, theoretical groupings or "political" associations which might regard themselves, in the present conditions, as a replacement for, and the forerunners of, a party.

Although one cannot be dogmatic about the nature of membership, it is important to note that belonging to the same branch of employment will have a decisive effect on the way a group expands and fulfills its tasks.

These groups may be formed in any area where there is a minimum of economic activities and consequent demands. Nevertheless, it is obvious right now that professional and intellectual circles and manual trades provide the best contexts for the groups' activities.

Such activities will begin with the most elementary aspects of the struggle and spread to include a general strike within a particular trade, comprising as such a deliberate political protest against the regime. It is essential to organize small actions in a trade in order to pave the way for more important actions and the subsequent assumption of leadership in that trade. Only when society is completely governed by a political consciousness, especially in the student sections, will political matters act as an impetus for spontaneous collective actions.

A politico-economic group may be formed amongst the workers of a particular factory. Workers in various urban trades (such as shoemaking, tailoring, printing, etc.) can form their own respective politico-economic groups. These cells and groups may use all available legal channels, such as the phony trade unions that have been set up by the regime, as well as available negotiating machineries, in order to give shape to the demands of their respective trades and also to prepare their members for collective actions - providing no step is taken which might be construed as an approval of the regime and would thereby create a favorable impression amongst the members of the trade, towards the administrative set-up and specifically towards the regime as a whole.

Amongst the professions (teachers, writers, artists, students, and so on), the groups have various grounds for activity. Here, too, legal and semi-legal pretexts should be exploited to create a movement. Any problem concerning the trade, any small demand for extracurricular and administrative topic should be exploited for trade solidarity to provide grounds for trade activities. If these matters and other seemingly small topics are used in line with revolutionary tactics, they will realize their true values and cease to be underestimated.

Student activities at the present time are susceptible to assuming political overtones and of being transformed into political protests. The fact that political and economic movements of one sort or another have not yet fully expanded and stabilized, should not be used as a pretext for abandoning trade activities inside the universities. Insofar as a particular group of students does not have real economic demands, their sectional interests about cultural matters can easily assume political overtones.

Writers, poets and other responsible and well-informed artists can fulfill their roles in the liberation movement by openly protesting the regime.

Having reached the stage of development that enables politico-economic groups to establish workable relationships with one another, they can organize the total membership of a trade (for example, all teachers in Tehran or throughout the country; university students and students in higher education generally) in a concerted action. Even in such a case the groups must avoid undertaking tasks which go beyond their well-defined political and organizational responsibilities. To overlook this principle will act against the interests of a mass movement and therefore against the revolutionary movement. In organizing trade activities, an ideological monopoly is harmful. Any one group or person will play its part in these activities and co-operate with others. The important thing here is to have a uniform and harmonious understanding about these activities and their ability to adapt in order to meet the requirements of the revolutionary movement. Ideological opposition is essential against all persons who, knowingly or out of ignorance, wish to divert political and economic activities from their main course, and push those informed elements, responsible for the organization of these activities, into a struggle the futility of which has been abundantly proved by experience. The groups who lack a revolutionary strategy are allowed to partake in the general decision-making process commensurate with the amount of work they put into collective trade activities.

Another form of activity undertaken by the political wing of the movement is the setting up of propaganda and publishing cells in towns, which have the task of duplicating revolutionary handouts and pamphlets published by the armed movement (i.e., by the guerrilla organizations). These should then be circulated within the movement, including within the politico-economic organizations, or distributed directly and at night to the public in general. This is the least costly way in which publishing can be undertaken in towns and on the level of the movement.

The members of these cells will be prepared to withstand any punishments meted out by the regime. The enthusiasm and sacrifice with which the guerrillas prepared elements of the political wing, including the members of these cells, to make sacrifices and accept punishment has had undeniable results. The punishment meted out to the members of these cells will be far more severe than that suffered by politico-economic activists.

Publishing cells will undertake to get hold of facilities themselves, so that in case of betrayal, nobody else will be involved. These cells can have a one-way contact with the guerrillas and politico-economic groups.

Propaganda cells are somewhat similar to publishing cells. They are very small and compact and, in exceptional circumstances, even one individual can engage in activities which can bring about effective results. Slogan writing and the distribution of tracts also form part of their activities.

Outside the country those political groups who believe in armed strategy will have to assume a more definite formation. These groups must set up tribunes and publishing facilities independent of the old organizations, bearing in mind that if and when these organizations are prepared to put their propaganda facilities at the disposal of the movement, such offers should be accepted.

The most important thing for political groups outside the country is to have solidarity with forces inside and to maintain direct contact with the revolutionary movement. They should assess their duties vis-a-vis the movement and accept the principle that it is the inalienable right of the organizations and groups who are engaged in struggle inside the country to determine the politics of the movement. Departure from this principle will lead to a subjective assessment of society and even more subjective solutions for the movement. Harm suffered by the movement through the propagation of such deviationary solutions can only be neutralized by expending a great deal of energy. But the action of persons and groups who cause this harm is hardly forgivable.

If and when the political groups abroad set up official centers, guerrilla organizations will get in touch with them outside the country and harmonize their activities with the groups' programs of action.

The most important tasks of these groups at the present time are:

a) to introduce the revolutionary movement and its strategy to Iranians and progressive circles abroad. This task can be achieved with an emphasis on internal interests and the activities and publications of the revolutionary armed movement;

b) the creation of a unified and strong propaganda front against the regime and in support of the internal struggle;

c) to reproduce internal communiques, publications and revolutionary texts that reach them, and transfer them back to Iran on a large scale.

Political organizations within the revolutionary movement are bound to influence each other. Intellectual (professional) groups and organizations can help other sections of the movement in the population, including workers. Such help cannot be extended merely by putting on a pair of working-class overalls. An attempt to draw sympathizers from amongst workers and hope to make "trained cadres" out of them is no help to the liberation movement or the working class. To form politico-economic groups amongst the workers is the job of conscious elements of the working class. Intellectual groups can go to the help of the workers through concerted actions, general protest movements and expressions of sympathy and solidarity. Politico-military groups must guide the workers' economic movement along the general policy of the revolutionary movement.

In the event of a workers' strike, students can express their support and, if at all possible, engage in street demonstrations and head towards factory areas or working class localities. This might involve a running battle with the police.

Propaganda and publishing cells can easily publicize the workers' struggle; so can political groups abroad, thereby putting the regime under propaganda pressure and helping economic and political movements.

However, one thing is still unclear, and that is the role of politico-military organizations in such events. It is their duty to take the following steps:

a) they should determine the role of political groups and the forms of struggle that may be adopted, and actively propagate them in the movement;

b) they should gather, not general and brief, but definite and exact information about the economic demands and sectional requirements of the masses. They should also watch all non-military activities in society, analyze them and take clear actions in approving, strengthening and developing such activities;

c) they should allocate some of their experienced cadres, who have the necessary requirements and positions, to organize the political wing of the movement, to speed up the formation of political groups and to lead them;

d) they should employ the multifarious facets of general struggle for the expansion and development of the movement. The radical leadership, and methodical use of this general struggle and the forces behind it, is also the urgent task of politico-military organizations.

It is thus that the seeds of a political front in the revolutionary armed movement will take root. The growth and development of this front, the creation of uniformity between various dispersed elements and groups in it, and the establishment of a full relationship between the front and armed organizations in the future, will be achieved inside the liberation movement of Iran.

At the present time, the first steps have been taken for the formation of a political front. But the achievement of full unity amongst all revolutionary forces will depend on the growth and development of the revolutionary movement. It is only in the process of struggle that the true content of this front and the forces within it can be assessed and the nature of its leadership determined.

The people's liberation front of Iran, or any form of union that satisfies the same requirements, will put an end to the leadership vacuum in society. The struggles of the political and military wings of the revolutionary forces will be unified in this front and their combined energies and resources will be used to achieve the strategic goals of the movement.

To create such a front is one of the important aims of the revolutionary movement. The front will play a decisive role in organizing popular forces and employing any and all forms of effective struggle; it will be able to issue orders to all sections of the community. The front will give leadership to the most conservative actions of a civil servant as it does to the most revolutionary struggles waged by the army of liberation..

However, at the present time, guerrilla organizations must shoulder the duties of such a front according to their abilities.

So far, military activities have chiefly been used to achieve political aims; they have been tactics against the regime and against the imperialists. These tactics were designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of armed struggle and the necessity to carry it out; to disclose the dictatorial nature of the regime; to break the official silence and to smash the prevailing oppression; and to awaken the masses to the necessity of struggle. The tactics, which revealed the characteristics of the armed movement and have established armed struggle in society, will be unflinchingly pursued in the future in a more developed form. In no time must the regime, imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie (the last one being part of the ruling bloc, reflecting the exploitation of imperialistic monopolies) be ignored by the movement. Therefore, while armed struggle will pursue a general aim, it will, in its development process, engage in those activities which have a direct bearing on the people's day-to-day existence.

Guerrilla Support for the Urban Masses

Now, we discuss the tactics employed by guerrilla organizations within the limits of an urban armed struggle in order to mobilize the masses.

A preliminary stage of development is essential before military tactics can be effective in people's political and economic movements, for two reasons:

- 1) The capacity of a guerrilla at the present time does not allow him to undertake a multitude of tasks;
- 2) Because of the people's unpreparedness and their conservatism at the start of a series of protest movements, military tactics may push them away from struggle. If, in present conditions, guerrillas resort to arms and bombs in a strike, the working masses who, after a long period of silence and inactivity, are only just beginning to take part in the struggle, will be overcome by fear of the regime and its vengeful tactics. This will, in effect, represent a retreat by the people and is thus against the interest of mass mobilization.

Therefore, the armed movement must, to begin with, engage in those activities which are designed to give moral support to the struggle waged by workers, intellectuals (professional classes) and other people. This support can assume the following forms:

a) Attempts must be made to introduce the armed movement to the people; to make known the prevailing political and economic conditions, and to reveal the dictatorial nature of the regime.

b) Established guerrilla organizations should take a direct part in the political life of society and publish their own thinking about various problems. The fact that during the preparatory phase, these organizations refrained, out of necessity, from using various forms of political propaganda, is no reason to remain silent today. It is by no means sufficient to be content with explanations given to the people in the form of communiques after military operations. While in some parts of our country such as Baluchestan, Sistan and Khuzestan, people, for any reason, come face to face with the regime; when people resort to the most elementary reactions to relieve the unbearable pressure of life they are under, when the regime throws in the most expensive phony celebrations and spends thousands of millions of dollars on arms and proudly boasts about its role as the gendarme of the region, and when the regime engages in adventurism in an

imperialistic front against the peoples of the region, then it is time for the guerrilla organizations to open a dialogue with the people - they must not remain silent.

No doubt it is also necessary for the guerrillas to explain their actions to the people and to familiarize them with their tactics. They must not, however, be content with the incorrect and simple analysis of the general public regarding their actions - as has been the case in some recent instances. Attempts must be made to inform people, to correct their previously held notions, and to lead the masses along a revolutionary path.

c) Attention to people's needs and their day-to-day problems: The general strategic aim of the armed movement is a people's democracy. This system will be able to provide adequate answers to people's social and economic problems. Nevertheless, it is incorrect to by-pass people's present-day needs merely because we hold such progressive ideas. In the interests of the people, the movement must provide suitable and practical slogans for current problems. We cannot defer people's present-day needs to the promised land. We must try to understand their problems and talk them over with every section, branch of employment and class in society - not merely in an outline and general sense, but in a detailed and exact manner. It is imperative that we propose feasible solutions for today's problems so that they provide people with the necessary impetus to move. For instance, when parents of children both in public and private schools are under severe financial pressure because of school fees, the guerrillas should start a campaign explaining the consequences of such an anti-popular system of education and the effects it will have on the future of their children; extend the campaign against turning state schools into private ones; demand the end of fees in state schools; and put forward a practical program to raise the standard of education in these schools. Such a campaign does not prove that we recognize the regime. On the contrary, it demonstrates the irresponsibility of the government and reveals its anti-popular characteristics. When the cost of living shoots up in a relatively short time, it presents an opportunity to a guerrilla to demonstrate to the people the working of a capitalist system in practice; he can isolate the real perpetrator of this system in our society and pinpoint its true beneficiaries and those sections who have suffered as a direct result of a rise in the cost of living.

d) An important task of guerrilla organizations is the expression of solidarity and sympathy with spontaneous popular actions when the workers of a trade or a factory, students or other sections of the community, come face to face with the ruling bloc in pursuance of their economic and political demands.

The Effectiveness of Military Tactics in People's Economic and Political Struggle

Having prepared the people to accept military operations, the guerrillas will begin to gather the required force for effective military tactics, and thus armed, will enter the economic and political life of society:

a) Armed exchanges with the regime and the ruling class: When the regime employs its armed mercenaries against unarmed and defenseless people; when striking workers, protesting students, or any group or section of unarmed people receive bullets as an answer to their political and economic demands, then the guerrillas, whose position in the struggle has been clearly defined, will resort to retaliatory actions. These tactics will be aimed at those elements, organizations and cadres of the regime who either took part in the suppression or had a vested interest in it. The guerrillas' slogan will be: The killing of defenseless workers will be followed by the execution of greedy factory owners and the regime's murderers; the factory owners will have to pay the price for the regime's brutality and their own greed with their properties, their lives and those of their families. The guerrillas will force the factory owners to stop the regime's military intervention in the event of a strike by workers for economic demands. This in itself is a form of guarantee for the right to strike.

In cases where a hated element in the regime resorts to an act against the people - more especially against a particular trade or a certain section of people - the guerrilla will rise in defense of them or even in defense of a particular individual.

b) Fulfilling the economic needs of the people: The guerrillas are involved in the day-to-day life of the people, both through the political wing of the revolutionary movement and, directly, through their units of sympathizers. Wherever there is sufficient ground for such a spontaneous popular action or whenever such an action has already begun, the guerrillas will have the opportunity to employ effective military tactics to help fulfill the people's demands. Kidnapping home and foreign industrialists and big capitalists and consulting workers about their fate is a symbolic instance of a relationship between the guerrillas, workers and other proletariat. To bring pressure to bear on home and foreign factory owners in order to give in to the economic demands of the workers is an instance employed to test military effectiveness of a tactic.

In a strike the guerrillas can enter the scene to help the strikers. For instance, when the drivers of the Tehran Transport Company went on strike, the regime used army drivers to break the strike. In a case like this, the guerrillas will announce that any bus driven by army men will be attacked. Obviously, this

announcement will reverberate throughout the town in no time. To back the announcement the guerrillas will explode a bomb or two, which will put an end to the regime's anti-popular tactic.

The guerrillas need not always wait for the people to take actions before they employ tactics to back school and economic demands put forward by the proletariat. For example, the guerrillas can kidnap some or other reactionary individuals, who have invested money in the educational system and through which they pocket millions of tomans at the start of the school year. The acceptance of working class children in their schools or factories should be demanded as a condition for their release. This operation can be combined with extensive explanatory literature dealing with the anti-popular system of education.

There are tens of other alternatives for the effective use of military tactics. Progressive organizations can choose the most suitable alternatives in order to involve themselves in the lives of ordinary people.

The result of these series of operations is the creation of a kind of revolutionary rule under the domination and within the sphere of enemy rule. At this stage, the guerrillas have various fields to effect their rule. As is the case in rural areas where the guerrillas effect their rule even before liberation of a region, so also is it possible to foresee such a situation, with special features, in an urban area. Such a double rule will exist only in circumstances where urban guerrillas are approaching the height of their power and waves of protests have enveloped a town. This will be the beginning of a mass armed movement.

When the country is a conglomeration of guerrillas, ruling cliques, home and foreign capitalists, political and military representatives of imperialist powers and is being continuously attacked by all these forces; furthermore, when armed struggle plays an effective role in determining the people's day-to-day existence, the conditions under which movements by masses of people appear and develop for political and economic demands, then the second strategic stage of the revolutionary armed struggle is at an end, and the struggle that has already begun in the countryside will be reinforced by urban as well as rural people, thus leading to the start of a mass movement.

The extent of mass protest movements will vary with changes in the factors that determine the conditions of struggle. However, the policy of the regime and its foreign allies regarding the revolutionary movement and people's activities will be a vital factor.

The experience of most revolutionary movements shows that when a country is dominated by a military atmosphere, forces within it will engage in military combat. In these circumstances the great bulk of the forces will probably be directed towards mass military operations, and political and economic movements will have a secondary role.

What is absolutely clear is this: that mass protest movements have already begun to appear, and that armed struggle has proved its ability to rouse the masses against the regime. Therefore, the important thing for the armed revolutionary movement is to fully appreciate the necessity of organizing these protest movements and consider it as part of its preparation for the revolution.