

From Iran:

Raha'i



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TRANSLATIONS FROM RAHA'I
(LIBERATION) AND OTHER
PUBLICATIONS OF THE
ORGANISATION OF COMMUNIST
UNITY.

★ Short History of O.C.U.

The following is taken from "Dar Tadaroke Engelabe Socialistee" (In Preparation for the Socialist Revolution), a small book published by the O.C.U. in 1979. It gives a short introduction to the organisation, by the organisation itself.

In 1970, some small communist circles of Iranians who had been active in the anti-imperialist struggles in Middle Eastern countries joined together and formed the Communist Unity Group (CUG). This group began to prepare for transferring its activities to Iran by seeking contact with the revolutionaries inside that country.

Initial contact was established with the Organization of the Iranian Peoples' Fedae Guerrillas (OIPFG). It was agreed that the two organizations should coordinate their activities while continuing a process of theoretical elucidation. During this period, which lasted three years, the OIPFG and the CUG carried out a series of joint actions, among which were the following:

Participation in the armed struggles of Oman's National Liberation Movement; close political and military collaboration with Palestinian revolutionary organizations; participation in the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the Lebanese civil war of 1974-75 (in the southern front against Israel); military and political training of Iranian revolutionaries; and general revolutionary propaganda work through radio broadcasts and the publication of over 40 books and pamphlets concerning the Iranian revolutionary movement.

The CUG had also established contact with the Organization of the Iranian Peoples' Mujahiddin, and despite theoretical differences cooperated with that progressive Islamic organization.

In 1975, conflicting theoretical positions between the CUG and the OIPFG reached a critical point. The CUG opposed what it considered the OIPFG's Maoist-Stalinist positions and its insistence that military actions had to be the main form of communist struggle against the Shah's dictatorship. Meanwhile the OIPFG had come under a violent wave of attacks by the Iranian military and police and most of its members, including the leadership, were murdered in clashes. This situation caused the CUG to lose its contact with the OIPFG, as

(continued on p. 40.)

Down with the Islamic Republic of Iran!

At the time the following article was written (late August 1981), the Iranian opposition was well into the heaviest offensive taken against it by the Islamic Republic regime since that regime came to power after the 1979 revolution. Since June, executions had continued relentlessly. On August 17, at least 52 were reported to have been killed by the regime followed by 22 more on August 18th. The O.C.U., from the beginning, had viewed the post-revolutionary government in Iran as reactionary and had repeatedly warned of its fascistic and totalitarian traits. In this article, the organization argues for the overthrow of the regime and restates its plea for a left unity. "Overthrow the Islamic Republic!" is from "Rahai" no. 100, August 25, 1981.

In the last few weeks we have witnessed several important developments. These include:

- 1) the acceleration of the process whereby all illusions concerning the Mojahedin are being dispelled within the Left,
- 2) new indications of self-consciousness within the Left and
- 3) the total shattering of any illusions about the regime.

If these continue, they may be very effective in determining the fate of the Left in our society provided that some of the other remaining problems are also rectified.

"ILLUSIONS CONCERNING THE MOJAHEDIN"

Before recent events, what we had termed "illusions" concerning the Mojahedin had assumed new dimensions, which became not only worrisome but also paralyzing. The Mojahedin, thanks to its large size as an organization and its "moderate" positions, had effectively paralyzed an important segment of the Iranian left. This part of the Left, desiring to ally with the Mojahedin, had lost its identity. It did not demonstrate a genuine interest in uniting with other leftists. At the same time it was unable to adopt a definite and independent position and could do nothing other than follow the events as they unfolded. Its operational policies, if they were "policies" at all, were based on how to attract the attention and cooperation of the Mojahedin. The democratic and anti-imperialist tendencies of the Mojahedin, although real provided an excuse for the sterility of the Left. But then, who could deny the necessity to ally with a democratic anti-imperialist force? No one, of course. Yet posing the issue as such became a diversion, conscious or unconscious. The real issue remained: why were the left forces unable to create among themselves the needed "unity in action" - at least in specific areas - before cooperation with this democratic anti-imperialist force. The attractiveness of cooperating with the Mojahedin, probably due to the opportunities which it would provide for the future, was overshadowing any kind of principled behavior. Opportunism, in the real sense of the word had induced many to scramble for shortcuts. We were all witnesses to many rash and clumsy actions.

The formalization of cooperation between the Mojahedin and Bani-Sadr, particularly the way in which it was announced - clearly an open expression of the decisive direction taken by the Mojahedin - generated widespread reactions from the Left once some of its "stupefying" effects subsided. A segment of the Left which was surprised by the Mojahedin's choice of the Right over the Left was now

forced to accept it. The Iranian left learned about the "pact" of Bani-Sadr and the National Resistance Council through leaflets and newspapers. No one consulted them on its establishment but the door was left "half-open" for them if they wished to join in a "government for the reconstruction of the Islamic Republic." No doubt, some will still enter and only then will they realize that they must sit on the floor, by the door, as second-class citizens - their presence merely contributing to the legitimacy of the assembly and nothing more. . .

Nevertheless, what has happened is good in that the "illusions" concerning the Mojahedin have been shattered by the Mojahedin themselves. The necessities of the real world have brought into focus the different political lines. It became obvious long ago that faced with the choice between the Left and Bani-Sadr, the Mojahedin would choose the latter. A large segment of the Iranian left had to trip over this fact before seeing it. Today one must be hopelessly deluded to still not see it.

THE INSIGHTS OF THE LEFT

This immediately had its effects on the Left: it was forced to pay more attention to itself and to think harder about its options and the conditions needed to expand them. After this episode, that segment of the Left which had been deluded concerning the Mojahedin could become discouraged and frustrated or suddenly like pseudo-heroes, replace yesterday's sterility with quixotic gestures and thereby fall into the trap of a new illusion: that they could take on the entire job of fighting the regime alone.

There exists a third alternative however. They could become a little more realistic and see that if there is any hope, it lies in an alliance among the left forces. Granted that such an alliance has not yet been clearly announced, nevertheless, this last alternative still seems more probable than the first two. The fact that it has not yet materialized may in fact be due to the attraction that the second holds, the tendency towards quixotism.

If this is so, that is, that the greater part of the Left has come to the conclusion that "charity begins at home", finally, a valuable opportunity for a working alliance among the leftist forces - in specific areas - has really appeared. Hopefully, our class "conscience" will overcome unprincipled expeditiousness.

ILLUSIONS CONCERNING THE REGIME

Realization of the above are but basic steps for the advancement of

the Left, opening the way without hesitation for subsequent steps. Presently, the Minority Faction of the Fedayeen Guerrillas, as seen in an editorial in Kar, no. 121, appear to have not only taken the basic steps discussed above but also a next step as well. [This editorial argued for the overthrow of the regime. - Ed.] Let us explain further.

Communists, in general, seek the overthrow of bourgeois and petty bourgeois regimes. Their goal is the hegemony of the working class, the formation of a worker's state and its subsequent abolition. This strategic goal, however, does not mean in each instance, that the possibility for or the means to achieve it exist. It is for this very reason that it is not always proposed as the slogan of the day. In other words, the special subjective and objective conditions which are required for the realization of this strategic goal in a short period of time are not always present.

Is the overthrow of a certain non-working class regime tantamount to the establishment of a working class regime? Naturally, no. All types of non-working class regimes can succeed each other until the conditions for the hegemony of the working class are created. Accordingly, posing the slogan for the overthrow of a certain non-working class regime does not necessarily indicate that now the conditions are ripe for the formation of a worker's state. For communists, whether to pose or not to pose the slogan for the overthrow of a certain regime is not a question of emotions or long term considerations. It is rather one that deals with a concrete plan for struggle. What is to be decided is whether a change in regime is possible, so that if it is, a suitable plan can be made.

Obviously, communists cannot attempt the overthrow of a regime, nor do they want to do so alone, without the support of social forces. Mobilizing the masses and creating a social movement or better yet, giving direction to an existing social movement is a matter of "doctrine": it is part of communist ideology. Communists however do not seek the participation of the masses with the view that they are recruiting soldiers to be used in the service of their own goals. The participation of the masses is not a quantitative and auxiliary phenomenon: it is qualitative and essential. The relationships between communists and the masses is not analogous to the relationship of officers to their troops but the expression of an organic relationship of the parts to the whole, i.e. the movement. Without the participation of the masses, each and every action, although seemingly progressive and successful at the moment, will result in the worst type of domination by an elite, with a subsequent continued reproduction of class society. A program that has no prospect of mass support is condemned to failure.

In recent months, it has become clear that a majority of the socially active population are not simply disloyal to the Islamic Republic regime, but demonstrate a strong desire for another regime. The increasing daily impoverishment of the people, the atrocious crimes committed by the ruling clique, the chaotic social conditions, the lack of the simplest means of subsistence, savage repression of democratic rights . . . are problems manifested everywhere. We have all to some extent been subject to these "blessings" of the regime. All layers of society show their deep dissatisfaction in different ways except that section which is in merciless bondage to their own dogmatic illusions.

Putting aside members of the Tudeh Party and the Majority Faction of the Fedayeen Guerrillas, traitors in the real sense of the term, the supporters of the regime although significant have reached their lowest numerical strength. This diminished group is so fossilized that no amount of propaganda and educational work by the regime's opponents could make it aware. People who still to this day defend the regime and justify its crimes are so committed that they may only change in times of class warfare. To entertain pausing even for a moment in order to awaken this group is, itself, a new illusion. Anyone who imagines that the members of the "Party of God" and its thugs will withdraw their support from the regime after the exposure of a few more documents, the execution of a few more militants or the continuation of the present chaos, is seriously wrong. The Islamic regime, like all regimes, has the support of a section of the non-conscious masses. What is at issue is whether reliance upon masses means attempting to attract and make aware this backward and inflexible section in conditions of peace or that the start of open class warfare and its continuation is the better "teacher".

Simply put, we believe that the decline in the number of the regime's supporters and deluded followers has reached its lowest point in conditions of peace. The final struggle cannot be delayed under the pretext that a section of the masses still does not demand the overthrow of the regime. Overthrowing the Islamic Republic regime must be put forth for the immediate consideration of all communist forces and be proposed as the most important slogan of the day. Failure to pose this slogan under the present conditions, not only is a sign of extreme conservatism, but also an insult to that large section of the masses which by demonstrating its intense dissatisfaction with political and economic conditions, is in fact demonstrating its wish to topple the regime.

In any event, we welcome the specific formulation of the problem by the Minority Faction with some reservation. The comrades have not sincerely criticized their previous slogan, "Form a Constitutional Assembly," and have resorted to the pretense that since the

formation of a constitutional assembly is not possible without the overthrow of the regime, then that slogan is just as valid today as it was in the past. This argument is transparent, one can see the past illusions of the comrades. The comrades should not fear the truth; incomplete and misleading slogans like "Form the Constitutional Assembly" and "Overthrow the Islamic Republic Party" must be criticized today.

THE AXIS FOR AN ALLIANCE

We must seek an alliance of left forces - a temporary and pragmatic unity in action - based on an accepted charter, one of whose most fundamental principles must be the violent overthrow of the Islamic regime. Only in this way can we act effectively in making our demands known and in introducing the Left as a viable alternative to the deceptive and antiquated alternatives of the monarchists and liberals. The militant left can present itself as a serious force to be trusted by working people. The overthrow of the regime is possible and the Iranian left must play an important role in this process if it wants to be a viable alternative. It is not sufficient to simply tell working people that we are communists and are "on your side", so join our camp. Justifiably people have come to doubt claims and invitations. They are fed up with the "progressive" claims of the monarchists, the "humanist" pretensions of the liberals and the "glorification" of the needy by the Islamic reactionaries. They seek realistic and workable programs.

Stand Up United for the Overthrow of the Islamic Regime!

Comrades! Communist Comrades! After the February Uprising we should have united, we didn't. After the attacks of the Summer of 1979, we should have united, we didn't. After the fascist offensive of the Spring of 1980 we should have united, we didn't. All this is now in the past. The people have lost their trust in us and they went after other alternatives. But this time, if we do not unite they will turn their backs on us forever. We will become known as traitors. It was we, after all, who paved the way for others through our mutual distrust. Brigades of Monarchist mercenaries are forming; while empty promises emanate from the "Bani Sadr's". Meanwhile we are saying that if such and such group joins, then I won't. We still imagine that each of us, alone, can do what needs to be done.
HAVEN'T WE HAD ENOUGH?!

More on the Overthrow...

At the beginning of September, the executions in Iran, while still growing ferociously, had not yet reached their peak. There was continuing resistance everywhere, particularly on the part of the progressive political organizations. On August 30, President Rejai and Prime Minister Bahonar were assassinated, sending the Islamic Republic regime reeling into another crisis. This article, from "Rahai", no. 101, (Sept. 1, 1981) expounds further on the need to struggle for the overthrow of the regime. It discusses: the kind of people still supporting the regime, the need to act before and not after the masses, and, again, the stake of the left in overthrowing the regime.

Before we adopted the slogan, "Overthrow the Islamic Regime," we had discussions among our members and supporters regarding the pro's and con's of doing so. Although all of us came to agree on the necessity of raising this slogan, we feel that our discussions could be useful for a wider audience. We will therefore present some of the points raised.

1. In regard to the regime's mass base:

Revolution is the task of the masses and until the people (generally speaking) have not felt the necessity for change, revolution is impossible. It is possible for organized political factions to overthrow a regime during a period of instability. This however is not what revolutionary forces and in particular communists are looking for. Revolution is not only for the masses but it is also the task of the masses.

We speak of the people "in general". We do not mean that every sector must feel the necessity for change and actively participate in it. There are few instances where all the people join in a movement. The political revolution in Iran is one of the rare times in history when a regime was overthrown by such an amazing participation of the masses. It is very advantageous for everyone to agree on changing the conditions in society, but this is not very likely. A look at other revolutions in the world, old and new, show us that we must not wait for rare events. (We must add that even during the political revolution in Iran the Pahlavi regime did have some support. During those days before the revolution, the supporters of the "Constitution" did gather one hundred and fifty thousand people.) It is important to recognize the different sectors of the people and the various issues which effect their movement or lack of movement. We must consider the necessary and sufficient level of participation of the masses and not their absolute participation.

We believe that we can speak of the overthrow of the regime at a time when the regime's mass support has reached its minimum and not necessarily disappeared. In other words, the overthrow of the regime becomes the order of the day when the masses, except for those who directly benefit from the regime, have turned away from the regime. This is true today in Iran. Support for the regime has not been destroyed but has reached a minimum. The supporters of the regime today are those who have accepted the aims and acts of oppression and exploitation committed by the regime. They know all about it and they rationalize it. They are Hezbollahi's (members of the

party of God). They have witnessed this shameful regime for two and a half years and for "spiritual" (if there is anything spiritual about this regime) or for material reasons they support it. Their numbers will not diminish considerably during "peace-time". Iranian revolutionaries must decide that despite this group, this diminishing mass of the regime, it is possible and imperative to help create a revolutionary movement. Otherwise we must sit and wait in the "hope" of a day when all the Hezbollahi's are converted to the right road before we can have a revolution.

2. In regard to the inactivity of the masses:

Some say that it is true that we must not wait for the Hezbollahi's but we must see whether the dissatisfied masses express their dissatisfaction actively or not. This is an important problem to consider; and it is here that the most important and determining role of the revolutionary organizations lies. The justification for revolutionary organization lies in the ability to present a program for the active sector and to present a specific plan of action. Mobilization and organizing are complementary and inseparable parts of mass work, and these areas must become the main responsibility of the political organizations.

Today the extent of dissatisfaction is not small. Those who are not with the regime, essentially hate it. But, this hatred is not translated into action in many cases. Why? Perhaps we cannot explain all the reasons, but it seems there are some which play an important role.

The people of Iran have just come out of a revolution. The abundant hopes that they had after the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime were quickly and uncontrollably shattered. One cruel and oppressive regime replaced another. Exploitation did not diminish. Instability increased. Chaos, murder, theft, and revenge reached unbelievable dimensions. These facts have repercussions, the most important of which is that a part of the masses no longer believe in the usefulness of revolutionary activity. A revolution which fails will for a time slow down the next movement. The problem of the lack of social alternatives, their reputability, and their direction for struggle is no less important. In the past two and a half years, the alternative which was the logical consequence of the revolution and represented the most radical and popular demands of the revolution did not become a reputable social alternative. We have in the past given many reasons for this. The left alternative could and should have radicalized, mobilized and organized the masses after the revolutionary wave. This was not done. What was the result?

Some of those dissatisfied with the regime turned to the Bani Sadr alternative and some even went toward the monarchists. When

there is no moon in the sky, the stars in the night look brighter. But this is not the end of the story. Some may follow Bani Sadr and the monarchists out of desperation, but they know that they do so out of desparation. They realize that these alternatives are not what they want. In every inclination of a working person towards these alternatives there is hidden a hatred. The people have not forgotten the crimes of the Pahlavi regime, although they are so traumatized that they seem to speak well of the past. The people have not forgotten the lies and collaborations of Bani Sadr, but unfortunately they cannot see a more serious alternative. It is therefore not surprising that their support of these alternatives is basically not serious and detached.

In addition to these two important reasons, that is, the defeated feeling of one sector and the lack of perception of an alternative by another, it is important to consider the fact that it has been rare for any of these alternatives to seriously help the people in their struggle and to give them direction. One must particularly look at the role of the left forces. The shocking confusion of the left organizations which in the beginning led some of them to call this regime "national", "progressive", "popular", and "anti-imperialist" was disastrous. We are faced with another angle of the problem now. The later movements were not free from these early confusions, as manifested in the belief that "a part of the regime is pro-people and a part is anti-people". Today this continuing confusion is reflected in the foolish trailing behind of the masses. Yesterday, Khomeini was considered the leader of the anti-imperialists, today he is a criminal butcher. Maybe the masses cannot be faulted for this kind of thinking, but what about the left organizations? What other explanation can they give the people except their stupidity? Was it necessary for them to grasp the nature of the petty bourgeoisie through experience, as it was for the mass of people? And what about today? Some organizations see that the masses have been ahead of them all along and therefore conclude that since the masses have not directly raised the slogan of the overthrow of the regime, they in turn do not have a right to do so. This is not simple backwardness, it is a backwardness complex. If the mass of people must select and raise a slogan before the revolutionary organizations consider it as their task, then how do these revolutionaries justify their existence? Do they exist to receive political positions after the revolution or to benefit from the demands of the masses?

No, we will not go so far as proposing civil war while an important part of the people still have illusions, but nor shall we wait for the slowest group before moving on. Neither adventurism and opportunism nor conservatism and unrevolutionary practice; this is

how a revolutionary organization must move one step ahead of the people. It must help them formulate their demands, to differentiate the important and the unimportant. It must determine the essential and the non-essential. To wait for the people is as incorrect as not paying attention to their demands and possibilities and moving too fast for them. A communist program must show the way to the people by adopting specific activities and a plan of action. It must transform inactivity to activity; to give direction to dissatisfactions and spontaneous movements. In order to do so, it must act before and not after the fact.

3. In regard to the material possibilities for the overthrow of the regime:

We believe that the material possibilities for the overthrow of the regime do exist. Even if the possibility does not exist for a left overthrow of the regime, the left must not fail to act in that direction nevertheless. The left is not the only force in this society. Other forces will not wait for the left. This regime can be and will be overthrown. The left should not once again remain a spectator. The masses will correctly not have any respect for "the left" who has not moved due to a lack of readiness.

Yes, if it was just the left facing the regime, this would not be the best time for a final battle. There must be more preparation made both materially and ideologically. But that is just not they way it is. We and the regime are not the only players on the scene. There are tens of forces inside and out who have an interest in overthrowing the regime and they will not wait for the left. Every child of the political scene knows that the other forces are neither stupid or any less pragmatic than the confused left. Anyone who does not understand this knows nothing of politics or revolution.

4. In regard to the stake of the left in the overthrow of the regime:

Finally, the question is raised that since the left is not now an alternative and cannot by itself overthrow the regime, and since what will happen is a political revolution where one capitalist regime will replace another, what is the use for the left's participation? Will the left be used by this or that faction of the bourgeoisie? Must the left struggle so that the likes of Bani Sadr come to power?

To answer we must first ask what do we want to do: mourn the fact that the left is not an alternative or change our shortcomings? We have not become an alternative because we have not acted as was expected of us in the political arena. The lack of participation by

the left in the overthrow of this regime will lead the people of Iran to deny even the existence of the left, making it essentially irrelevant. The regime is killing the people and leading the country to destruction. The people and other social alternatives participate in the overthrow of the regime but the left refuses to do so because it cannot gain power. If the left has any respectability it is in their participation in struggle of the people against their enemies and in their struggle for the realization of the demands of working people. If the left does not try where it can, it will be rejected. And a left movement that does not even try is at best pitiful. Yes, it is very possible that the efforts of the left in overthrowing the regime can seemingly help other alternatives. The goal of the communists is to withhold support for these alternatives but the only way to do so now is to expose these alternatives while struggling for the violent overthrow of the Islamic Republic.

More on the Overthrow...

By late September 1981, it was estimated that since June of that year, more than 2000 people had been executed in Iran. The regime pounded away with its campaign of murder, arrests, and intimidation. In one week-end, the 18th - 20th of September, more than 300 people were known to have been executed. Within the opposition, the Mojahedin and others pursued a strategy of armed struggle. The article below from "Rahai", no. 104, continues on the theme of the overthrow of the regime, this time with a specific focus on armed struggle and the left.

In Iran, due to a tradition of armed struggle by the communists and the petty bourgeoisie against the Shah's regime, any discussion of armed struggle still carries with it highly emotional overtones. By now, both the theories that advocated the necessity of armed struggle and the ones that considered the taking up of arms as adventurism should have been evaluated in the light of ten years of experience. Even if this appraisal would not have necessarily prescribed the course of future action, at least it could have offered some guidelines for the future. The sad reality is that no systematic evaluation has been made. Neither the theories of the proponents of armed struggle against the Shah's regime nor those of its opponents were ever evaluated. Consequently, the hotly debated issue of armed struggle was never really settled during the Shah's time or after.

Today, some of our comrades are "theoretical neanderthals." They are still debating the merits of Ahmadzadeh versus Jazani. Their polemics have a nostalgic, dream-like quality. Jazani and Farahani's theories remain their present problematics as though nothing new has happened: nothing's changed, no revolution, no new regime, no social upheaval. On the other hand, opposed to this "old" ahistorical current, some are so obsessed, or better yet, overawed, by the recent political revolution that they are embarrassed to discuss the past at all.

The Fedayee shouldered the main burden of a struggle which became the most popular current in terms of mobilizing communists. Although very different and incompatible theories were offered by communists in support of armed struggle, not a soul in the Fedayee ever noticed any contradictions between these theories nor felt the need to criticize them. At one time, our most difficult task was to show the comrades that Jazani's theory, for example, differed with Ahmadzadeh's, and Ahmadzadeh's with Pouyan's. To do so was then considered blasphemy. The response we repeatedly were given was, "How could you dare say that Ahmadzadeh and Pouyan had differences!"

If all this only related to the past, we could ignore it, but the same superficial, childish confrontations reappeared in another period when armed struggle was rejected. Suddenly, overnight, it became rejected so vehemently that it seemed as if we were dealing with a new totally self-evident phenomenon. Immediately after the revolution, the Fedayee began to disown their past and reject armed struggle. Yet, they did so without any explanation. To this day, none of the Fedayee splinter groups have felt it necessary to explain their views on armed struggle.

Among other left forces, one can name two organizations that have made mentionable efforts to examine the subject, although neither attempt has been perfect or comprehensive. Indeed they could not be for the great wealth of experience was available to the Fedayees and it remains wasted. In any case, one of these organizations was

the Worker's Path which at the start of its career, attempted to criticize and disavow "geurrilla struggle" and, during this attempt, developed a theory so as not to come up empty handed. According to this theory, during the period of repression, armed struggle is permissible, but during the period of suppression (when the regime has become stabilized), it is not. Many realized at that time that this flirting with armed struggle was an empty gesture invented to differentiate the theories of this organization from those of the Tudeh Party and its allies. Repression cannot conceivably be more savage than it is today. The Worker's Path must once again get to work to negate today's necessities springing from yesterday's opportunist theory.

Another organization which expressed views concerning armed struggle was ours. At the same time that we supported the armed struggle of the past, we have criticized some of the misconceptions concerning its relation to other forms of struggle. At that time and later we believed that it was a mistake to expect armed struggle to give consciousness to the masses. The armed struggle could have, and did in fact, mobilize and vitalize the conscious elements of the society. We also argued that when the majority of the population is not conscious and inactive, armed struggle could not be the ultimate axis of all communist actions, but certainly one of the many forms of struggle. (See the pamphlets, "Preparation for the Socialist Revolution," and "The Stage of Preparation for the Revolution,")

Considering the low level of the intellectual development of the communist forces in Iran, it is not surprising that the ones, who, today, are rejecting the armed struggles of the past in the strongest and in some cases the most indecent terms, are the very same people who took exception to our criticism in the past with such effrontery and considered the "sacred geurrilla struggles" to be exempt from any defect or fault.

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In two previous issues of Rahai (100, 101) we set forth views regarding the necessity of the participation of the Left in the overthrow of the Islamic regime. We indicated that if the Left was the only viable alternative fighting against the regime, one could argue that now was not the proper time to attempt to overthrow the regime and that the Left should wait for a more favorable time. But we explained that relying on these "if's" is dealing in fantasies. The Left is not only not the strongest but at this time it is not even a real social alternative. The other social forces who seek a change in today's situation will not and have not waited for the Left to act. At this time, the Mojahedin (apart from any objections we have

expressed with regard to their ideology and politics) have already begun the process of bringing down the regime. The process of civil war has begun. Inaction under the pretext of unpreparedness is not only reproachable, it is contemptible. Non-participation is tantamount to political suicide.

Facets of the Struggle Ahead

Each type of struggle waged by communists should have its own identity. A struggle which does not differ, in content and form, with respect to its program and stated goals from the program and goals of the petty bourgeoisie, is a petty bourgeois struggle, regardless of the claims of its supporters or the alignment of its forces. Being communist is not just in name only. It is an identity and the distinctive features of this identity must be clear in practice.

Every action taken by communists is an action towards mobilization of the working people. Thus each action should justify itself to the working masses, i.e. the masses should know why a specific action is carried out, what goals it is intended to achieve, and, most importantly, in achieving those goals what effects will it have. Actions carried out by communists in recent months, for the most part, have not had these features and consequently have been overshadowed by the actions of the Mojahedin and, in the minds of the people, have been conceived of as part of the actions of the Mojahedin. As yet, no leftist organization or coalition has proposed a program, formulated in detail the methods of struggle, or clarified the relation between the actions taken and any program.

All categories of communist work - propaganda, agitation, and organization - are indispensable and any action which does not encompass all three is doomed to failure. Action taken for the realization of a program, i.e. the method of struggle, is absolutely dependent on the content of that program. As we said earlier, the method of struggle is not specified beforehand but is a function of the program; it is the content of the struggle which determines the method. We must remember that although independent, category, content and method are all inter-related. Questions such as, "Is now the time for propaganda work or armed struggle?" are ridiculous. It is not a question of doing or not doing propaganda work. Of course we must do it! The question is, in what form or forms and through which methods can these tasks be accomplished? Is relying exclusively on peaceful methods (non-armed) sufficient for carrying out these tasks (propaganda, agitation, etc.) or must we also resort to armed methods?

This discussion reminds us of the trite questions raised during the Shah's regime in the opposition's meetings. According to some

arguments, some tendencies were labeled political and others military (i.e. militarist and politician). Content was being opposed to method, instead of classifying different tendencies as political/non-political and pro- or anti-armed struggle. The issue became a banal one of military versus political actions. The main conductor of this nonsensical chorus was of course the Tudeh Party, and the very anti-Tudeh Maoists who borrowed all their concepts from the Tudeh while simultaneously heaping abuse on the Party and reiterating its theoretical jabbering.

In any event, if we agree on the above and if we don't consider the overthrow of the regime as an issue in the distant future but as a process that has already begun, and in which social forces are participating, then the fundamental issue boils down to: what means are available for propaganda and how best can we mobilize the masses? Within this context the role of armed struggle can be appraised. Is there a place for it and if so to what extent? In our opinion, under conditions like those of today, communists must use any means available to overthrow the regime. The utilization of all these tactics not only helps to overthrow the regime but also to raise the "class quality" of the struggles.

From the working class point of view, the recent struggles are weak and immature. The participation of the majority of the workers in the current struggles is not for their own class interests but is due to the crisis atmosphere of the society. This is, not, of course, an absolute; class actions by the workers are also part of the general struggle. But these actions still cannot be viewed as having a distinctly working class identity nor do they correspond to the horrible conditions which the working class has been forced to endure.

The constant emphasis by the communists on the mobilization of the masses as one of the important guarantees for their continued perseverance and for the prevention of rival forces from gaining power at the expense of communists is still necessary today. But it is not enough to meet the needs of the opposition nor to topple the regime. An important segment of the working people have reached the point in their conflict with the regime where they are ready for more radical actions. They can be attracted and mobilized by the more radical actions of communists. Otherwise, they will inevitably turn towards non-communist alternatives. A large section of the dissatisfied masses no longer wants more "exposures". They have suffered the repression first hand and when they see that the fighting has already begun in the streets, they rightly want to participate. The people can now envision the possibility of the regime being overthrown. At the present time, perhaps not everyone is prepared to take part, but the only way communists can persuade them to do so is to show them that we, as communists, also see this possibi-

lity and are taking the appropriate actions. Needless to say, the issue here is not whether the best time has come to start the process of overthrowing the regime; this process has already begun. Rather it is whether the communists, as a social force, can face up to this reality and develop a program to meet the real conditions.

When the war has started everywhere and the regime is fighting tooth and nail to save its disgusting existence, to think that one can bring down the enemy who is armed and on the offensive or put a stop to the killing and massacres or even defend one self by non-violent means is simply utopian. The struggle is under way. We must decide. We must emphasize that the struggle to overthrow the regime is not limited to peaceful activities. Force is a necessary and essential element of the struggle. The non-violent "overthrow" of a government is equivalent to a change in cabinet, not the destruction of the regime. No doubt, one group cannot plan and execute this task alone. It requires the cooperation of all forces after extensive discussion, planning and coordination. Any group attempting to go it alone has resorted to childish behaviour that is again nothing short of delusion. Before everything else, we must get a realistic assessment of our situation.

Does the Iranian communist movement, especially those who believe in the forceful overthrow of the government, have the level of insight and sophistication required at this critical conjuncture?

The Great Deficiency/The Essential Problem

Although we firmly believe in the forceful overthrow of the regime, we are nevertheless aware of one important difficulty in achieving this goal. The essential problem facing Iranian communists is that of uniting the struggles waged by the political organizations with those of the mass movement.

The radical character of recent struggles has not been a natural result of the intensification of democratic and class struggles. In certain periods, the discontent and opposition of the masses comes to a climax and political organizations, as the representatives of different sections of the people, steadily expand their struggle against the regime and eventually there emerges a final armed confrontation. During these periods, the problem of uniting the activities of the political organizations with the mass movement is already resolved. One springs from the other and both are in essence intricately related as one.

The recent struggles in Iran did not occur in this manner. Despite the dissatisfaction of the people and the ever increasing and unprecedented level of poverty and unemployment of a large section of the people, their protests and movements have not reached an intensity or an extent to correspond to these appalling conditions.

More importantly, this struggle has not gained a specific class quality. One cannot claim that the working class movement in Iran is more organized or has a wider base than it did before. This lack of a specific working class orientation forces the mass struggles, form a political stand point, into the category of petty bourgeois struggles and subordinates it to the dominant petty bourgeois atmosphere. On the other hand, the intensification of the contradiction between the strong political forces in society, i.e. the Mojahedin and the Islamic Republic Party (I.R.P.) has not portrayed the intensification of class contradictions. Rather it has indicated political contradictions.

There are times when the contradiction between one class or a section of a class and another class escalates from an economic to a political struggle, intensifying the contradiction in the process. For instance, a section of the petty bourgeoisie under economic pressure fights against the bourgeoisie and, although the nature of this contradiction is not antagonistic, it persists in its economic demands and thereby elevates to a political confrontation. This may even take the form of a violent confrontation. This was the case between the Shah's regime and an important section of the petty bourgeoisie.

But today, the situation is different. The contradiction between the Mojahedin and the I.R.P. is not an indication of a specific class contradiction but rather one confined to political matters. The Mojahedin do not express the demands of one section of the petty bourgeoisie nor do they act as the representative of one section of the masses against another section. The mass bases of the Mojahedin and the regime are more or less the same and both pursue the same class interests. The struggle between the two is essentially superstructural (ideological and political). From the economic point of view, these two forces do not present mutually exclusive alternatives. Both desire some form of state capitalism, regardless of what they call it and how serious or capable they are. The fact still remains that their struggle is superstructural.

The importance of this is that many exploited, impoverished workers and bankrupt merchants do not see the Mujahedin's fights against the regime as their own. For them, this fight is between two alien forces, neither of which is related to their lives. It is true that they are not satisfied with their lives, but there is no reason for them to suppose that their lives would be better under the Bani Sadr's and the Mojahedin. Why should they think otherwise? What radical social alternatives have the Mojahedin offered and what realistic social programs have they proposed so that the masses would be attracted to them? Does the fact that one defends the "True Islam" and the other supports "Scholastic Islam" make a difference to the people? If the Mojahedin think so, they are deluding them-

selves, or underestimating the people. The masses may not have a great deal of class knowledge but they do have class instincts. They know the struggle between these two Islams is not their struggle. They have little knowledge of this or that Islam but they know well their own demands.

In this situation, although the contradiction between the masses and the regime increases day by day, it is not reflected in or expressed by the contradiction between the regime and the Mojahedin. These two struggles proceed on their own. This also applies, to some extent, to the Left's struggle with the regime. In the last three years, the Iranian left has not organized any considerable amount of class struggle, and its political struggle, apart from some jargon and interpretation, on the whole has not been much different from the Mojahedin's. And so, the working people do not see in any concrete manner, the connection between their demands and the Left's claims. The masses may be pleased by the attacks on the regime made by the Left because of their own dissatisfaction but they do not see how it relates to their own daily lives since in fact no direct relation exists.

Seeing the above is the most important problem of the Left. If the Iranian left believes that revolution is the masses' task, and apparently everyone agrees on this point, and if the Left has enough insight to see the absence of any relation between the class and the political struggles, but not everyone does, then the most urgent task facing us is how to link the Left's struggles with the masses dissatisfaction and struggles - how to link together the class and political struggles.

The final struggle has been imposed upon us and the forceful overthrow of the regime is on the agenda, despite the unpreparedness of the Left and the absence of complete objective and subjective revolutionary conditions. The Iranian left must formulate the kind of strategy and tactics that will make its struggles have meaning for the masses and convince them that today's war is not a war between political organizations but a war of class against class. Only then will people become actively involved in this war. Only when people see the war as being related to them will they be prepared to get involved. The Left's task is to transform the fight between the political organizations [those of the opposition and the regime, ed.] to one between different classes. This will not be easy. It will be the most difficult task without which the revolution will never see victory.

From the Present Struggle to the Mass Struggle

The following article is from "Rahai", no. 105, (Oct. 5, 1981). It tries to grapple with the question which by now had come to occupy not only the thoughts of the active opposition but also that of the people at large: why had the Islamic Republic regime still remained in power? To come anywhere near finding an answer, it argues that the opposition must take a long hard look at itself and particularly the Mojahedin-Bani Sadr coalition.

Iranian society is pregnant with a new development. The new but predictable confrontation of the regime with the political organizations foretells of the most important and perhaps determining political struggle in Iran since the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime. The medieval and reactionary regime of the Islamic Republic is trying with all its might to stop its downfall. This "divine" government is utilizing all its earthly possibilities, clerical and non-clerical, national and international - in the midst of its bloody and fierce offensive against progressive and revolutionary forces - in order to prevent its demise. But the daily historic events of the past two and half years has numbered the days of the regime. The sum of political, social and economic conditions indicates that the regime is not headed for an easy road towards its stabilization but rather a deadly one towards its downfall. The executions and violent suppressions do not tell of the power of the regime but are analogous to the useless thrashing of a drowning swimmer.

Despite all this - despite the regime's inability to solve social problems, despite the widespread dissatisfaction and even outright hatred of the people for the regime, despite the presence of armed opposition, the destruction of the most important elements of the regime - the Islamic Republic is still in power, albeit in a state of helplessness and confusion. If we reject any kind of coup d'etat, the only thing that can deal the final blow to this half dead body is the presence and active participation of the workers and other people in the scene of struggle.

The answer to the perplexing puzzle of why the regime has not fallen despite all the prevailing objective conditions is hidden in the absence and inactivity of the people in the battles to overthrow the regime. Why do the masses of people refrain from participating in the struggles against the regime? One of the main reasons is the atmosphere of brutal suppression. The regime executes anyone found in the vicinity of a confrontation, charging them with having taken part in an armed demonstration. There is no inquiry or trial. According to official directives, some are even executed on the spot. In this situation, it is natural for people to try and run away from a scene of conflict. The regime is at a crossroads, both roads leading to death. The suppression and countless executions have not solved any of the regime's problems, nor have they discouraged the militants. Instead they have placed the overthrow of the regime on the agenda as a task for the revolutionary forces. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic knows that any retreat on its part will only hasten its downfall. Both roads lead to a dead end. Nevertheless, the regime thinks that terror and suppression and brutal

murder can delay its fate, and in the meantime a miracle may happen.

The continuation of an atmosphere of terror, fright, and repression (without any promise such as relative prosperity), will not only erode its effectiveness, but will have the exact opposite of its intended effect. Undoubtedly, this atmosphere of terror is one of the most important elements in keeping the masses of people from participating at present moment (and not in the near future) or taking part in face-to-face combat with the regime. But it is a mistake to see this as the only element restraining the masses.

Along with this element of terror, there are many others which lead people, especially workers and working people, to at least hesitate in getting involved. Among these are: the lack of trust towards the political organizations (both democratic and communist); the absence of a link between the organizations and the working people; the methods of the organizations in dealing with one another; the people's discouragement after such a tremendous uprising marked by an epic of heroism and sacrifice and a revolution plundered; a lack of clarity and the ambiguity of the program of the most likely alternative (Mojahedin - Bani Sadr); a lack of trust in promises and the fear of falling out of the skillet into the fire; and, finally, the lack of trust in the working people towards the possibility for basic change in society. The political organizations can effect a change in the nature of the present struggle in the direction of a mass struggle when they are able to do away with the subjective conditions that obstruct the mass struggle.

There is no need to expound further on the element of terror and suppression. People feel its impact in their daily lives. The other elements need elaboration.

Both democratic and communist political organizations have failed to attract the trust of the people in the past three years. Since these organizations did not know (and still do not know) what they want and because they have moved behind the people and social events, it is natural today that people do not find their demands reflected in these organizations and thus do not trust them. The left in Iran before the uprising more or less repeated such slogans as "Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic," "The Silence of Any Moslem is Betrayal of the Koran." During the uprising, the left lost its independence entirely in the minds of the people. Afterwards, despite the existing favorable conditions, it did not show any more capability. The Fedayeen changed their position so many times that they not only confused their own members but the people as well. People's minds were filled with the betrayals of the Tudeh Party and the Majority Faction. The Minority Faction of the Fedayeen which changed its position as many

times as it printed its newspaper, did not differ basically from the Peykar or Rah Kargar Organizations. It did not present a better analysis nor a clearer idea of the future than they did. These confusions and flip-flops were repeated so many times that not only was the trust of working people not mobilized but the supporters of the left themselves were led to eventually distance themselves from the communist movement, a force that could have spoken for their most radical and revolutionary demands.

The Iranian left, despite all the sacrifices and the selfless acts of its members and supporters was not able to find a place among those who bear the heaviest burden of the social revolution - the workers. And once the myths surrounding Khomeini were shattered, it was unable to mobilize its forces. The Iranian left remained in a fuzz.

The people who see the major part of the left as unable to mobilize and organize cannot and should not look with favor upon it and to trust their ever changing and mostly contradictory advice.

Another important part of the opposition (the most important for the time being), the Mojahedin, despite their considerable success in enlarging their organization have not succeeded in: speeding up the slow political death of Khomeini, keeping the masses hopeful about themselves, the struggle, the political organizations, and the prospects of change in the ruling powers. Therefore, they have not been effective in preparing favorable grounds for the active participation of the masses. But even more important, it has become clear today that the Mojahedin have not had any success in gaining the trust of the people or attracting the hundreds of thousands (or even a part of them) they used to to demonstrations. Those hundreds of thousands who came to Mojahedin demonstrations were not all Mojahedin supporters but were anti-regime. They knew that the demonstrations would become violent and they would be attacked by "hezboallahis", yet they still came. But today these same people no longer participate in the struggle. Why?

As we said, undoubtedly the atmosphere of terror and brutal suppression and the executions is an important element but it cannot completely explain the absence of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators from the Mojahedin's marches. If the Mojahedin had any illusions that the masses would support them after the armed actions of the heroic Mojahedin boys and girls following the 30th of Khordad [20th of June], they no longer have such illusions today. Recently Massoud Rajavi announced in one of his Paris interviews, that,

The goal of the present armed struggle of the Mojahedin

is to break the atmosphere of suppression and terror to bring the masses into face-to-face struggle with the regime and to prepare the ground for protests, strikes and popular uprisings.

This goal could have been correct if there was something more important presented to the people other than the "Islamic Republic" of Bani Sadr or the "Democratic Islamic Republic" of Rajavi or the issues raised in the speeches and interviews both have given in Paris. In any case, the ideological differences of the Mojahedin and the communist forces have had important effects on the character and nature of the particular actions waged by the Mojahedin. The Mojahedin have matured and have been besieged by contradictions arising from a religious outlook which does not essentially differ from the ruling culture. This religious background produced the principle elements and phoney slogans for a huge section of the people in their attempts to express their pain and their anti-imperialist and democratic aspirations. It also provided favorable material conditions for the growth of the Mojahedin, who relying on traditional methods completely took whatever advantage they could from the situation. But this very same tradition carried within it the seeds for the masses to grow distant from the Mojahedin. During the two years of "critical support" for the Islamic Republic and in particular "unconditional support" for the "leader of the revolution", the Mojahedin quickly passed by and overlooked major events and developments: the suppression of the Kurdish and Turkoman and Arab peoples, the suppression of democratic and political freedoms, the closing of the progressive newspapers, the attacks on marches and demonstrations organized by progressive forces (other than their own), suppression of women and unemployed, the issue of the issue of the universities, and other crimes committed by the regime and remembered by the people. (This criticism not only applies to the Mojahedin, but in the majority of cases also to the communist organizations.)

Even if the Mojahedin do not explain why in less than three months, "the Messiah", "the leader of the revolution", "the great father", became the "bloody executioner", "blood thirsty", a "dying old man", the "great rat of Qom", one can hardly expect the people not to wonder why. Today the people who were stung once in 57 [1979] have a right to fear the religious cloak, especially since Bani Sadr is speaking again of an "Islamic Republic" and Rajavi of a "Democratic Islamic Republic", which incidentally was first proposed by Bazargan two and a half years ago.

The lack of explanation on the part of the Mojahedin will not work as a tactic to attract the trust of the masses to this organ-

ization as it did for Khomeini. With the recent bitter memory of Neauphle - le - Chateau, people have a right to no longer accept the words of the "leaders" in Paris. In the "Misagh" [Bani Sadr's Promise], the basic needs of the masses have not been addressed. How do we then expect them to take part in the present acute struggle? For what goals should they endanger their lives? Of course it is not unthinkable that in the case of such terror and suppression, and with an alternative expressing their needs still not materializing, the masses would nevertheless prefer a thousand times the Bani Sadr - Mojahedin alternative to this hated regime, and that they would indeed participate in the struggle. Although it is impossible to predict all the dimensions of the future, one thing is certain: the defeat of Khomeini by the present opposition, especially if this defeat occurs in the coming weeks or months, will not bring about any social change other than a bourgeois one. The announced program of the most powerful faction of the opposition - the Mojahedin/Bani Sadr alliance - as specified in the "misagh", as well as the elaboration of this organization of its anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist positions in the many interviews of Rajavi, hold nothing more than semi-bourgeois reforms in the future political and economic system of the country. This is also reflected in the internal and international relations of Bani Sadr which in three years changed him from an unknown immigrant into a president as well as in Rajavi's diplomatic maneuvers in presenting the Mojahedin as a non-threatening organization to opinion in and outside of Iran. The make-up of the forces in the "National Council of Resistance" (the Mojahedin, Bani Sadr, and a few groups and individuals inside and outside the country), the program, and even the form of armed struggle undertaken by the Mojahedin (who form the backbone of the Council), together with the absence of a mass workers movement which could express its own demands or at least affect the demands formulated by the Mojahedin, all attest further to the fact that whatever change will come about will be bourgeois in nature.

Today, aside from the question of whether the Mojahedin-Bani Sadr coalition along with some sections of the army and possibly the Democratic Party [Kurdish] can in fact overthrow the regime, the important question facing the communists in Iran remains as pressing as ever: what is to be done?

The process of the overthrow of the regime has started and the most likely alternative at present is the Mojahedin-Bani Sadr alternative. The form and context of the change in the political system are clear: bourgeois context, violent form. The masses are not taking part in the present struggle for many reasons. The communists with no specific links with the worker's movement and having no hopeful relation with each other are continuing a frag-

mented struggle with the regime. Today we must deal with the specific responsibilities we face, responsibilities whose fulfillment is possible; not those derived from a general formula applicable to all conditions and justified by a handful of irrelevant quotes. In the previous issues of Rahai, when the political struggle had not reached such an acute level, we spoke of this and presented the thesis that the unity of the left forces was the only way out of the present dead end, not only in connection with the left becoming an alternative in the future but also as an important element able to affect the line of the most likely alternative. The communist movement in Iran for many reasons particularly because of its lack of a correct perspective and program for making the communist alternative a social one has trailed behind history. One of the most important questions it faces today is how to develop a correct program suitable to the new conditions and from there adopt the appropriate tactics to change these conditions. To do so, we need to understand the present changes, to identify the particular characteristics of the present social movement and thus, draw a conclusion concerning our responsibilities.

After the expulsion of Bani Sadr, the bloody events of the 30th of Khordad, the intensification of repression and the resistance by the political forces, what goes on in society, both qualitatively and quantitatively, has many important characteristics. The on-going battle in society, rather than an organized mass struggle against the criminal regime, is a battle principally fought out between the regime and the political organizations. Some of these organizations like the Mojahedin and the Democratic Party and the Koumeleh do have a relatively wide mass base. The reactionaries on the other hand have the support of the most backward masses. Today, we do not face the same kind of mass organizations that existed during the uprising: those of today are mass-based but not specifically doctrinal. The opposition movement and different anti-dictatorial expressions of protest also differ today. The absence of a huge mass movement with its own forms and methods of struggle, in spite of the fact that the present economic situation calls for such, is again not only due to the atmosphere of terror and suppression but the logical outcome of developments and events following the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime. A good example of one of these developments is the fact that the political organizations did not place importance on the formation of strong democratic organizations and they frequently carelessly ignored the then existing struggles for political freedoms. . .

The people expect more from political organizations than just their being smarter and more self-sacrificing than ordinary people. They are not looking for a father - son or teacher - student relationship with the political organizations. They expect a kind of one-ness [union] and mutual trust. After the betrayals of the Tudeh Party both before and after the 1953 coup d'etat and after the more recent betrayals of the Fedayeen Majority, today this kind of trust does not exist between any of the political organizations and the people. Yet, even these important elements together with the element of terror still do not completely explain the absence of the mass movement, for the simple reason that in recent history, there are many instances of mass movements existing in the absence of political organizations.

Alongside all these factors, we must consider the element of the people's direct experience. We cannot dismiss the memories of old experiences that have now receded into the subconscious or the recent ones which are very much alive in people's minds. The people are disillusioned and tired, coming out of a great political revolution, they will not easily turn towards another new alternative despite their hatred for the present criminal regime. No matter how strong this hatred is, it alone will not pull people into face-to-face struggle with the Pasdaran [the revolutionary guards], especially since people do not yet know what will be the basic difference of the future society from that of today; whether the change to come will be a political or a social change in relations. To change the Islamic Republic to the Democratic Islamic Republic involves what important change? In other words, unlike the opinion of the Mojahedin who argue that by shattering the atmosphere of terror through armed struggle, a wide mass movement will emerge, we believe that we must consider the total economic, social, political, historical and psychological factors which in interaction have created the special conditions of today.

Bani Sadr's "misagh" and the diluted program of the Mojahedin have extreme shortcomings in terms of creating the subjective conditions necessary for the present movement to become a mass movement. The masses cannot be expected to come to the scene of struggle and become victims of the criminal Pasdaran only for the purpose of bringing about some small superficial changes. Even in order to break the atmosphere of terror with the goal of bringing out the masses, it is necessary to present in addition to arms, a more powerful motivation than that of some superstructural changes and clearer outlook than that evident in the promises of Bani Sadr's "misagh".

One last point. The Mojahedin, regardless of their organizational strength and discipline, their military know-how, the confidence they engender amongst their mass base (frequently exaggerated), and their outstanding and courageous members and supporters, are seriously mistaken in seeing themselves along with Bani Sadr and a few other personalities as sufficient force to overthrow the regime. At best, the only attempt they have made to attract the communist forces who seek to represent the working people has been to demand that they accept Bani Sadr's "misagh". This way of dealing with social realities and the complicated questions of societies like Iran is scandalous and dangerous. The policy of "like it or not", even if it leads to the overthrow of the Khomeini regime, will have terrible consequences. The most recent relevant experience is that of the Khomeini regime. Even if the Mojahedin in all good intention claim that they are not headed in the same direction, we are certain that they are. This is after all the logical conclusion of the "policy" of accept whatever I say and join me. The engineers of the "Democratic Islamic Society", knowingly or unknowingly have started out with a faulty foundation.

Mojahedin Myths and People's Inertia

By late October, when this article was written, the O.C.U. was still seeking the dynamics of why the regime had not fallen. Focusing on the fact that the masses of people had not been mobilized nor drawn into direct struggle with the regime, it presents what was to be one of the first specific evaluations of the Mojahedin's strategy and tactics, particularly those pursued since June. However difficult it may be, it argues, the first step toward stopping the massacres and overthrowing the regime is "to see the weaknesses and mistakes". This article comes from "Rahai", no. 107, (Oct. 20, 1981).

The active opposition as well as those simply dissatisfied with the regime and even those who do not have a clear political position at all, have all been shocked by what has happened in the past couple of months and baffled as to why these events have occurred at this time. What were the reasons for the actions taken by the regime and for that matter those taken by the opposition? Why did events unfold as they did and most important, what can be expected for the future?

Amongst all these questions, the easiest to answer is the reasons behind the regime's actions. The medieval regime in Iran cannot tolerate any opposition and trusts only a small circle. This is the basis for the thinking of the regime's elements. Of course, when they were not established as well, in the beginning, they had to tolerate more. From Khomeini's speeches in Paris to the formation of the "revolutionary council", Bazargan's cabinet, and the election of Bani Sadr; from the "first" revolution to the "second" and the "third"; the method of the regime has been the same. At the beginning, anyone who could be tolerated was allowed to participate, but with every passing day and month a group was expelled from this wide spectrum. Even those who sold themselves and felt that they were among the main individuals were given the axe by and by. The main players and in particular, Khomeini, true to his lethal perception of the "permanent revolution", readily discarded those forces who had served their purpose and had become a nuisance, the more confident they became. Forces such as those of Shariatmadari, the National Front, Sanjabi, Forouhar's party, Sami's party and that of Bazargan's were all expelled after they had given all they had to give to the service of the regime.

The expulsion of a useless opportunist, a man without an organization who had been "given" eleven votes in service to the regime's strategy was but a necessary and logical continuation of the regime's policy. (The poor man actually thought that it was he who was so popular.) A regime that could not tolerate someone like Bazargan - a mature and skilled broker - certainly would not embrace his pretentious student for long. After a while, Bani Sadr understood this and tried to take advantage of those people who had turned to him because of their dissatisfaction with the regime and the lack of other alternatives. For Bani Sadr, the backbone of these forces was to be found in Mojahedin, the largest Islamic opposition organization. They found each other quickly. In the next three months it became clear that Bani Sadr had to go. His becoming more "radical" and "democratic" was like a person who is condemned to death suddenly finding capital punishment "truly" inhumane.

It was thus that an opportunist like Bani Sadr - a man who had boasted of the victories of the regime from Kurdistan to the universities - also had to become victim to Khomeini's "permanent revolution." Today, we find him, like his friend Ghotbzadeh, weeping for freedom. Bani Sadr was destined to go and he went. The regime's "permanent revolution," however, will not stop with him.

So far we answered the easy question - why did the regime do what it did. The more important one is to understand what the coalition [of Bani Sadr and the Mojahedin] has accomplished in its battle with the regime. The coalition thought that an offensive like that of the 30th of Khordad [June 20th] could force the regime into retreat. But it was clear that an offensive without proper back-up support would be equal to a defeat. Anyone could see that. Yet, in this all of the opposition was mistaken with the main responsibility lying on the shoulders of the largest part of the opposition, namely, the Mojahedin.

During the heat of in-fighting between the different factions of the regime, a great number of dissatisfied people were allying themselves with Bani Sadr - not in order to express their support for Bani Sadr's faction - but in order to express their opposition to the regime through the only permissible channel available. With every anti-popular action on the part of the regime and as chaos increased, the numbers in what was considered an "exclusively Bani Sadr camp," also rose. He and the Mojahedin, in the months of Ordibehesht and Khordad [May and June] led the people to believe that victory was around the corner. When the Mojahedin emerged as the organizer of the opposition, a large part of the dissatisfied pinned their hopes on them. At this point, the internal fighting among the regime and its attacks on the people both intensified creating the hope that an active mass opposition was forming. Indeed, we witnessed a period of widespread struggle throughout society.

But what happened? The de facto leader of the opposition, the Mojahedin, which had in the past acted as if it had made all the necessary preparations and formulated the needed plans and programs, showed clearly that it was in fact thoroughly unprepared. In the days following the attacks, the arrests, the escapes and the executions, many of the previous calculation proved to be incorrect. This criticism, however, applies not just to the Mojahedin, but to everyone - especially the other opposition organizations including our own who did not expect that the Mojahedin could be so completely unprepared. After all, the Mojahedin had never discussed their plan for action with other forces or even with their own followers. (And later it became clear that there in fact had never been any plan.) Certainly, the Mojahedin's exaggerated claims and myth-makings spread via the radio and their sympathizers helped to further promote these harmful delusions. Few could believe that despite

the claims made by the Mojahedin, they in fact had no realistic and well calculated program. When we wrote in Rahai that the Mojahedin had acted prematurely many of our readers, including our sympathizers were surprised and confronted us with their disbelief.

The reality of the situation was that the great mass of people, stunned and anxious, on the one hand knew nothing about the program of the largest organization in the opposition (and the one which had started the offensive) and on the other hand knew that by themselves they could not resist. Suddenly the masses were forgotten and the opposition organizations, as if they had not expected the severity of the situation that emerged, were hurriedly occupying themselves with their own affairs. In the days that followed, full of anxiety and agitation, confusion and scattered resistance, it became painfully evident how incapable the political opposition was in Iran. Indeed, the hope that the mass struggle would spread despite the enormous mistakes that the political organizations had made from the revolution on and their lack of participation in the mass struggle that did exist proved to be utterly useless.

The masses looked to the political organizations and the political organizations looked to the Mojahedin. The Mojahedin who were obviously unprepared for what came to pass, not only did not confess to their own deficiencies but foolishly persisted in reproducing their myths. Not only did they not tell the masses the truth of the matter, but they gave incorrect information to the political organizations. It is really difficult to understand this but the Mojahedin cannot escape from bearing the responsibility for this non-revolutionary method of behaviour.

What then came to pass was the paralyzation of the masses and the isolation of the political organizations. The Bani Sadr - Rajavi trip to Europe - without an acceptable explanation offered to the people at large and to the opposition - and the unrealistic expectations that many had of the trip, all the promises and invitations, the total irresponsibility of the Mojahedin towards other progressive organizations, the foreseeable offensive of the regime, the intensification of the atmosphere of terror and repression, the increased passivity of the masses; all formed the links of a chain of hopelessness. To recognize the beginning and the end of the chain became if not impossible then simply unimportant. The conditions that were imposed upon society were not desirable but nevertheless they had to be dealt with. The regime's violence had reached such a stage that in our opinion the question was not whether this confrontation had occurred under the best objective and subjective conditions. Without doubt the preparation was not very good. The confrontation was nevertheless imposed on the op-

position and it was imperative to try to deal a blow to the regime if possible. Different events had made this confrontation a certainty and we had to move according to what took place and not what "should" have or not have taken place. That is why we announced that faced with a forced confrontation, the left must be united. The warning that we and others gave that the revolution will not succeed without the participation of the masses was overshadowed by the hopes created by the Mojahedin. Some simply thought that certainly the Mojahedin were aware of this also. In any case, two dangerous mistakes paralleled each other.

The first mistake was that the Mojahedin's tactic of armed demonstrations by a few turned out to actually impede the participation of the people in that it made them into mere spectators in the streets. The second big mistake was again that the Mojahedin never felt responsible to explain their strategy either to the people or to other organizations. It was as though others were responsible to completely trust the intelligence of the leaders of the Mojahedin and to follow them. This kind of relationship exists within their organization and they used the same method with the people at large and other organizations. This includes absolute trust in the leadership, complete power for the leadership. It is unbelievable but true that no progressive organization actually knows what the goals and possibilities of the Mojahedin are. Anyone who denies this is simply lying.

When the heroic and brave armed struggle of the Mojahedin had become a daily event in the streets of Tehran, everyone can remember the ambiguity they felt when they saw how people would either watch or react sympathetically but yet passively. On the one hand there was admiration for the courage and sacrifice and on the other hand sadness that despite the Mojahedin's expectations, these actions frightened and inactivated people instead of attracting them to the arena of struggle. When the armed Mojahed and Pasdar are firing at one another what other reaction could the unarmed and unprepared yet dissatisfied people have except to run for the corner? And everyone still remembers that in answer to these questions, the Mojahedin and their supporters unofficially responded that they are to keep the regime occupied until the next large action. But what action? In the face of the Mojahedin's lack of responsibility and silence, rumors spread and until today the shattered hopes are new bases for new myths.

There was a time when Rajavi and Bani Sadr spoke of the overthrow of the regime within days. This pleased the dissatisfied masses at the same time as it inactivated them. People thought that the organizations have arranged everything and thus, they saw no need to get directly involved in the struggle. This does not give the masses "hope" but rather inactivates them. It leads

to delusions and these delusions continued so long that even a month after the regime was to have been overthrown, Bani Sadr announced that the regime would actually be overthrown by economic problems! What an insult to the intelligence of the people.

Worst of all are the "left" followers of the Mojahedin, who in defense of these actions, pretend to be in the know and tell those who are wondering about the strategy of the Mojahedin, "How do you expect this organization (the Mojahedin) to discuss every method and decision with those organizations which have no common consensus or struggle with them?" In other words, they have told us but not you what is going on, and then they continue, "It is evident that in areas of tactics, common people and rural and urban families cannot participate in particular armed actions. But solidarity in the clashes and the giving of assistance to the columns of fighters is the first step in participating in this acute struggle and it must (!!) be so. In fact the recent wave of street demonstrations began with this goal in mind"(what goals?). (Quotes are from Payam Azadi, no. 2.)

In other words, an organization knowingly or unknowingly undertakes a certain course of action and others, acting as its handmaidens, retort to those who say that they don't know what is going on, "We do." And then when the union falls apart, it turns out they really didn't know after all. Unfortunately, this is the reality of the situation of the "opposition" in Iran. Is it still a mystery why despite the deep dissatisfaction of the majority of the people, it seems that a group of reactionary fascists are able to solidify their position more and more each day?

* * * * *

Today four months have passed since the last vicious attack by the regime. The opposition has not grown stronger, the people have not strengthened their link with the opposition and the regime is taking advantage of all this. Every day, the brave youth of our people are gunned down and thousands of martyrs and prisoners attest to the regime's beastliness. Vacillating elements, true to their nature, support those in power and a large portion of the dissatisfied are inactive. Love for the people, honesty with the people, revolutionary integrity - all these - demand that we see reality for what it is. We must not delude ourselves or try to cover up. The first step is to see the weaknesses and the mistakes. The people are so fed up that if mistakes are remedied, they will certainly turn to the political organizations. Today, false hopes are spreading amongst the people for a coup d'etat. This leads to nothing but passivity. Comrades, friends, revolution is the responsibility of the masses not of the political organizations and coalitions! These are not the tools; the

agents of the revolution are the people. The all encompassing crises of the regime and its impotence will undoubtedly intensify the people's dissatisfactions. Despite their mistakes, the progressive organizations through struggle and sacrifice can attract the trust of the people if they correct their program and base it on a realistic evaluation of their possibilities and those of the enemy. People do not want a Don Quixote; nor a coup d'etat; they do not believe in magic. They want to participate in struggle according to their ability which may at first be limited but in the end is endless.

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well as with its own membership in Iran.

When the ties with Iran were reestablished, the CUG began a new stage in its struggle, this time as the Organization of Communist Unity (OCU) and independent of the OIPFG.

During the 1978-79 revolution, the OCU members in the Middle Eastern countries returned to Iran and joined their comrades in the struggle for the overthrow of the Shah's regime. The OCU views the fall of the monarchy as a political revolution and considers the present Iranian regime as a counterrevolutionary coalition of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois forces which stand in the way of the social revolution in Iran.

The following points are a summary of the OCU's ideological and political positions:

1. The world view of the OCU is that of scientific communism.
2. There can be no real freedom in class societies. Only in classless society can real human freedom and creativity be achieved.
3. Capitalism is an international system. Monopoly capitalism wages its economic, political, and social oppression upon the masses of the people and workers of the entire world. The international socialist revolution is the only means for destruction of capitalist oppression and exploitation. Since the proletariat is the historically progressive class in capitalist society, only its direct rule can lead to the ultimate freedom of human society.
4. The common interests of the world proletariat stem from the fact that the workers of the world are under the exploitative rule of international capitalism with no exception and regardless of their race, nationality, culture, religion, and language. Proletarian internationalism is among the principle theoretical positions of our--and every other--communist organization.
5. Iran is a capitalist country. The basic contradiction in our society is that between labor and capital; and the basic class war is that between the working class and other toilers against the bourgeois class and world imperialism. Therefore the only social revolution that can end exploitation and change class relations in a fundamental way in favor of the working class and popular masses is a socialist revolution.
6. History of the world, since the dissolution of primitive communal societies, has proven that no ruling class would ever peacefully surrender its position and interests to other classes. Thus

the use of class violence is the only means for the toiling masses, in Iran as well as internationally, to liberate themselves from exploitation and oppression.

7. While imperialism and the ruling class maintain their domination through the use of military power, revolutionary struggle in the preparatory stage, as well as in the actual carrying out, of the socialist revolution can only take the form of politico-military struggle.

8. Revisionism in its various manifestations, such as reformism, parliamentarism, etc., has led to deviations and defeats of the international working class movement. Communists must struggle against those groups, parties, and states that advocate revisionist ideas of class collaboration.

Among other deviations in the communist movement are Maoism, Trotskyism, and Stalinism. The Communist Unity Organization wages a specific and all sided struggle against these deviations.

9. In our view, proletarian internationalism means solidarity with the workers of all countries and complete independence from all powers, including the states, which proclaim themselves to be the representatives of the workers. This means independence from all governments, a critical approach towards the policies of all governments, and condemnation of the nature and policies of the so-called 'socialist states' that take positions contrary to the interests of the peoples of the world and make deals with imperialism and its puppet regimes.

We do not recognize any world center or 'home land' for socialism and fight the hegemonism and national chauvinism that attempts to present itself as socialism.

Objectives of the Communist Unity Organization:

1. Ultimate objective: to take part in the building of the communist party in order to achieve the socialist revolution and to struggle for the maintenance of a society free from class oppression.
2. Interim objective: participation in the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, advancement of the theoretical level of the movement, and struggle for building in Iran of the politico-military revolutionary organization that can serve the communist world view.