



THE ORGANIZATION OF THE IRANIAN PEOPLE'S
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THE PRINCIPAL TASKS OF MARXIST - LENINISTS

AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
IN IRAN

OCT-78

INTRODUCTION

The Organization of the Iranian People's Fedaei Guerrillas (OIPFG), a Marxist-Leninist organization, has an outstanding place in the history of the Iranian people's struggles, having launched the armed struggle against the Shah's U.S.-backed regime in February, 1971. In an era of severe dictatorial oppression and intense suppression, the OIPFG vigorously and valiantly led the new revolutionary movement of Iran, and at the same time made important theoretical contributions.

The OIPFG was formed with the merger of two Marxist-Leninist groups led by Bijan Jazani and Massoud Ahmadzadeh, respectively. In February 1971, when the two groups were in the process of ideological exchange and unity, their mountain wing started a new era in the political life of the Iranian people by attacking a gendarmerie post in Siahkal, a village in northern Iran. Ever since the historic Siahkal event of February 8, 1971, the OIPFG has been actively participating in the struggles of the Iranian people, in the ideological, political, and economic sphere. The contribution of the OIPFG to the theory of armed struggle in dependent capitalist states such as Iran is of great significance to the struggle of the oppressed.

Today, in the highly politicized and militant atmosphere of Iran, and with the absence of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party to lead the struggle of the masses, the OIPFG must undoubtedly take up part of the responsibility of filling this vacuum. It is in response to this need that the OIPFG has recently

put out pamphlets on the present tasks of Iranian Marxist-Leninists. The translation of these important documents is a small step in introducing the Iranian people's ongoing revolution to the progressive movements of the world.

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THE PRINCIPAL TASKS OF
MARXIST-LENINISTS

by

The Organization of Iranian
People's Fedaei Guerrillas

As hitherto, the basic and chief content of our work is to develop the political understanding of the masses. But let us not forget that, in addition to this general, constant and fundamental task, times like the present in Russia impose other, particular and special tasks. Let us not become pedants and philistines, let us not evade these special tasks of the moment, these special tasks of the given forms of struggle, by meaningless references to our permanent duties, which remain unchanged at all times and in all circumstances.

Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. It will be an armed uprising.

V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising."

In this pamphlet we have endeavored to clarify the principal tasks of Marxist-Leninists vis-a-vis the working class and the liberation movement. Lack of serious and practical attention towards these tasks will cause a further lag in the communist and labor movement of Iran with respect to the activities of the other sectors of the society. Yet, in light of the present revolutionary situation, in light of a probable upsurge in the mass movement and its transformation

into a spontaneous uprising, we have started out with these prominent words by Comrade Lenin in order to prevent deviation and incorrect understanding of our tasks in these critical days.

The Marxist-Leninist armed movement of our people, after eight years of experience in theoretical work and revolutionary practice, has now entered a new stage. In the past, the specific conditions of the movement lent a particular prominence to the question of practice, and revolutionary Marxist-Leninists under those conditions were faced with numerous obstacles in their efforts to fuse with the working class, carry socialist consciousness to them, and ultimately forge the proletarian vanguard. The revolutionary practice of the vanguard organization should have resolved the difficulties confronting the movement.

Among the tasks facing Marxist-Leninists were: struggling against passivity and stagnation resulting from dictatorial domination and the strategic defeat of the movement in the past; struggling against opportunism within the movement; drawing active social forces out into the battlefield; and eradicating the lack of confidence in the vanguard that had come about as a result of the vanguard's mistakes. On the other hand, the political weakness of the working class and the inadequacy of the spontaneous movement within this class--with respect to the above problems--greatly weakened the basis on which Marxist-Leninists could fuse with the working class. But today, with a change in the factors mentioned, and with an understanding of past defeats and victories,

the prevailing general conditions of the movement have placed us in a special situation. Our response to this new situation will reflect our organization's theoretical and practical position on the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses in general, and the working class in particular.

In recent months, we have been witnessing the upsurge of a broad-based struggle by the masses. The movement's upsurge, slogans and demands are an expression of part of that dormant revolutionary force, reflecting all the misery of class society and the repressed wishes and hopes of the oppressed masses. We salute this promising start. But a one-sided view of the mass movement, without taking into consideration its class content, the position of the working class and the proletariat's role in the democratic revolution will ultimately present the anti-imperialist forces with nothing but disappointment. Here Comrade Lenin's words are instructive: it is only the proletariat, he stressed, that can remain democratic to the end and a vigorous enemy of absolute monarchy. There can be no wavering in this matter, for the class nature of the proletariat is such that only the proletariat can be the vanguard on the road to political freedoms and democratic changes.

On the basis, then, of our understanding of the role of the working class in the liberation movement and the necessity of realizing the hegemony of this class, we present our specific guidelines--as a fundamental necessity--to Marxist-Leninists supporting the armed struggle. This necessity derives from the relation

between class struggle and the liberation movement, and the relation between our socialist tasks and democratic tasks in the present stage.

A general crisis prevails in our country today. The economic, political and cultural decay of this system, dependent upon imperialism, has pushed millions of our people to a life-and-death struggle; and the continuation and expansion of the people's struggles deepen and intensify the general crisis daily. The imperialist-dependent dictatorial regime of the Shah is incapable of ruling over the masses by its previous mode of domination. All the oppressive methods used to block struggles in the past have today lost their effectiveness. Despite the deployment of military and police forces in the cities and the implementation of martial law, the long-oppressed masses continue their strikes and demonstrations fearlessly and courageously. Internal contradictions within the ruling class have intensified, and the political crisis is an expression of the totality of existing contradictions. In such a situation, any puppet government which comes to power--military or otherwise--cannot enjoy internal stability. These kinds of governments, whatever their structure, cannot work and will collapse because of the depth and intensity of the system's internal contradictions.

The Shah's regime, relying on its oil revenues, had at one time become a chief money-lender to both imperialist states and dependent-capitalist states. Today, to compensate for its shortcomings the regime is forced not only to cancel many

of its economic and military programs but to beg for imperialist loans as well. These realities demonstrate that in our society a revolutionary situation prevails (the objective conditions of revolution). That is, the general crisis that is present in our society is such that the exploited masses can no longer live as they did before and want to change the conditions of their existence. As mentioned above, the exploiters too can no longer rule in the same manner as before. In such a revolutionary situation, when the revolutionary vanguard possesses the necessary qualifications (subjective conditions) the revolution can be started and the masses can be led to their final and historic battle. In such a situation too, even if the revolutionary vanguard is unprepared, the masses will still carry out forceful forms of struggle. The militant demonstrations of our people and the vigorous and dispersed activities carried out by some groups within them are an expression of this phenomenon whose direction is the overthrow of the regime and the smashing of its ruling apparatus. In our society, when the vanguard enjoys influence and organizational strength, it will attract the masses who today defend themselves against attacks by the regime's agents with molotov cocktails, benzine, rocks and clubs. The vanguard will introduce them to mass armed struggle and the masses will take up the arms offered them by the vanguard.

In such a situation the struggles of the masses take on higher forms every day, and the element of revolutionary force which the vanguard employs along with other political tactics takes on a

special role in mobilizing and organizing their struggles. At the same time, Marxism stipulates that in a revolutionary situation the victory of the revolution is determined by the preparedness of the vanguard, taking into consideration the distinct experience of the masses. This shows that while the objective conditions of revolution in a society can be present there can at the same time be differences in the political quality of the struggles of the various classes and strata. These differences are a result of historical conditions in the formation of the classes and strata, and their respective experience in struggle. Rectifying these shortcomings is a task which confronts the ideological representatives of those classes and strata.

We will now survey the present situation of the movement. What exists in the democratic movement of our people today is the struggle of the urban masses, made up mainly of the radical petit bourgeoisie. The Iranian petit bourgeoisie, because of its class position vis-a-vis imperialism and its client states and because of its historical tradition of struggle, possesses a high degree of class consciousness. By altering its religious framework it can approach the other toiling masses, including the working class, and be its ally in the united anti-imperialist front. ** However, because of its radicalization and broad base, the petit bourgeoisie is a potential rival of the working class movement and can claim leadership of the whole of the revolutionary movement. To the extent that the radical petit bourgeoisie understands its class interests and has considerable political power, any dealings with this group must be done in a serious and highly conscious manner.

On the one hand, the petit bourgeoisie in our society manifests itself as a force struggling against imperialism in a resolute and militant manner. On the other hand, the petit bourgeoisie, unlike the proletariat, does not form a homogeneous class, i.e., in the sense of an historical cohesiveness in the struggle against dictatorship and imperialism. Depending upon which of its factions dominate, the petit bourgeoisie will leave different and significant impacts upon the liberation movement. If the ideological representatives of affluent groups within the petit bourgeoisie with conservative and anti-working class views take on the leadership of the national struggles, they can create obstacles for the unity of the popular forces. At the present time, it is this group that is playing a major role in the activities of the petit bourgeoisie. The anti-communist propaganda of recent months has intensified the contradictions between the petit-bourgeoisie and the working class. Undue emphasis of this contradiction and its intensification at the present stage does not benefit the popular forces and in fact weakens both the petit-bourgeoisie and the working class before the enemy in varying degrees. (1) We support the struggle of the radical and militant factions of the petit-bourgeoisie that express the interests of the broadest national and anti-imperialist forces in our society, and we consider this support to be of benefit to the working class and the liberation movement. Dispersion and distortion of the national forces weakens the unity of the popular forces in the united front, and also weakens the strength of the working class in the realization of the popular democratic revolution.

We now turn to the proletariat. It is our view that the proletariat cannot play its destined role in the people's struggles without a militant vanguard organization. Without a proletarian organization to promote and protect the interests of the working class at the fore of the popular struggle, the working class cannot participate in the united front and cannot realize hegemony. In the present situation the working class movement lags behind the struggle of the other anti-imperialist sectors, for the years following the coup d'etat of 28 Mordad (August 1953) saw a stagnation in the working class movement. Contributing to the stagnation of the working class was the absence of the proletarian vanguard, the severe suppression of workers' demands by the Shah's dictatorial apparatus, and the peasant origins of much of the proletariat. (In recent years in particular, many peasants have joined this class.) Revolutionary Marxist-Leninists who consider themselves to be the ideological representatives of the proletariat and who are seeking to promote themselves to the level of the vanguard of this class must address themselves to the relative backwardness of the working class movement, for a lack of attention to this reality can be catastrophic. Without a thorough understanding of this point Marxist organizations will only tail the petit bourgeoisie, and the working class movement in the factories will simply remain in the stage of trade union activity and/or tail petit-bourgeois ideology.

In recent years, however, the working class struggles have experienced unprecedented growth. This is because of the regime's escalating political and economic crises, and the general effect of the vanguard's armed struggle upon the society. The regime has been confronted yearly with dozens of cases of working class strikes and protests. During the past year, for example, there have been over a hundred cases of labor strikes in big factories, some of which were met by military suppression. The formation of the revolutionary situation in the society, which pushes the mass movement strides did provide the necessary atmosphere for the surge of the suppressed working class movement. Under the impact of this factor, today we face an upsurge of broad working class struggles whose extent is unparalleled in the history of working class struggles. In this situation, working class strikes possess the necessary strength to forge an immediate link with the democratic demands of other sectors. When Marxist-Leninists are able to use the appropriate atmosphere to carry socialist consciousness among the workers, the working class will play its historic role in the liberation movement.

The gap between the working class movement and the liberation movement in the present stage presents the greatest responsibilities to genuine Marxist-Leninists. Taking socialist consciousness to the working class and linking with the demands and struggles of this class constitutes the most important task for Marxist-Leninists. How to carry this consciousness forward depends upon the particular historical conditions of the society as well as the strategical frameworks adopted by the vanguard to respond

to the fundamental necessities of the society. Under different conditions and in a different situation this matter could be resolved through political struggles. In the present conditions of our society, however, socialist consciousness will not have the necessary strength if it is separate from the armed struggle, whose impact will be to clear the way and promote popular struggles of the movement. Without firm reliance on this principle, all forms of political struggles will lose their effectiveness and the vicious circle of word-mongering opportunists will be repeated. If we speak of forms of political, trade-union, and economic struggles for the purpose of establishing political organizational fusion with the working class in order to carry socialist consciousness among them and emphasize their participation in these struggles, it is only because of the existence of the armed vanguard in our society and not as an independent and abstract method. Only when political and economic struggles adopt the line of armed movement will they play their real role in the qualitative and quantitative growth of the popular movement.

As for the relationship between the socialist tasks and the democratic tasks of the proletariat, how and with what force Marxist-Leninists should deal with it depends upon the particular situation of the working class movement and the democratic movement within the society. In Russia's case, the proletarian forces in 1898 were scattered and there was no militant proletarian organization. Since fusion with the struggles of the working class and the formation of such an organization was one of the most important

tasks of the communists, Lenin issued the slogan of concentrating all socialist forces to work among the proletariat. He believed that building a militant revolutionary organization within the workers was of primary importance and he rejected any dispersing of the forces in that situation. For it is only by relying upon such an organization that the working class can maintain its lines in the democratic movement and lead the democratic struggle toward its fundamental objectives. But in another situation, when such an organization was formed and many forces were organized around it, Lenin said that in order to give the working class an all-round, living political consciousness we should go among classes of people; we should express and indicate the general tasks of democracy to all the people without hiding our socialist ideas for even a minute. Lenin said that one who forgets that his task is to be in front of all others in bringing up, intensifying, and resolving the general democratic issues is not a socialist.

It is our point of view that this Leninist law, i.e., the organic link between socialist tasks and democratic tasks in every society, cannot be brought about isolated from the conditions and qualities of the struggles of different classes and strata and their impact upon each other. In Russia's case, from the late 19th century to the October Revolution the proletarian movement was more developed than that of the other social groups and was at the fore of the Russian revolutionary movement. The proletarian class struggles were the center of gravity of the revolutionary movement and had an immense impact upon the struggles of

other strata. The Russian socialist movement had accumulated valuable experiences from the revolutionary practices of this class. In our society, however, the class consciousness of the working class--compared to other strata--is low, and Marxist-Leninists are in a scattered state. In this situation the growth of the mass movement leaves strong impacts upon the struggles of the toilers, including the working class. For this reason, unlike the classic societies, the mass movement in Iran should be seriously considered by the communists and they should actively participate in it. They should not become one-sided in their principal tasks toward the proletariat, and should not avoid the tasks put forward by this movement. As Comrade Lenin said in his report to the Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East: "We must realize that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone."⁽²⁾ He paid particular attention to encouraging revolutionary activities by the non-proletarian toiling masses in these countries and to the role of class consciousness. In response to dogmatic hair-splitters he said: "These are problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book."⁽³⁾

In our society, emphasis by Marxist-Leninists on the working class and its necessary organizational structure should not lead to ignoring the mass movement. We should maintain the link between these two phenomena by emphasizing communist theory and practice. We should avoid as a tendency of the ultra-left a one-sided attention to the working class that

ignores other sectors of society. Conversely, tailing the petit bourgeoisie and ignoring the working class and its interests is obviously a rightist tendency in the communist movement. The question of the class identity of the revolutionary militant organization, from a Leninist point of view, is a general task. The condition for our progress in the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle is the possession of class force. For this reason, in a situation where such an independent class identity is not formed in the revolutionary movement and Marxist-Leninists are in a state of organizational and ideological dispersion, the necessity of fusing with the working class and the creation of unity among the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists has a major role in directing our activities.

With such an understanding of the historical tasks of the armed vanguard in the present situation, we consider the political-organizational fusion with the working class to be the major task of all Marxist-Leninists who support the armed movement. It is because of the importance of this task that we raise the slogan

Forward to political-Organizational
fusion with the working class

as a practical step towards formation of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. All revolutionary Marxist-Leninist gatherings, groups, and elements must make an effort toward this fusion and link the working class movement with the general mass movement, the anti-dictatorship movement and the anti-imperialist movement in a socialist manner by taking socialist consciousness to them.

Comrades: the great hour of combat for millions of the masses lies ahead. The class enemy, relying on the immense economic and military power of imperialism, has already designated the level of revolutionary violence in our society. It is only through revolutionary force and firm reliance on that never-compromising revolutionary army that the masses can promote the level of its revolutionary violence and deal with the vascillations of unstable and opportunist elements. Therefore, forward to the preparation of the uncompromising army of the people.

Forward to the working class.

Forward to the militant unity of the proletariat and the armed movement.

Death to the dictator Shah and his imperialist supporters.

NOTES

- * Reference here is made to the CIA-sponsored coup d'etat of 1953, which overthrew the constitutionally-elected, nationalist government of Premier Mossadegh and restored the Shah to power. (ED.)
- ** In recent years there have been attempts by Shariati, et al., to reform and modernize Islam and present it as a universal ideology compatible with science and progress. (ED.)
- (1) We should point out that the group calling itself the Marxist-Leninist branch of the Organization of Mojahedin of the People of Iran (OMPI) has intensified this contradiction by creating obstacles and conspiring against the formation of a national religious force and other non-working class sectors. In so doing it has seriously damaged the interests of the working class movement.
- (2) Here Comrade Lenin uses the word vanguard to mean the working class, not the element of consciousness.
- (3) Comrade Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East," November 22, 1919 (Collected Work, vol. 30, Moscow: Progress, 1965, p. 162).

The Organization of Iranian
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