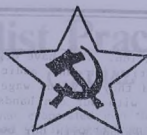


# BOLSHEVIK MESSAGE



No. 8

PAPER OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN--THE COMMITTEE ABROAD

MAY 1987

## WE WILL BUILD A DIFFERENT WORLD

The world is swarmed by misery and foulness. At a time when knowledge and technique allow man to reach out to the galaxies, on this earth millions of our brothers and sisters, millions of impoverished and destitute people spend their days and nights in hunger, thirst, and sickness. In Africa and Asia, where clouds and rain dictate the fate of men, hundreds of thousands of human beings and their children, in a manner fit for herds of animals, seek roots, leaves, or a drop of water under the soil, rocks and stones, spending their nights like stone age men, without shelter, on the ground, and under the stars...

Day after day--and on May Day like any other day--several thousands of children lose their lives without having had the chance of seeing anything of the world. Day after day death claims thousands of lives as a result of exposure to cold, heat, sickness, and dirt...

These people are not victims of nature. Nature has for many decades surrendered to man. These are not the victims of nature--they are victims of human ignorance and brutality. Present day humanity itself is victim to a system built into a monster, to which these people form only a small proportion of victims...

Take a look at the heap of the corpses of youngsters, fallen to the ground by means of the most advanced technology, the most advanced weapons made by the people themselves, whose number rises daily in the midst of the joyful clamour of arms producing companies...

Take a look at the houses destroyed by bombs. Look how thousands of workers are drained of energy for years in building them, and how destroying them in an instant turns into smoke the product of the exacting labour of thousands of workers and wage earners along with the burnt out bodies of the inhabitants...

Take a look at the host of workers in military industries, employees, of Star War projects, who strain every nerve in order to render void in thin air the product of the striving of thousands of wage earners on the other side of the globe, when it is sent in their direction by orders of enemies of all humanity...

Take a look at the blistered bodies of those who have inhaled various gases from chemical bombs, as products of the labour of wage earners on the other side of the globe, and the agony they have suffered till their hearts have stopped beating...

Take a look at the rotten bodies of the fish, and

the shrivelled leaves of forests, to see how these also are victims of the most savage animal on earth...

Take a look at the scores of starving people who become hungrier every moment because of the unprofitability of food distribution. Take a look at the blood gushing out of the breasts of those who protest. Look at those who are being tortured, who scream and die within the walls that we have built and behind the bars that we have forged... Look at the mansion and the lifestyle of their butchers. Take a look at the stupefied faces of billions of people who shall never benefit from literacy, books, and knowledge...

Take a look at the slum-dwellers, at those who feed in the garbage dumps, at the women who sell their bodies for bread. Take a look at the black slaves who feel the pressure of hundreds of stilled years on their skin and bone, look at the drums of bellies of their bony children...

Look at the world. The world that we carry on our shoulders is filled with blood, scum, and filth. Look, and those you see are us, with our children, spouses, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers...

Look what this diabolical system has built on earth. They have organized poverty and wretchedness

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**LONG LIVE THE  
FIRST OF MAY !**

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE !**

war and devastation. They have organized murder and genocide, prostitution and addiction, hatred and insanity... And they give us wages to rebuild this hell everyday, with our own hands and for our own use.

They make weapons with our own hands, they aim them at us with our own hands, so that we should give up everything else and remain mere wage earners-to be wage earners and follow orders so that they should decide whose breast to burst with the new weapons we have made, the wages of which dispossessed and down trodden wage earners to pay out of the bread we have wrested from the earth and what other calamity to create in the world with the rest of the wealth they have at their disposal.

It is them-not nature-who kill our children with want; it is them who butcher our brothers in the battle-fields; it is them who make the houses of our loved ones collapse over their head, them who turn prostitutes out of our sisters, who have placed our brothers and sisters in slums and enslaved them.

Look what this diabolical system has done to us. It has plundered all we have, and turned us into wage earners-wage earners and nothing more. All this barbarity and monstrosity takes place daily in front of us. But they have so emptied us of the spirit of humaneness and brotherhood that we do not hear, or hear and do not heed, the cry of innocent and starving children for help from all corners of the world. We fail to see, or we see and shut our eyes to, the mutilated bodies of victims of their anti-human and profit-oriented wars, as though they are cotton dolls and not our children, not our brothers and sisters, but garbage, who are set fire on... They have so deeply imprinted on our minds the fact of our being wage earners and disenfranchised, and of their own might and omnipotence that we have come to regard their will as the will of gods, having submitted to our inability in ridding ourselves from these miseries...

Workers, wake up! The day of the workers has long been with us. Wake up and awaken your fellow prisoners. It is the God of capital who has sealed our destiny in this way. Wake up, rise, so that we should hold the reigns of our destiny and our world in our hands. Cry out on May Day that we have had enough, that we no longer tolerate this barbarous disgrace.

Tell those who still promise to reform this system, who still demand patience from us, those who remind us of the alms they have gathered for us-if they are blind and fail to see-that this world has become the instrument of murder and exploitation. Every minute of its shameful existence harbours thousands of miseries for us... Such repulsive structure should be transformed, not through patience, but through revolution... We want a different world free from traces of poverty, starvation, and exploitation, from war, squalor, and murder. We want a free world.

Open your eyes. Those who sympathize with us while making this rightful cause appear unattainable are supporters of this hellish system. Those who regard the dominance of the exploiting minority possible and that of the majority over its own destiny unfeasible, are asking us to surrender. If they do not believe in our strength, show them the army of billions of wage workers. If they are lacking in awareness, open up their eyes and their ears, if they do not believe in our will show them your fists, and if they think us fit for no better, use those very fists to strike them in their babbling mouth.

Cry out on the First of May that you no longer take it to be a wage earner. You no longer want to

be workers to the exploiters of mankind. Cry out unanimously that we will build a different world in which there will be no room for idle exploiters and criminal parasites... A world of justice, love, and life for us, for all mankind, and for our children.

On May Day let capitalists and their allies tremble at the call of "down with capital". This would be the beginning of a great festival for the mistreated and deprived people of the world for whom the only hope out of a dismal existence is the victory of the workers.

**LONG LIVE THE FIRST OF MAY!**

**POWER TO THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKERS!**

**VICTORY TO SOCIALISM!**

Communist Party of Iran-  
The Committee Aboard

7 April 1987



MESSAGE

# Communists & the Populist Practice

( FINAL PART )

This is the second, and final, part of a speech by comrade Mansour Helkmat in the First Congress of the "Unity of Communist Militants" (Sep-Oct 1982), summarising the Congress discussion on the question of style of work. The UCM was one of the organisations which founded the CPI in September 1983. The question of style of work formed the major topic on the agenda of the UCM Congress and was the subject of extensive discussions. The text of the speech was later published in UCM's theoretical-political organ (No.6, August 83), from which the present translation has been made. **UM.**

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The other example of populist resistance to adopting communist style of work is when insistence on the urgency of socialist work (be it propaganda, agitation, or the organization of the proletariat) is denounced as voluntaristic. In the final analysis, to the populists, regardless of their claims, socialist work is conditional upon a certain degree of the involuntary development of the proletariat. From this standpoint the socialist movement is basically regarded, not as the movement of the proletariat, but merely as the opposite pole of the "spontaneous" movement. What is forgotten here is that the "spontaneous" movement of the proletariat, no matter how spontaneous, can no longer be the rebellion of slaves! This is the movement of a class which at any moment, on the basis of existing and available ideas, takes on elementary forms and moves ahead. One of these forms is the trade union movement. But is the trade union movement a spontaneous movement? Take the example of England. There, the trade union movement has various offices, headquarters, councillors and theoreticians. In many cases it is a partner of the state in pursuing their economic plans. But despite all of these the Iranian "communists" call this the "spontaneous" movement of the proletariat without much deliberation. As if the working class were merely a national phenomenon, were born today and were building its views from the start and anew. Thus its trade unionism would be its "spontaneous" tendency. Supposedly, because Marx, Engels, and Lenin are not personally present and active within the working class of Iran, while there are many active trade unionist Iranian workers, one should conclude that Marx, Engels, Lenin, communism, and all communists are "outside of the working class," but trade unionism is the "spontaneous and genuine" movement of the working class of Iran! Populists consider, with ease, the trade union movement as "spontaneous," despite the fact that all of its bases have been theorized by certain sectors of the labor aristocracy of Europe over the years, and is today being theorized by bourgeois theoreticians of the social democratic parties of Western Europe, is organized on the world scale, and is being led by these same parties. But once you ask these populists to recognize communism as a specific tendency within the movement of the working class, they become speechless and experience a guilty conscience! Despite their words, populists do not consider the communist as a movement within the working class: a movement which is at least 130 years old, that came into existence through the publication of the Communist Manifesto; a movement that, as the most conscious element of the working class, led a tremendous workers' revolution to victory 70 years ago. They continue to stick to the phrase, which is being quoted out of its real and historical context, that "socialism must infiltrate the working class from the outside." Yes! But communism has been with the working class for quite a while! This is very well realized even by owners of cartels and trusts.

Comrades! We represent the Communist Manifesto. We represent the October Revolution. Today, after revisionists have shattered our organization, our party, our International, we have come back to build them. We are worker-oriented. Tens of millions of revolutionary workers have been in our

ranks. They have not evaporated into thin air. Our Lenin's portrait has been and still is hanging from the walls of millions of workers' homes. "Down with capitalism," the communist slogan, is now chanted by workers' children. In the Iranian Revolution we were witness to the fact that the heritage of this communist characteristic of the struggle of the working class is alive. The Iranian working class started its struggle, apparently against monarchism and despotism. Along with this it discredited capitalism to the extent that for months after the uprising, the only way for the corpulent capitalist to cross the street safely, was to chant, "Down with capitalism!" himself. All these in a revolution whose formal slogans and the utterances of whose alleged leaders laid no claim to any substantial blow to the bourgeoisie and to private property. Lenin has pointed out how, after the October Revolution, the Soviet movement, a movement for life patterned on a communist revolutionary model, came to be the cause and demand for hundreds of millions of workers all around the world. This means nothing but that the communist cause, like trade-unionism, has penetrated and settled in the working class mentality. Populists fail to see the development and advancement of the working class movement in the past decades. They fail to see the maturity of traditions and "spontaneous" tendencies of workers. They do not consider communism, even after great communist revolutions, as a real experience in the life of the working class, an experience that has become a real tendency within the working class movement, thus a workers' tendency. Indeed, those populists are waiting to see a replay of the history of the international working class in Iran. They are expecting another Marx and Lenin to introduce and establish the theory of the proletarian revolution within the Iranian working class from the "outside." Only then would those populists dare to consider communism as a trend within the class, and thus a worker's trend.

No! This cannot be our method of approach. Our last comrades were defeated in Russia. Nevertheless they left behind a heritage of epoch-making victories. We have been worker-oriented in Iran from the beginning, even if we did not know one single worker, because many workers would consider us, the communists,—if they would accept us as communists—as their vanguard, the followers of their dear Lenin and the October Revolution. Communism is a trend that objectively belongs to the working class. This has been proven by organizing great proletarian revolutions, by organizing years of mass armed struggle against imperialist countries after the first world war, and by the blood which millions of workers have shed for the communist cause and socialist ideals.

Let us leave to the petty-bourgeoisie this task of considering us outside of the working class movement and demand that we "merge" with the spontaneous movement of the working class. This is exactly the position the petty-bourgeoisie accuses us of being placed in. We keep forgetting that all those petty-bourgeois organizations who cheered for slogans such as "Marxism is outside of the working class," were indeed outside of the working class themselves. The populist organizations of the "Third Trend" from the beginning never recognized Marxism as something within the working class. Most of their leaders and ideologues learned of Marxism as an antithesis of religion of the Mojahedin type. They thought that as soon as they gave up Islam, they transformed into communists. They confused materialism—and of the mechanical type at that—with communism. They never realized that Marxism is a deep-rooted trend within the international working class movement; that it has had its own traditions and methodology; that it has created its own parties; that it has continuously built communist bases within the working class; and that for decades it has led the working class in class struggle and revolutionary movements. Thus, in order to become a Marxist one must learn these traditions as well. The populists' understanding of communism was shallow and abstract. We too, in practice, that is, in our practical understanding of communism, succumbed to this petty-bourgeois interpretation. Here I am not talking about our political and programmatic views. We succumbed only in practice. In organizing and theory of org-

anization (a necessary basis for all revolutionary practice by communists) we followed, in an uncritical manner, the prevalent petty-bourgeois conceptions.

As I said before, the problem was that in fact we considered petty-bourgeois revolutionism as the only form of revolutionism and ultra-class revolution as the only real revolution. We drove the socialist revolution from the plane of reality to the plane of "goals". We failed to consider our own revolutionism the socialist revolution which has for long been on the agenda, and which requires organizing and mobilizing the working class under the banner of the Communist Party in order to struggle to seize power and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a real task that should be on our agenda. For us and our revolution, that is, the socialist revolution, a true revolution was not on the agenda, for which revolutionary activity has for long been going on, for which forces have for long been gathering and being organized, and which can, by virtue of this very activity and communist, revolutionary practice erupt into an uprising and the seizure of power by the working class. Belief in the practicability of the socialist revolution at the end of the 20th century is by no means voluntaristic. Today capitalism is in the grips of a deep crisis and is in a state of decay. It is possible to turn any economic crisis of the capitalist society into a socialist revolution. Provided that the Communist Party has mobilized a sufficient number of the masses and vanguards of the working class in its own ranks, any economic crisis would sound the death knell of capitalism.

We knew all this. We had explained this clearly in our literature. We had done a great deal to awaken the socialist conscience of the communist movement in Iran. That is why I kept insisting that we deviated from our theoretical understanding in our organizational practice. We had clearly explained the place of the on-going democratic revolution in the process in which the working class will achieve its socialist goals, which go far beyond this on-going revolution. We had correctly argued that the struggle for revolutionary democracy and the victory of the democratic revolution is in the domain of tactics. We knew also that our struggle is for goals far beyond our tactical goals. That is why in the beginning, once we realized that in practice we had not followed our thorough socialist revolutionism, we attempted to explain our problem in forms such as, "limiting ourselves to the tactical sphere," or "not understanding the relationship between routine communist work and tactics." Are these formulations explanatory enough? No! I do not think that they reach to the bottom of the problem. What communists consider as the domain of "tactics," is both "the tactic" and "the strategy" for petty-bourgeois revolutionism. For the petty-bourgeois this is his entire revolutionism. Thus this critique that our practice was not correct because "tactics were everything for us" is itself a limited and short-sighted criticism. Our problem was not "limiting the struggle to the domain of tactics." It was "following petty-bourgeois revolutionism in practice." In fact, the problem for us was not tactics: it was the petty-bourgeois revolutionism dealing with the question of a democratic revolution. Such a revolution is in the domain of tactics for the communist, but both tactic and strategy for the petty-bourgeois revolutionism. It was precisely submission to the petty-bourgeois revolutionism that was reversely formulated under "tactics having been everything to us."

Once the communist revolutionism is alive and on-going, and is adopted by the organization, then revolutionism of other classes is maintained in our tactics. There is no doubt about this. Petty-bourgeois revolutionism is at most an aspect and a limited dimension of the comprehensive proletarian revolutionism in specific socio-political conditions. The petty-bourgeois democrat wants democracy, has a limited vision of this democracy, and in the struggle to achieve it he is inconsistent. We too, as part of our revolutionary struggle, fight for democracy in the most thorough form. Thus the entire petty-bourgeois revolutionism is only part of our tactical struggle. But we limit our struggle to a certain part, to issues in the domain of tactics, then in practice there is no difference between our revolutionism and that of the petty-bourgeoisie. Here we see clearly why "limiting the struggle to the domain of tactics" or "confusing routine communist work with tactics" do not explain the point thoroughly, because it is exactly the petty-bourgeois socialism and revolutionism which is thus limited in its perspective and scope. It is the petty-bourgeois revolutionism which is alien to the

routine communist work, and, at best, its struggle and its ideals are limited to the tactical goals of communists. We cannot evade building an organization necessary for organizing a socialist revolution and build instead a limited one that would only meet requirements of a democratic revolution, and then argue that this is a "tactical issue" for us. Organizing the revolution and democratic movement is whose "tactical issue"? For those who consider this revolution as part of a more general strategy, as one step toward their ultimate goal, for those who consider this revolution as a special favorable situation which facilitates the achievement of their lasting, fundamental goals, for those who act within the context of a more thorough socialist revolutionism and on this basis will deal with an actual non-socialist revolution. They must know that they ought to lead such revolution to victory. They must be the most revolutionary elements guiding this actual revolution. The democratic revolution is a "tactical issue" for a communist party organization; a party which has devoted its continuous and non-deviating revolutionary practice to organizing a social revolution of the proletariat, a party that on the basis of this devotion considers itself revolutionary. It is not a "tactical issue" for those who have limited their revolutionism to this specific immediate revolution. For these people organizing a democratic revolution is indeed both tactic and strategy. For populists tactic and strategy coincide, and consist in carrying out a democratic revolution and the establishment of a people's democratic republic. It is no accident that populists did not have a programme that included socialist goals, and did not participate in discussions about the programme.

It is, of course, possible that an organization or communist party may have to "limit struggle to the tactical issues" for a period of time. For example, its participation in an anti-fascist front may weaken its class independence and affect its routine communist work. But if it has fundamentally violated the overall communist struggle in practice and has not built its organization in the spirit and on the basis of this struggle in essence and in practice, it is no different from a petty-bourgeois organization. In practice, to a large extent, we, too, have not considered socialist revolution as a live, real, and immediate revolution. As regards the every day practice of our organization as the basis for judgement, we, too, have somehow postponed our socialist revolution to the future.

How different, however, is my argument from the one who argue that the current revolution in Iran is a socialist one, and on this basis, our task would be organizing a socialist revolution. I can clarify the essence of my argument and explain the nature of communist style of work by pointing out the above mentioned difference.

Those who have to conclude that the current revolution in Iran is a socialist one in order to consider themselves socialist, are the same petty-bourgeois people who deduce their revolutionism and their revolutionary practice from tactics and tactical issues. They have to consider the socialist revolution as a tactic, because their methodology, which they have in common with the conventional populist revolutionism, is based on daily affairs and tactical issues. They argue that it is the actual revolution which is socialistic. From this they conclude the necessity of socialistic organizing. Their differences with the conventional populists are over the question of the "stage of revolution", not on the issue of communist identity. If one can prove to them that the stage of revolution is not socialist yet, they will, like other populists, limit their revolutionary practice to a democratic revolutionary practice. That is exactly what most of them were doing, before adopting their new tactical views. They are unable to understand the necessity of the continuous socialist practice of communists, even when they participate in actual revolutions which are democratic by nature. The only way that these populists can claim that they are socialists is to ignore the real world outside of their minds. In contrast, we consider organizing a socialist revolution as continuous, natural, and independent of time and place—thus a constantly immediate type of task. We have always been and will always be socialists. We have always been involved in organizing the social revolution of the proletariat, independent of the "stage of revolution." We invite the working class to a social revolution and seizure of the political power always and on all occasions. We put socialism and the socialist revolution on the agenda of the working class at all times. But we recognize the relationship of this continuous revolu-

tory struggle to the real world situation. The specific economic and political aspects of a society at certain periods, the balance of power, the concrete objective and subjective conditions of the working class in each period, all in all make adoption of tactics a necessity for us. We adopt these tactics to get closer to the real seizure of political power and advancement of the social revolution. But a tactical supporter of the socialist revolution is not concerned with changing the real world. He is not concerned with seizure of the political power by the proletariat. He is a socialist when he can chant as a tactic, that "we must seize political power immediately." It is obvious that when it is not objectively possible to seize political power immediately, there is nothing left for him to do. Liberalism and passivism are the end results of this dimension of democracy for a petty-bourgeois who wants to consider himself socialist. He is not concerned with the actual fighting over the political power. He is not concerned with the solution of the specific problems that are in the way of the social revolution in each specific period. He is not concerned about the temporary allies of the party of workers. He is "socialist at the time of the socialist revolution." Therefore until that "time" comes, he has nothing to do but to go home, complain about the lack of socialist consciousness in the proletariat, and once more resign his slothful mind to being submerged in the literature and documents of the socialist movement, or to enter into the political arena and combine his bragging about socialism with a liberal-reformist practice which seeks to "improve" conditions for "preparation for the socialist revolution." The bankrupt petty-bourgeois revolutionism up till yesterday was afraid of socialist propaganda, agitation and organization of the working class, kept warning against "Leftism", "Trotskyism", etc., because the "stage of the revolution" was democratic. Today it is hiding its passivism, lack of tactics, and political inability under the pretext of "the socialist stage of revolution." All these people are doing is getting engaged in "theoretical" work on the issue of theory of knowledge, and discovering roots of Marxism in the thinking of Hegel and his predecessors. They, too, have abandoned socialist (and now even democratic) propaganda, agitation and organization of the working class to us.

Therefore our argument involves a question of identity which must reveal itself in our permanent style of work. When we speak of the adoption of socialist revolutionism, we are not thinking of "the stage of revolution". We are talking of the communists' responsibility in organizing a proletarian social revolution. This is independent from the objective particularities of a specific revolution in a specific country. This is independent from the 'stage of revolution in Iran'. We are always socialist, always try to turn workers into communists, organize communist cells and committees of workers. We always teach them the necessities of seizing political power. Our activities aim at turning workers into communists and forming ranks of communist vanguard workers who have deep understanding that each additional day of capitalism means one more day of the continuation of all the afflictions of all humanity. They, therefore, demand a rapid and immediate end to the capitalist system. This communist party, faces the issue of tactics. It is here that we realize that the immediate demolishing of capitalism at this or that specific conjuncture may not necessarily be possible. The need for a specific form of struggle and participation in a variety of tactical fronts arises from this realization.

We started our work based on this vision. Unlike tens of opportunist and revisionist circles active in the leftist movement of Iran, we did not start by counting various stages of political and economic development of society to use it, under pretext of "the stage of revolution," to pass "new democracy" and "development of productive forces" for goals of the working class and to obscure its comprehensive class consciousness. In our very first pamphlet "The Iranian Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat," "The Iranian Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat," we declared that we are socialist and will fight for socialism. Then in an analysis of tactics, we argued why an immediate socialist revolution was not feasible at that specific point in time. Our present discussion of style of work must therefore concentrate on the following point: Why the correct vision about our communist identity on the one hand, and our tactical considerations on the other did not thoroughly reflect itself in our organizational work? Why our differences with populists

were not as clear and prominent with respect to practice, as they were with respect to theory? We are communists and must always prepare the working class for the total seizure of political power. But tactics deal with the question of particular situations in which immediate seizure of power by the working class is not feasible. Under such circumstances how should a class-conscious proletariat move closer to political power?

So our permanent revolutionary practice is defined as permanent revolutionary work and socialist revolution, i.e., organizing the ultimate revolutionary task of the working class, which is engaging in the social revolution, it is educating them, uniting and recruiting the vanguard and revolutionary workers in the rank and file of the Communist Party. To prepare for social revolution our organizational theory cannot differ from the theory for the construction and consolidation of an organization which can fulfill these tasks. This organization must permanently, ceaselessly, and thus under any circumstances immediately put communist organization of the workers on the agenda. This organization must make workers aware of their ultimate interest, and cause them to establish communist bases among the working class. On the other hand, it also knows its special duties at any special time: Mobilizing this organized mass of the working class and its vanguards to perform those special duties.

Communist tactics only make sense for those organizations which turn this revolutionary approach as their philosophy for existence. Only the tactics of those organizations which are able to mobilize the working class on the basis of their fundamental and independent interests could be called class tactics. Otherwise they would be more of organizational tactics of the kind we have experienced in populist organizations in the past few years. By definition, communists cannot be isolated from revolutions and living, ongoing struggles because they think of the seizure of power by the conscious proletariat knowing that in the actual world, power could be grasped through the growth and development of real, living struggles. But in order to intervene in this real process, a Communist Party should primarily (and continuously) try to organize working class power, the power for adopting tactics based on fundamental class interests, i.e., non-tactical interests. The relationship between class and party cannot be defined through entity called "tactics". On the contrary, the accomplishment of true communist and proletarian tactics depends upon the struggle to organize the class on the basis of its fundamental interests. One of our comrades, in defense of this point, cited a very important statement by Lenin to the effect that the mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the endurance of the working class government, was due to those thousands of communist workers' cells which were established among the working class throughout the years. Those cells at the right time mobilized and guided the class to seize and maintain power. In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat, years before, and at various periods of time, had constantly been organized by Bolsheviks through communist work among workers.

But what have we done? To the degree that we have neglected this point to the same degree we have ignored the most basic Leninist principle of organization, i.e. we have failed to put the organization of the social revolution on our permanent organizational agenda to this extent we have not relied on the Leninist theory of organization. In other words, while we struggled at the theoretical level or even at the level of agitation and propaganda for socialism, in our organizational task we restricted ourselves to revolutionary-democratic tasks. This is nothing but submission to the petty-bourgeois revolutionary approach in our practice. If someone does not see, in practice, socialism as organizing communist workers, in practice consequently he will not organize the rank of communist workers. Here I can refer to the one-sided understanding of one of our comrades from the aforementioned limited formulation of obsession with organization. From this formulation comrade drew the conclusion that "we make workers socialist while populists call them to their own organizations". I say, if our organization is a communist one, it should definitely call and absorb workers only to its organization, meaning that communist workers must be organized and in our ranks at that. Why should they be scattered around of join the petty-bourgeois organizations? Is there any communist other than the Communist Party? Is there any way for working class emancipation besides joining the orga-

nization of the Communist Party? Today our pressing duty is not only to make workers socialist, but also to organize them in our party ranks. This is our urgent, permanent and daily routine task.

Why should this task be called a gradual political work? (Let alone the fact that the phrase gradual political work in the past referred to political work which was only against the regime.) Our work is not gradual. Permanent organization of the proletarian socialist revolution is not gradual work. It is a militant communist task. Socialism has been militant since the first publication of the Communist Manifesto. Organizing workers in the Communist Party, expanding the ranks of the party, educating the vanguard workers and the vast masses of workers about their independent class interests, regardless of any particular situation, uniting the rank of the working class wherever the bourgeoisie deliberately and intentionally tries to divide the workers, and wherever political and cultural factors of bourgeois society widen the gap between the workers, indefatigable struggle in the way of uniting workers and attempting to bring the working class closer to the seizure of political power in any particular situation, thereby radicalizing and leading each revolutionary struggle which paves the way to socialism, all these are revolutionary communist work per se. Whether there is a revolution or not, whether there is the rise or the decline of the revolutionary situation, our revolutionary task must not be attached to the political situation. Our self-reliant revolutionism is credited by our communist goals, and is interpreted in terms of this credit, and the closeness of these goals to the permanent and uninterrupted struggle of a specific class in bourgeois society. This is that militant socialism which we know.

Once more I repeat our controversial issue. Even though we were trying to consider socialist enlightenment, in our revolutionary organizational activities, i.e., in the task of organizing as a whole, we submitted to the petty-bourgeois revolutionism. As a result, we built our organization to suit a popular democratic revolution. The fact of the matter is that in article eight of our original programme and now in our Communist Party programme we outlined the Leninist theory of organization. This theory explains the philosophical essence and the goals of communist organization. It also explains the characteristics and the content of the activities, and the rules which apply to its practical methods. The social revolution which has led us to the forefront of struggle clearly defines its proper organizations and suitable methods. The Communist Party tries to educate the working class about their class interests, and organize them in their own ranks. The Communist Party attempts to mobilize the working class to seize political power, it also realizes how at any particular political situations and at any particular time it should move close to seizing power. The Communist Party permanently attempts to counteract anti-revolutionaries whether those in power or in the opposition. The Communist Party, based on struggles of the working class on different fronts, tries to make it more aware of its final goal in any particular situation. What would the practical routine activities of such a party be? If we define our organizational existence in terms of the above-mentioned points, then the answer to the question, i.e., defining the practical methods, will be easy. But if we sum up our revolutionary task in the struggle against the regime or even in democratic struggle, then we will be caught in the grips of the difficulties I have mentioned earlier. Consequently, communist work would appear very difficult and complicated, and anarcho-syndicalist activities would dominate our working class activities, and we would forget the socialist organization of the working class. Then immediate and permanent communist work would be found in conflict with flexible tactical activities. Then we would be threatened by obsession with organization. Yes, all of these are possible. For political short-sightedness and making concessions in the class objectives we have set ourselves, might allow us to survive despite all these difficulties and find some index to justify our success, but advancement in the social revolution has its own indices and no anarcho-syndicalist or a person obsessed by organization can regard himself successful based on these indices. The Shah's regime and that of Khomeini could be overthrown by anarcho-syndicalists, populists, or sectarists, and even by those who carry out coup d'etats. But the proletarian social revolution sets us the task of adopting communist methods. The petty-bourgeois approach will not bring us to our goals. Only those who refuse to orga-

nize themselves on the basis of "anti-regime" or even democratic revolution, and to limit their political existence to such a struggle can lay claims to uninterrupted struggle for revolution. Those who, from now on, take the communist approach must agitate, make propaganda and organize for socialist revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The existence of a strongly-organized socialist proletariat today is a guarantee of an uninterrupted revolution. Otherwise any revolution and any power will be transferred to the bourgeoisie.

It is necessary to mention one more point. Organizing a Leninist party means actual struggle in the manner of a Communist Party. We claim that only from real communist method of action, based upon our communist programme, and only from this programme, can a communist party be created. The existence of a Communist Party depends on the adoption of communist methods. If a party adopts non-communist methods it will perish. If UCM should fail to implement its communist goals without adopting communist methods, it would fail to do so even if it calls itself a communist party. Today explanation and stabilization of the adoption of communist methods is as vital as the stabilization of the party programme a few months ago. This is the grand mission of our Congress: to stabilize these principles not only in the UCM but in the communist movement as a whole.

Today we leave the Congress with the old banner of struggle in a Leninist partisan method. I believe that with our Congress, we, the communists, have once more entered the arena, armed with the Leninist theory of the party and with determination to build such a party after a long recess. Now we purge ourselves not only from the inheritance of petty-bourgeois deviations theoretically, but practically as well. I am sure that if I expound our discussion and explain one by one, the methods of communist work on different fronts, then it will be clear how, even in the midst of the present oppressive, strangling situation there is favourable grounds for our growth and organizational stability. The bourgeoisie would lose the efficiency it had against the petty-bourgeois-socialist organization in confronting those communists who adopt the communist methodology in their struggle.

Mansoor Hekmat  
Sep. 1972

The translation of this text was by comrade  
Rezz in the USA.

REPORT: Biweekly newsletter of the CPI-the Committee Abroad in English.

# INTRODUCTORY THESES ON THE QUESTION OF SOVIET UNION

(Following is the translation of theses on the question of Soviet Union by comrade Hamid Taghvaei which were published in the 2nd issue of the bulletin "Marxism & the Question of Soviet Union" (Nov. 1986). This bulletin is published as a supplement to the theoretical organ of the CPI, "Besoooy-e-Sosyalism", and contains articles and documents on the S.U. question, which is an ongoing discussion in our party. Although written in the framework of the CPI Programme, the articles in the bulletin officially only express the views of their authors. In the future issues of Bolshevik Message we shall carry further translations from the bulletin. BM.)

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The present theses are the condensed form of the views whose essential part have also been discussed by other comrades in seminars and other party meetings. These theses were not compiled and written with the intention of external publication; but I was entrusted with the task of preparing a basic text for an official party meeting. These theses were written primarily for this purpose.

I have tried to express here only the most essential points regarding methodology of analysis as well as the content of my views on the question of the Soviet Union. Hence, the theses are in no way comprehensive and even some of the most important aspects of the problem are not included (for example: degeneration of the Comintern, correlation between revisionism and the degeneration of the Soviet Union, transformation of Soviet Union into an imperialist power, etc.). But so far as the methodological aspect of the analysis of Soviet Union, explanation of the defeat of the proletariat and the process of the establishment of capitalism in Soviet Union are concerned, the following theses represent a specific theoretical tendency and I think their publication in the bulletin will be useful; at least in the sense that the holders of other views could have a chance to criticise them.

1- the understanding and explanation of the question of Soviet Union has a decisive significance and importance for the communists because of the following reasons:

a) to learn from the defeated experience of Russian revolution in order to avoid the shortcomings, mistakes and deviations of the Russian proletariat and its party; and from now on be equipped with such requirements which would prevent the recurring of this experience.

b) to revive the credibility and desirability of socialist ideals which, as a result of the Russian experience and "Campist Socialism", have been distorted and discredited before the eyes of the working masses all over the world,

and which have also allowed the bourgeoisie to conduct a successful anti-communist propaganda in the world public opinion.

c) to deepen and concretize the concepts and theoretical foundations of Marxism (proletarian dictatorship, the economic content and structure of socialism, the correlation between party, state and class, council democracy and mechanisms of exercise of mass authority by the proletariat etc.) in the light of the Russian revolution experience.

d) to counter and nullify comprehensively and fundamentally, the destructive effects of Russian revisionism on the international workers' movement.

e) to understand precisely the political situation in the world, imperialist rivalries, relations of the imperialist powers between themselves and with the dominated countries, significance of the democratic-anti-imperialist revolutions in the present period, considering the role and position of Soviet Union in these upheavals, and on this basis to develop the international strategy of proletarian revolution.

To fulfil the above-mentioned tasks is possible neither by a deterministic analysis of the defeat of revolution in Russia - based on unavoidable objective factors like the economic backwardness of Russia, isolation of revolution in one country and so on - and nor through a political criticism of the Russian party and government - based on the developments within the party, domination of Stalin or Khrushchev or modern revisionism. This task can be accomplished only through a profound and proletarian critique of the events in Soviet Union, after the revolution, on the basis of investigating the process of the class struggle in Russia and the weaknesses and mistakes of the proletariat in this process.

2- In analyzing the history of the development of Russia after the revolution, like any other scientific analysis based on historical materialism, one must at the beginning and as

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the main key for understanding and criticizing the question, investigate the economic conditions and the objective interests and relations of the two main classes in the Russian society\* (i.e., the proletariat and the bourgeoisie). The form of the state, goals and the policies of the classes, the social and cultural relations and the position and role of each class in the political developments of the Russian society can be investigated and criticized only after bringing to light the objective interests and positions in the sphere of social production.

3- On the other hand the economic laws and necessities do not function automatically, but they are materialized through the social practice of the classes and give shape to the historical realities. The political and social transformations in Russia, after the revolution, also cannot be explained directly and immediately by historico-economic necessities. What has, here, the determining role, in generating these upheavals, is the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Hence, what had a decisive role in post-revolutionary Russia was a certain political struggle which was led by political parties and leaders of the two main classes of Russian society, its content being a response to the objective necessities of Russia after the revolution, from two antagonistic and irreconcilable class perspectives.

4- Hence the defeat of the Russian revolution, in the most fundamental level has had objective economic reasons. But from this one cannot deduce the inevitability of the defeat of the revolution. Rather, it follows that if the Russian proletariat (its vanguard party) was able to respond to the objective necessities, which the class struggle had placed before it, the October Revolution would not be defeated. In other words although in the final analysis the class struggle in Russia after the revolution, like all periods of the history of class societies, has been a struggle for objective economic interests and goals, the fact that finally in this struggle the interests and goals of the bourgeoisie, and not the proletariat, were realized, demonstrates the weaknesses, mistakes and political deviations of the Bolshevik party which were all avoidable.

5- From the methodological point of view, the understanding of the relation between specific form and concrete characteristics of a phenomenon and the fundamental laws which explain the essence and motion of that phenomenon, acquires a determining significance in tackling the Russian problem. Russian capitalism, from the viewpoint of the process of its evolution after the October Revolution, as well as of its functional characteristics, possesses a specific form which distinguishes it from capitalism as such. Therefore a comparative and analogical study of the Russian system with classical western capitalism, would not lead one to grasp the essence of it. If historically the existence of capital and capitalist system (in the developed western countries) pre-supposed

the existence of private ownership of the means of production and distribution, competition, and free market of labour and commodity, one cannot deduce that the essence of capitalist system (i.e., those fundamental laws which distinguish the basic characteristics and operation of capitalism from other modes of production) are determined on the basis of these characteristics.

In no way is the classical form of the operation of capital - i.e., the form which historically came to being in the western countries - the only possible form of the operation of capitalist system (in many dominated countries both the method of passing to capitalism and the operation of capital differ essentially from that of western capitalism). The essence of capital is the production of surplus-value, and in analyzing the system of Soviet Union the existence and operation of the law of value must be proved or rejected. This must be the aim of studying the specific features of the system of Soviet Union, and not comparing them with the classical features of the form of western capitalism.

6- The main and current schools who, up till now, have made a critique of Soviet Union (Trotskyism, Left Communism, Maoism, Tony Cliff, Bettelheim, Sweezy) have been unable to understand and make a scientific analysis of the question, mainly because of: 1- superficial and limited understanding of capitalist relations and therefrom incorrect understanding of socialist economy and 2- deterministic method of analysis (in methodology of handling the Russian question).

At the most general level, as far as the content is concerned, the common mistake and weakness of these schools is that each of them, in a way, reduces the specific feature of capitalist production to characteristics such as competition between different capitals, the way in which capital is distributed in different sections of production, the legal form of the ownership of the means of production and distribution, the commodity feature of means of production, etc- i.e., characteristics which are generally placed in the sphere of the "relation between capital and capital", and not capital and labour - and hence reduces the economic content of socialism to the elimination of these factors.

It is by this method that Trotskyism arrives at the "transitional society", Bettelheim tries to deduce the existence of capitalism in Soviet Union and Sweezy, despite recognising the existence of the production of surplus-value and exploitation, refrains from calling Soviet Union capitalist, and propounds the thesis of "new production relations"...

Naturally in this system of thinking - in which the capital-labour relation are absent or at the most play a secondary role - neither the establishment of socialism as a new system of production, whose essence is the negation of exploitation, nor the content of economic policies of the proletariat in this field, can have a determining place; rather what has been stressed as important and decisive is the method and



manner of imposing these policies (workers' democracy, workers' control over production, mechanism of workers' mass participation in the state, etc.), without clarifying what are and should be the content and goal of this control and intervention. Thereby, most of the present critical schools of the Russian question, even if not based on the critique of bureaucracy and state (like Trotskyists) are, because of linking the building of socialism to democracy - i.e., the method and not the aim and content of working-class rule - substantially democratic and methodologically idealist.

7- In the above mentioned schools - with the exception of Maoist critique of Soviet Union (and similar tendencies) which attributes the defeat of October Revolution to the emergence of Khrushchev and domination of revisionism over the Communist Party of Soviet Union and in this way represents a coherent idealism - idealism of a "political critique of the economy" is completed with determinism and fatalism in the methodology of analysing the reasons for the defeat (or deformation) of the October Revolution. Trotskyists, Sweezy, Bettelheim, Tony Cliff and Left Communists all have in common the attribution of the defeat of October Revolution to the economic underdevelopment and backwardness of Russia and the isolation of October Revolution.

This view, clearly, considers the defeat of the October Revolution as inevitable, since solving problems like economic backwardness, the insufficient development of the productive forces and expansion and victory of revolution in other countries, basically do not depend on the course of the class struggle and the balance of forces between bourgeoisie and proletariat (whether in Russia at that time or at any other time and place). Proletarian political and class will and practice cannot solve such problems. The roots of this mistake lie in not understanding the real relations between the objective and subjective conditions in the course of social upheavals. In this proposition the objective conditions (economic situation and the degree of development of productive forces) is immediately linked to politics (negation of council democracy, domination of bureaucracy, domination of revisionism, mistakes by the working-class and the deviations of the Bolshevik Party, etc.); i.e., the link - class struggle - between the living social forces is omitted and its determining role disregarded. This deterministic method of thinking does not understand the elementary point that if the objective conditions in Russia had matured enough to allow the proletariat, as the motive force of socialist revolution, to step in the struggle and take the political power, then one cannot go back again to the "backwardness" and "immaturity" of the objective conditions in order to explain the defeat and inconclusiveness of this revolution. The problem should be explained at the same level of the process of class struggle between the two main classes of the Russian society, i.e., bourgeoisie and proletariat.

8- The present system of production in Soviet Union is a capitalist system, i.e., the social production is carried out on the basis of exploitation of the labour power and capitalist relations between the objective conditions of production (means of production, land, capital) and its subjective conditions (labour-power). But this system of production, as it was explained before, is different from the classical capitalism (western capitalism) because of the historical process of its formation as well as its operation at present. Whilst the characteristics of Russian capitalism (which has been shaped on the grounds of a defeated socialist revolution and under the name of working-class and socialism) distinguish its operation from capitalism as such, in no way do they alter the capitalistic nature of the relations of production in Soviet Union. And as far as the exploitation of the working-class and its economic, political and social disenfranchisement is concerned, capitalism in Soviet Union does not differ from capitalism as such.

9- The defeat of October Revolution has had numerous and many-sided expressions and dimensions. In order to distinguish the fundamental causes of the defeat of the proletariat in Russia from its outcomes and secondary effects, one must precisely examine the question which had become pivotal in the struggle between the Russian bourgeoisie and proletariat. The leaders and vanguards of the proletariat were not able to give a proletarian solution to this question and consequently the bourgeoisie has been able to consolidate its own solution.

10- The October Revolution did not conclude the struggle between the two main classes in Soviet Union, i.e., proletariat and bourgeoisie. As the result of the revolution, Russian big bourgeoisie lost the political power and was deprived of partizanship and open and independent political activity. But in no way, did it abandon its goals and ideals and the struggle for them, and in the political and economic upheavals following the revolution it did not stand passive and neutral. After the revolution, the struggle between the deposed bourgeoisie and the proletariat in power continued in new forms and on new issues. Following the civil war, in which the proletariat, in a face to face and overtly military battle won against the bourgeoisie, and after the relative political consolidation of the new state, the question of production and economy was driven to the forefront of the class struggle, and various political tendencies and fractions, each with its own solution, were formed around this question. In this situation the proposition and adoption of the economic policy which should have been put in force became the main issue of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the Party and state organs became the main channels and arenas of this struggle. In the final analysis, the defeat of October Revolution and the emergence of capitalism, under the signboard of socialism in Soviet

Union, were the consequences of the defeat of the proletariat in this struggle.

11- The defeat of the working-class and its vanguard party in this specific battle can be explained briefly in the following context:

The Russian big bourgeoisie always (from the time of the 1905 revolution) wanted to eliminate the backwardness and the obstacles in the way of growth of capital in Russia and of industrial development in that country. The concept and ideal of complete and all-sided development of capitalism in Russia, and the development and expansion of industry and productive forces, was a notion which the Mensheviks and even "old" Bolsheviks did not criticise and dissociate themselves from, and for the entire Russian social-democracy "socialist economy" was blurred and unclear against "industrial development and growth of Russia". Hence Russian bourgeoisie, which after the revolution used to hide its nationalist aspirations under the name of revolution and socialism and had its sympathizers and political representatives in various party and state institutions, in the struggle for determining and adopting those economic goals and policies, which were to be put to effect by the ruling party and state, could finally promote its own aims and policies. It was able to materialize the old ideal of a "developed, industrial and independent Russia on a par with western countries" under the name of "moving towards socialism and building socialist economy". In brief, the socialist revolution in Russia was defeated in the face of its economic tasks.

12- In concluding the defeat of October Revolution from the inability to respond to its economic tasks one must bear in mind the following points:

a) October Revolution was a socialist revolution for which the objective conditions for complete victory were available. The Russian proletariat was able to depose the bourgeoisie politically and economically, and the dictatorship of the proletariat (i.e., the means of enforcing the proletarian policies in the political sense and not the form and structure of the state) was set up in Russia. In this sense, October Revolution was victorious. But for reasons which we stated this victory was not consolidated and did not continue up to the establishment of socialism.

b) In Soviet Union, capitalism, in the economic sense, was never completely uprooted and even the first positive steps towards building a socialist economy were not taken. War Communism and NEP were special economic policies, stemming from the necessities of the specific conditions after the revolution, and not economic measures for building socialism. But at the same time the strengthening and domination of the stricken capitalism in Russia did not result from these special policies. War Communism and NEP were both responses to the junctural economic necessities of their period, from a proletarian standpoint.

c) Factors like workers standing aloof from power and not forming the dictatorship of the

proletariat based on mass workers' organisations, the strengthening and domination of the bureaucracy, the inner-party conspiracies and oppressions (and so on) undoubtedly had their role in the final defeat of October Revolution and domination of the bourgeoisie over the party and state. But without appreciating the pivotal role of the economic tasks that the revolution should have performed, it is not possible to clarify the real role of these factors in the process of the defeat of the revolution. The fact is that the intensification and consolidation of these factors, from the form of reversible mistakes and deviations by the party - or in some cases the limitations that the objective conditions imposed on the proletariat in the first period of the revolution - to the level of fundamental characteristics and the necessary and reproducing components of the system, are consequences of the defeat of the revolution and requirements of the domination of capitalism in Soviet Union, and not the other way around.

d) Until the late 20s, the Bolshevik Party and Soviet state, although having committed numerous mistakes, had a proletarian character. The mistakes of the Bolshevik Party were reversible and correctable until this time. But by carrying out the first five-year plan the way for return was blocked and the ruling party and state became subservient to bourgeois goals and policies and gained an anti-worker character.

e) The defeat of socialist revolution in Soviet Union did not annul it as a social and historical event. October Revolution was a great socio-economic reform which created a developed industrial society out of a relatively backward capitalist country, and made certain improvements in the position of the workers, national minorities, women and other social strata. The capitalism of Soviet Union owes its present position as much to the defeat of the October Socialist Revolution as to the victory of this revolution over Izarism.

Hamid Taghvae  
Nov. 1986

\* In the same way as one cannot explain the overt dictatorship and bourgeois-imperialist policies in the dominated countries without understanding the economic relations and position of the classes within the framework of these relations.

ADVISED

# DOSSIER ABOUT WOMEN IN IRAN

We had intendend to publish a special dossier about the women's situation in Iran on the occasion of the 8 March. Unfortunately, due to some technical problems, it was not possible to publish it in the March issue of the Bolshevik Message. Nevertheless, because of the importance of the question, we are publishing the collection in the present issue of Bolshevik Message. It includes the message of the Communist Party of Iran - the Committee Abroad on the occasion of 8 March, the translation of a document from an official Iranian newspaper about the Islamic ethics of women's

personal and social life, a report on the life and working conditions of the carpet weaving women workers in Kurdistan - western Iran - and a leaflet produced by the "Association of Supporters of the CPI in Britain" about sexual Apartheid in Iran.

We hope that this dossier will portray some aspects of the life and suppression of Iranian women for the readers of Bolshevik Message.

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## A REPORT ON THE LIFE & WORK OF WOMEN CARPET - WEAVERS IN KURDISTAN

The workers and toilers in Kurdistan live under conditions of savage exploitation and intense poverty and lack of rights. Wide-spread contract-work, long working hours, arduous and exhausting working conditions, lack of any kind of safety at the work place, and unemployment and expulsions ... are inseparable parts of the life of workers in Kurdistan. During the last few decades, and in fact following the imperialist solution of the agrarian question in Iran, millions of toiling masses and poor peasants of Kurdistan have been driven into the labour market.

For the Iranian bourgeoisie Kurdistan has played the part of a source of reserve army of cheap labour, where large masses of workers are kept barely alive under the lowest possible level of existence. (Not to mention the wide-spread deaths resulting from lack of medical care and malnutrition ... which particularly hits the children).

Capital, whenever it needs, employs vast masses of cheap workers who toil in the villages and suburbs for a paltry wage to "reproduce" their labour-power; and whenever it has no use for them, sends them back to the villages to work on the piece of land whose produce barely meets a few-months' living, or drives them to do casual street sales or domestic labour.

Thus a vast mass of workers and toilers is seasonally travelling between the cities and villages of Kurdistan and other parts of Iran. Masses who in most cases have to engage in wage-labour to earn a minimum living for their families: vast groups of working-class families who every year, around spring time, set out towards the brick-yards, the cities and various regions; large masses of women and

children who engage in jobs such as carpet-weaving, herding, etc.

Capital, while keeping the workers in villages as a reserve force, in the cheapest possible way, employs a section of them for "domestic work". And in order to maximize profits, it puts one worker against another, the male worker against the female, and the latter against her children. Here the women toilers in the villages are particularly hit.

The working woman in Kurdistan, on top of the arduous and back-breaking work in the house, has to engage, alongside her husband and children, in work in brick-yards, farms and all sorts of domestic labour, in order to earn a living for the family.

In this short discussion I will try to give a picture of the work by women in a particular branch of domestic work; i.e., carpet-weaving.

Carpet-weaving is one of the most common lines of domestic production in which for the most part women workers and toilers, particularly in the villages and towns of South Kurdistan, are engaged. In some regions (such as villages and townlets around Divandareh, Afshar, Bijar) carpet-weaving forms the main source of income for the toilers.

The woman carpet weaver in Kurdistan is driven to the carpet loom from early childhood, i.e., from the age of six onwards, at the playing age, under the parents' compulsion. From the beginning, any disobedience and refusal to work on the part of the child and her demand to play is met by the rebuke of the parents. She is compelled to learn to weave in a period of a few months. This is the bitter logic of exploitation of workers in the capitalist system which forces the family father

### Down with the Islamic Republic regime !

to commit such acts, contrary to his affection for his children. In some cases children are so young that the parents lift them up or put them down beside the loom. The child begins from simple knitting and gradually comes to grips with the finer techniques of the job. She has to work 14 hours a day with her tiny hands. And she is not alone in this; her mother, sister and girls of the families in the neighbourhood who have come for apprenticeship, accompany her. Taking a rest during the working hours has no meaning here and usually the workers fall asleep, from the intensity of work, by the side of the hand-loom.

The mother of the house, on top of all these, must attend to house-work such as baking bread, preparing food, fetching water, nursing the children, looking after animals, etc. Having finished the house-work, she too comes to the foot of the loom to begin the unending work of carpet-weaving. A never-ending work which knows no time limits and eats up all their energy.

In carpet-weaving, like other piece and contract-work, capital puts the workers against one other. Here capital turns the family father into the agent for controlling the children. To speed up the work and get the carpet finished as fast as possible, the father promotes competition among workers and compares the work of women workers of other families with those of his daughters. Thus the capitalist turns the father into an unwaged agent and overseer in his service. Before the work starts, the father determines the quantity of work that is to be done by the end of the day, and checks this at night time when the work is finished. On every carpet, having a definite area, always work a definite number of workers. A more skilled worker (Ostad) works with a number of workers. The Ostad controls the carpet pattern and teaches the workers how to weave according to the pattern. She keeps an eye on the work and makes sure that workers do not work slow. The pressure that the father exerts on the Ostad is now put by her on other workers. Should the carpet pattern be wrong, the Ostad undoes it and makes the workers weave once again.

In carpet-weaving, as with other forms of piece-work, free (unwaged) labour is an inseparable part of production. Many women and children from working-class families work for other families to learn how to weave, without receiving the minimum wage, and it is clear that the product of their toil entirely goes to the capitalist's pocket.

In this hard work, as a result of the intense immobility caused by the job, the body's muscles and joints become weakened in their natural and normal motion and experience

numbness, from early childhood. Of the usual symptoms associated with carpet-weaving are: the body and face turning yellow, a severely impaired eye-sight, and blindness. Tuberculosis and other lung diseases threaten young workers from the beginning. Intense back-ache is also a typical ailment affecting the workers. In addition, women workers have no rights to rest during the menstruation period and pregnancy and have to continue work until the last moment of child birth.

Workers have no recess from the daily work, nor any breaks from the annual work. Only out of respect for the dead or when a marriage is on, do they interrupt work. Now let us see what the workers gets in return for all this work, suffering and pain.

First we should take a look at the contracts and the particular relationship which exists between the carpet-weavers and the capitalists (individual owners or government-affiliated institutions such as the "Construction Crusade").

The contract between the workers (the family father) and the capitalist is of different kinds. Here we shall look at the most common. The "half-work" contract means that the employer (the capitalist) buys the wool, yarn and weaving equipment such as scissors and the knitting knife ... and divides the cost with the worker. The worker has to weave the carpet by a fixed date, and when the work is done and the carpet is sold, half the price of the carpet is taken by the capitalist and the other half by the producers (the family father). This is called a "half-work" contract which is common in most of the places we mentioned above.

The other kind of contract is when the workers are provided with equipment by the individual employer or institutions, such as the Construction Crusade or the Labour Ministry, and receive wages for every particular carpet weaved. Such contract is known as "hiring".



Women carpet - weavers, teenage as well as old, engaged in unending back-breaking toil ...

**For a Revolutionary Democratic Republic !**

Paying wages "by the metre" is also another kind of contract. The employer gives the equipment to workers and pays the producer for every square metre of carpet woven. Should the carpet be soiled, its price will fall by as much as half that which was originally agreed. Should the pattern be flawed, the employer will cut the workers' wages. Besides the competition engendered and promoted by the father among the workers on the speed and quality of work, the employer too instigates competition among the producers on the quality and fineness of the produced carpets, and thus firstly improves the quality, and secondly always has an excuse for paying the workers less and making them work for lower wages.

A simple statistical comparison between the capitalist's income, the cost of the means of production, and the worker's income and standard of living, relative to the living costs and the duration of work by women carpet-weavers, provides a clear picture of the degree of exploitation of workers, their level of subsistence and the avarice of capital for profitability. It is usual for a 2 x 3 metre carpet to be worked on by 5 workers. The working day of each worker is 14 hours and the time needed for the completion of the work is 6 months. The cost of the means of production can be taken, on average, as 8 000 Tomans\* and the carpet price as just over 60 000 Tomans. A simple calculation shows that during this period, for 12 600 hours of work a sum of 26 000 Tomans is paid, i.e., 29 Tomans a day for every worker.

Fourteen hours' work for 29 Tomans! And this is at a time when the minimum wage determined by the Labour Ministry, for 8 hours' daily work, is 72 Tomans. Isn't the logic of domestic work clear?

What officially remains for the capitalist is about 30 000 Tomans. But what happens in reality is that the capitalist sells the carpet in the market at a price much higher than what he originally foisted on the worker. Moreover, first of all, he has made the workers pay for half the cost of the means of production, in form of loan, for which he deducts out of their share at the end of the work; secondly, he has paid nothing towards the expenses of keeping the equipment or of the maintenance of the work place (workshop or factory), since he has made the worker himself keep the means of production; thirdly, the capitalist has made no commitment to observe a working-hour limit, and the workers, in order to finish the carpet as soon as possible, work

on average 14 to 15 hours a day. A working day the capitalist would be unable to impose on a worker in a factory or workshop. Not paying the workers an official, fixed and higher wage and not insuring them or providing them with similar securities are all benefits which domestic production brings for the capitalists. Capital, particularly in times of crisis, by appropriating the absolute surplus value produced by workers' domestic work, increases the intensity and duration of work and imposes an ever lower standard of living on workers. This is the characteristic feature of the work of women carpet weavers in most parts of Kurdistan.

The slave-like domestic work by women in these regions is such that it leaves its mark even on the marriage of women carpet weavers. If the girl carpet-weaver is skilled in her job and the carpet produced by her sell well, this will have an important effect in determining the amount of the "Shirbaha" (the money paid to the girl's father at the time of marriage-Tr.). The opposite also applies.

On top of the savage exploitation, women are also subjected to reactionary ideas and traditions. It is customary to postpone the girls' marriage so as to let them weave more carpets. Women's and girls' reaction against all these pressures, lack of rights and exploitation is individual protest: they refuse to work, cry and threaten to commit suicide; but in the end are forced to return to work. In fact all the reactionary ideas and traditions concerning women, here clearly serve the interests of capital.

Women workers are badly dispersed and suffer from lack of consciousness. The reactionary traditions and ideas imposed on women and the dispersion characterising domestic work are both limitations for working women in the cause of their consciousness, unity and solidarity. But these limitations can and must be overcome. The exposure of the class nature of the oppression on women carpet-weavers, showing how religion, ignorance and superstition and the reactionary traditions dominating their relationships serve the exploitation by capital; and on the basis of such education, creating family circles, co-operative funds, etc, among women workers are the first steps that must be taken forward for their education and organisation.

Azam Kamgoyan

\*By the official exchange rate, 80 Tomans is approximately equivalent to \$1.

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC & WOMEN

In the past 7 years the Islamic regime in Iran has developed an all-sided ideological, social and legal frame-work for the total undermining and suppression of women's rights. According to the Quran - the holy book of Islam - women have been created by the God to serve men and are regarded as second-rate human-beings. The Islamic Republic regime is trying to socialize and materialize this attitude in the everyday life in Iran.

Following is the translation of a document which first appeared in "Resalat" (No. 228, 23 Oct. 1986) - a daily newspaper which is published by one of the moderate factions of the Islamic regime in Iran. This document is a tabulation of the desired merits and morals of a Moslem woman, as opposed to that of the modern and non-Moslem woman. It is another evidence of the unbelievable dimensions of the degradation of woman under the Islamic Republic rule.

We appeal to all those organisations, comrades and friends who, like us, are disgusted at, and offended by, such attitudes towards women, to translate and publish this document in other languages. This will help us to expose the treatment that women are receiving under the Islamic Republic regime in Iran.

### COMPARISON BETWEEN

#### THE MOSLEM WOMAN

- Has humane, moral, scientific and artistic freedom.
- Has dignity and integrity and therefore a heart full of kindness and sacrifices.
- Has religious marriage, i.e., there exists a strong bond between the pair and God on the basis of love, kindness, good behaviour and warm-heartedness
- Wears make-up for her husband and family.
- Is like a pearl in a shell.
- Offers her first love to her husband.
- She has Mehriye (The amount of money set aside as her price at the time of marriage), which is a sign of kindness towards, and appreciation of, women. All her expenses are met by the husband.
- She first of all pays attention to her important duties such as housework and raising children and then uses what is left of her time in social activities.
- She cooks, sews and does artistic work for herself, her husband and family.
- She and her family eat clean, home-made food.
- She enjoys making food, sewing clothes and doing other artistic works for herself and her family, and in this way strengthens her love with her husband.
- She saves in the financial situation of her family by her own personal creativity and interests and moderation in make-up and other ornamental articles.

#### THE NON-MOSLEM ("WESTERNIZED") WOMAN

- Has animalistic freedom in desires and lust.
- Has no dignity, is lecherous, and therefore has a temporary and passing love.
- Has a shaky relation on the basis of a superficial and passing love; and on the basis of money and material things.
- Wears make-up for everybody.
- Is like artificial jewellery which, having no covers, can be seen everywhere.
- Offers her last love (to her husband), after many affairs.
- She is denied Mehriye and appreciation and must earn her own living.
- She first of all pays attention to her social activities and to earning money and then puts the time left to housework and raising children.
- She works for others in restaurants, factories and institutions.
- She has to use artificial food, and food made in the restaurants.
- She usually uses others' ready-made food and clothes, and since these are not the results of her own effort and art, she is denied of this enjoyment.
- She spends all she earns in make-up and different sorts of clothes daily, and in eating in the restaurants.

-She raises her children in her own kind arms.

-She multiplies the strength of her husband for social work by looking after him, by house-keeping and by preparing the means of comfort and rest for him.

-She usually does not suffer from loneliness, since by the warm environment she has created in the house she gathers her husband, children and mother and father around.

-She always respects and shows kindness towards her mother and father and in turn receives their help.

-She raises her children away from motherly love, in the boarding schools, or with other people.

-She has no time to help her husband morally and increase his liveliness for social work.

-Because of her loneliness, which is the result of living for oneself and being away from the parents and the rest of the family, she has to take refuge in drinks, etc.

-She has lost ties with her parents and does not receive their reciprocal help.

### THIS 8 OF MARCH

## RISE AGAINST SEXUAL APARTHEID IN IRAN

On the occasion of 8 March we greet all those who struggle for the liberation and equality of women, and we wish every success for them and for all those who strive for a world free from injustice and exploitation.

We call on all workers to participate actively in celebrating 8 of March, a tradition founded by themselves, and we ask them to accelerate the fulfilment of the just demands of women, through their presence in the rightful movement of women, and, moreover, show them that the final liberation of women, like that of all oppressed humanity, lies in the destruction of a system based on the exploitation of man by man, and on the keeping down of the exploited. When the striving for freedom of all the oppressed should fall in step with the revolution of the world working class to eliminate class society and uproot the power of capital, then freedom, equality, and social justice would be a dream come true.

What we are asking, this year in particular, from all participants in this international protest to the oppression of women, is to make the world hear, as loudly as possible, the voice of women in Iran. In Iran, crucified by the most reactionary and savage defenders of capital, the Iranian woman has lost her most basic and commonplace rights. All her rights, the right to work, to study, to choose a husband, the right to the maintenance of her children, the right to love, to choose her clothes, the right to appear in public, or to use public transport, are taken away. The indignation that the Iranian woman is subjected to is unimaginable and unbelievable for women in Europe. The truth, however, is that Iranian women live in the same hell experienced by black South Africans under the organized medieval barbarism of racial apartheid.

Sexual apartheid in Iran is a horrible and undeniable reality that should be put on trial this 8 of March from any platform and in every resolution. This is a stain on contemporary humanity that everyone in the world should try to wipe away, with women on the forefront of this effort.

This 8 of March the Islamic Republic should tremble at the cry of "Down with Sexual Apartheid in Iran". The cry should be so loud as to bring the hope of liberation to the enthralled women and all freedom loving people of Iran, penetrating the closed doors of the country and the black sensor of the Mullahs.

On 8th March this year the support of religion for the interests of capital, and the role of religious reaction at the service of imposing subjugation on women should come under such attacks of exposure that it should brand and disgrace not only Islamic governments, but all those reactionary religious trends which, with the support of Reaganism in the U.S. and other countries have set out on an overall attack on women's rights.

**LONG LIVE 8 OF MARCH, SYMBOL OF THE AWAKENING OF THE TOILING WOMEN OF THE WORLD!**

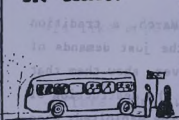
**LONG LIVE LIBERATION AND EQUALITY!**

**LONG LIVE SOCIALISM!**

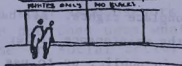
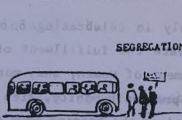
Communist Party of Iran-  
The Committee Abroad

28 Feb. 1987

### APARTHEID IN IRAN



### APARTHEID IN S.AFRICA



**ETC...**

Leaflet produced by the Association of Supporters of the CPI in Britain

28/6/86

## WOMEN IN IRAN, FACTS TO KNOW!



This pamphlet, compiled by comrades Mina Azad and Nooshin Azary, contains information about: some Islamic Laws concerning women, segregation of women and men, expulsion and punishments on grounds of not complying with Islamic Hejab (covering of the body), resistance in prisons against wearing the veil, compulsory marriage, and a chronology of the events on the suppression of women in Iran and their struggle. This pamphlet is available in English, German and Swedish.

#### NOTE

An article by the CPI entitled "The Women's Question is the Workers' Question" which has recently been translated into English will be published in one of the forthcoming issues of Bolshevik Message.



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE CPI



"KOMONIST" is the central organ of the CPI published in Farsi. Issue no.30 (Feb.1987) contains the following articles:

- Unemployment benefit or cheaper redundancy?
- Sectarianism and liquidationism in the left movement. H.Taghvaei
- A new wave of murder and destruction in the Iran-Iraq war
- About the Islamic Republic's "Labour Law" bill (Interview with comrade H.Taghvaei)
- The "Union of Gilan Workers' Council" remembered. R.Moghaddam
- The spectre of May 1968. A.Majidi
- Safety in the work-place
- Workers' news
- In revolutionary Kurdistan

"PISHRO" (in Kurdish) is the organ of the Kurdistan Organisation of the CPI-Komala. Issue no.21 (Dec.1986) contains the following articles:

- About the discussion of the 2nd Congress of

the CPI-part two (Interview with comrade M.Hekmat)  
Our organisational policy among the workers  
M.Hekmat

- Pan-Islamic reaction: imperialism's defensive barrier. J.Shafiee

### NEW PAMPHLETS

The following pamphlets were recently published by the Kurdistan Organisation of the CPI-Komala:

- A Report on Several Working-Class Centres in Kurdistan
- A Report on Several Working-Class Districts in Kurdistan
- Some Reports on Small Work-Shops in Kurdistan
- On the Life, Work and Struggle of the Brick Yard Workers
- On the Work and Life of Workers in Small Work-Shops

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### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE CPI

To help the CPI financially, please send cheques or (international) money orders to any of the Party addresses, payable to B.M. BAYAN. Alternatively directly credit the following account:

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