

# **THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT (THESES)**

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## **Foreword**

The theses presented in this pamphlet, which were also published in a limited edition by the "Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation" in Nov./Dec. 1978, review, on the basis of the economic analysis of the nature of the dependence of dominated countries to imperialism, the main lines of the nature and content of the democratic revolution of Iran and the role of the proletariat in this revolution. In our view, the expansion and presentation of these theoretical lines among Marxist forces active in the Iranian revolution, can answer many of the theoretical deviations of the left organisations and groups in relation to the question of "dependence" and the political consequences emanating from it. As the first step in this way, "Sahand" has resorted to the wide publication of this pamphlet in order that it may also be available to other groups and organisations.

At the first opportunity, we shall deal with the expansion of these positions - which have been written in a very constricted form in relation to the problems and events of the revolutionary movement of Iran, and shall try in particular to give adequate response to the theoretical problems on the so-called "national" bourgeoisie and the so-called "bourgeois-democratic" character of the present revolution in Iran, which exist in the communist movement of our country, forcing many of the left groups and organisations into confusion and deviations.

Our attempts will also be towards the clarification of our stand particularly on the role of the liberal bourgeoisie (the so-called "national" bourgeoisie), the prevailing deviationary "populist" views in our communist movement, the connection between dictatorship and imperialism, the necessary conditions for the victory of the democratic revolution in Iran, the required theoretical and practical basis for the unification of the revolutionary forces of the country, and so on.

We hope that other organisations and groups too, by analysing and criticizing these theses, would declare and publish their stand on these viewpoints, so that by escalating a constructive theoretical debate around the principal and urgent problems of the left movement in Iran, the theoretical grounds of the unity and organisation of Marxist groups and organisations will be provided in an ever more principled and consolidated manner.

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## **THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT (THESES)**

1. *The complete negation of the ruling dictatorship in Iran and the establishment of democratic rights in society is the vital necessity for the mobilization of the working class of Iran for the socialist revolution.* From the point of view of the immediate and future interests of the working class, the depth, scope and the practical content of democracy must be such, as to make the independent and extensive mobilization of the working class for socialism, practically possible.

2. *The complete negation of dictatorship and the establishment of the democracy required by the working class necessitates the complete destruction of the domination of imperialism in Iran.*

a. *In the general sense, the predominant mode of production in Iran is capitalism and in the more specific sense, dependent capitalism or in other words the capitalism of the epoch of imperialism in the dominated country.*

a.1 In general terms: the social production is mainly accomplished within the framework of the growth and expansion of capital. Generalized commodity production predominates in the country, labour-power has become a commodity, wage-labour constitutes the main form of employment; surplus-product, in the form of surplus-value, is appropriated by the owners of the means of production, i.e. the capitalists, mainly through the production of commodities.

a.2 In specific terms: the profit-making by capital (production of value and surplus-value) in Iran, depends upon, and is in accordance with the operation and requirements of foreign monopoly capital.

a.3 *All the strata of capital* in the country make profit within the above framework (i.e. in relation to the requirements and conditions created by monopoly capital).

a.4 In view of the intense conditions of imperialistic exploitation of the working class, the average rate of profit of capital in the country is very high and the different strata of capital in Iran have become dependent on the imperialist system, precisely due to the high profitability resulting from the operation of the imperialist system in Iran. The existing competition among the different capitals (the intrinsic phenomenon of any form of capitalism) by no means negates the common interest of all the strata of capital in preserving the existing system.

a.5 In this way, *the dependence of the profit making by capital* in Iran to the operation of imperialism, forms the basis of the dependence of Iranian capitalism to imperialism. The *concrete appearance* of this dependence on the productive level is in the form of the specific position which the Iranian economy has assumed in the international division of labour by monopoly capital. The development of the productive forces of society takes shape within the framework of the role of the Iranian economy in this international division of labour and its movements take place in relation to the specific requirements of imperialist capitalism at any specific juncture.

b. The ruling dictatorship in Iran is the necessary political superstructure of capitalism [in the epoch of] imperialism in our country.

b.1 Dictatorship is the necessary political superstructure of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. (Lenin)

This necessity arises from the inner operation) of monopoly capitalism and is directly aimed at the working class. The practical operation of the above law (i.e. the necessary relation between imperialism and dictatorship) in the concrete conditions of the imperialist division of the countries of the world into metropol and dominated countries, is such that on the one hand, in the dominated country, violent and naked dictatorship, suppression and denial of all democratic rights becomes the necessary and unavoidable condition of the exploitation of labour, and on the other, in the metropol country, "bourgeois democracy", because of the creation of specific objective conditions by imperialism (the growth of a labour aristocracy benefiting from imperialistic super profits) and the resulting subjective conditions (deep penetration of bourgeois ideology into the working class and its political organisations) continues to exist. The appearance of both of these phenomena (naked dictatorship and bourgeois "democracy") is the dialectical proof of this Leninist conception that dictatorship is the necessary political superstructure of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. The bourgeois democracy of the metropol country rests entirely on the basis of the preservation of an ever more violent and blood-thirsty dictatorship in the dominated countries.

b.2 The class content of the ruling dictatorship in Iran (as a dominated capitalist country) is completely bourgeois and its main aim is the ever more determined political suppression of the growing working class of Iran and the preservation and intensification of the exploitation of this class through political and economic programmes within the framework of the dependent capitalist system. In this way this dictatorship provides the general conditions for the intensification of exploitation for *all the strata of capital*. *All the strata of capital* have interests in this dictatorship and the rule of capital in Iran cannot be but an all-sided and naked dictatorship. In one word, the existing dictatorship in Iran serves all the strata of capital as a necessary instrument of suppression in the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

b.3 The ruling imperialist system in Iran intensifies the exploitation of peasants in various ways. Disregarding the growth of the land proletariat (the rate of this growth is not the subject of our discussion here) which with the expansion of wage-labour and capital in the countryside is directly exploited by capital, the bulk of the surplus-product of the "independent" peasants too (who farm with their own or their families' labour-power) is appropriated by various means (through the operation of state and private interest-bearing capital, commercial capital, import policy and price control on agricultural products, direct taxes and tolls etc.) by the dependent bourgeoisie of Iran. This exploitation intensifies with the growth of the dependent capitalist system. The necessary condition for the preservation of this system too, is the ever more violent suppression of the struggles and protests of the peasants by the state of imperialist capital in Iran.

b.4 Without doubt this suppression cannot be effective without the *denial of all democratic rights and the negation of all dimensions of bourgeois democracy*. This necessity arises from the nature of monopoly capital and appears openly in the dominated country. Thus while the workers and toilers of society are the main target of this suppression, the rule of the bourgeoisie in Iran, acting on the basis of the requirements of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism, is not able to recognise even those rights which have traditionally been regarded as "bourgeois-democratic". On the one hand an all-round dictatorship is a necessity for the preservation of the rule of capital over labour, and in the final analysis is the only possible form of government of the bourgeoisie in Iran; and on the other, the negation of all dimensions of bourgeois democracy, limits the field of

political activity, in practice, even for the discontented strata of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie.

c. The rule of the bourgeoisie in Iran *cannot* be democratic.

The rule of the bourgeoisie (i.e. the rule of the capitalists) in Iran must necessarily comply with the requirements of the growth of capitalism (production and reproduction of capital) in Iran. In the dependent capitalist system of Iran, the production of value and surplus-value, the rate of exploitation of labour and the rate of profit are determined in accordance with the operation of monopoly capital (at economic and political levels) and the productive forces of the country have developed in accordance with the world requirements of monopoly capital. "Preservation of capital and independence from imperialism (this most utopian of all ideals in the epoch of imperialism) necessarily has the effect of a drop in the rate of profit of capital in Iran, and the lying idle of the greater part of the productive forces which now constitute the physical basis of the operation of capital. Independence from imperialism is contrary to the logic of profit-making by capital in Iran. And even if such a situation could be conceived of (i.e. the "independent" capitalist system of Iran!) the maintenance of the rate of profit at its present high level (imperialist conditions) would necessitate a fierce attack by the "then independent" bourgeoisie of Iran against the working class and toilers, the return of the backward forms of labour and the production of absolute surplus-value which itself would once again reveal the necessity of a naked and violent dictatorship by the bourgeoisie. It should be noted that a "national and independent bourgeoisie" can only be the class reflection of the existence of "national and independent capital" and the assumption of the existence of the latter in Iran is baseless and without meaning and only indicates the absence of a correct understanding of capital as a social relation. We must note that in the present situation of the Iranian revolution, the bourgeoisie itself, even its most liberal section (through its ideologues and political leaders) does not in the least demand independence from imperialism. Therefore at the practical level the above problem can be formulated such: the bourgeoisie of Iran *neither demands, nor is capable*, of independence from imperialism and at any rate requires the preservation of naked dictatorship.

3. *The present revolution in Iran, despite the domination of capital, is a democratic revolution precisely because of its anti-imperialist character.*

We said that capitalism is the ruling system in Iran. But this is not the capitalism of the 19th Century; it is the capitalism of the epoch of imperialism, to whose general laws at the economic and political levels and the operation of these laws in the dominated society of Iran, we have referred at sufficient length. Naked, despotism and intense exploitation of the toilers of Iran, particularly the working class, is the intrinsic feature of this system of imperialist capitalism. For this reason, although the main struggle is between the working class and the bourgeoisie of Iran, the revolution in Iran is not immediately a socialist, but a democratic revolution. Because:

a: We said that the solution to the question of democracy is itself the pre-condition for the independent and extensive mobilization of the working class for socialism. Communists cannot, without breaking up the ruling imperialist dictatorship, provide the working class, even given the [present] quantitative growth of the working class, with the necessary subjective conditions (ideological, political and organisational) for the move towards socialism.

b: On the other hand, the same ruling imperialist relation has provided the objective conditions for the existence of other revolutionary classes (peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie under disintegration,...) who have interests in the overthrow of imperialism and the elimination of its

intense exploitation and fierce dictatorship, and who resort to revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system. Hence the working class is not the only class demanding revolutionary changes in the present revolution of Iran.

Therefore the revolution in Iran is democratic since the ruling imperialist system in the dominated Iran, has given a democratic content to the Iranian revolution, from the point of view of the objective conditions (intense economic exploitation and violent political repression of the working class and other toiling classes: peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie...) and also from the point of view of the subjective conditions (the presence of classes alongside the working class - mainly the peasants - prepared, as a result of the objective conditions of their social existence, to accept revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system). It must be stressed that in Iran, because of the domination of the system of imperialist capitalism, the working class of Iran constitutes, more than in any previous democratic revolution in the world, the main force of this revolution.

*4. The revolution in Iran, while not directly and immediately a socialist revolution, is directly and immediately an inseparable part of the world socialist revolution.*

a: The solution to the question of democracy in society, in a revolutionary manner, itself forms the necessary practical content of the move towards socialism in Iran (a capitalist country under the domination of imperialism}. In spite of the fact that the present revolutionary struggles are against monopoly capital (imperialist) and in the final analysis are in essence against the capitalist system; in spite of the fact that the working class constitutes the main force of the struggle against bourgeois reaction, the revolution in Iran cannot be, in its practical content, "directly" and immediately, a socialist revolution. The distinguishing character of the Iranian revolution is that the subjective forces of the socialist revolution lag behind the objective conditions for the development of capitalism and the quantitative growth of the working class. This backwardness is not at all accidental and arises precisely out of the economic and political operation of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. Imperialism is nothing but capitalism at the highest specific stage of the domination of monopoly capital. As it was explained earlier, the world movement of monopoly capital manifests its general laws in the expansion of different specific conditions in different countries. The inevitable division of the world into dominated and metropol countries, is the most important and the most determining concrete result of the operation of imperialism. The growth of capitalism in the dominated and metropol countries creates different objective and subjective conditions. Conditions which necessarily set different and concrete practical tasks on the immediate agenda of the communists for the achievement of socialism.

b: At the economic level, in the dominated country, imperialism imposes upon the working class and other toiling classes the most intense conditions of exploitation, and creates, in the metropol country, precisely on the basis of this process - production of super-profits - the material basis for the creation of a labour aristocracy (a section of the working class which is provided with these super-profits}.

At the political level, in the dominated country, other toiling classes and strata are drawn into revolutionary struggle alongside the working class, and in the metropol country a section of the working class itself - the labour aristocracy - loses its revolutionary character and is transformed into the material basis of the infiltration of bourgeois ideology into the working class and its political organisations.

In the dominated country, imperialism establishes the rule of the bourgeoisie, by relying mainly on naked dictatorship, and in the metropol country does so by relying mainly on compromising reformists, revisionists and opportunists of the working class movement.

c: Therefore, while the *practical content* of the struggles of the communists in the dominated and metropol countries is necessarily *different*, this difference is nothing but the different manifestation of the monistic struggle of the world working class against capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. By this definition the democratic revolution of Iran is directly and immediately an inseparable part of the world socialist revolution:

c.1- Defeat of imperialism in Iran will create the necessary conditions for the final movement of the working class of Iran towards socialism.

c.2 - Defeat of imperialism in Iran will deal a heavy blow on the rule of imperialism over other peoples of the world and the revolutionary workers of the metropol countries.

c.3 - Elimination of Iran from the world chain of exploitation of monopoly capitalism will weaken the basis of profitability of the world imperialist system and by escalating the world crisis of capitalism, will help the destabilization of the material basis of the politico-ideological infiltration of the bourgeoisie of the metropol countries into the working class of these countries and in this way will provide the revolutionaries there with the possibility of uprooting reformism, revisionism and opportunism which dominates the workers' movement of these countries.

5. *The necessary condition for the victory of the democratic revolution of Iran is the securing of the hegemony (leadership) of the proletariat in this revolution.*

a. From what we have said so far on the mode of production predominating in our country (dependent capitalism) and the anti-imperialist nature of the democratic revolution of Iran, this conclusion can be drawn that among the revolutionary classes and strata of the society the working class is the only indissoluble class, and revolutionary to the end, and the most consistent and uncompromising fighter in this revolution.

b. Precisely because of the socio-economic role, which the predominant mode of production assigns to the working class, this class has the most means in the struggle against imperialism and dependent capitalism, and is the most able class in these struggles.

c. Unless the working class steps into the arena of struggle as an independent class and armed with its own class ideology, the ideological domination of the liberal-bourgeoisie over the revolutionary forces, and even over the working class itself, will be unavoidable. In fact the absence of the hegemony of the working class over other strata and classes [struggling] alongside the working class in the democratic revolution, will lead to the domination of the hegemony of the liberal-bourgeoisie, the "harnessing" of the revolutionary forces and ultimately the defeat of the democratic revolution.

d. Only the political hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution is able to mobilize all the revolutionary classes and strata for the most principled aims, and by presenting the most resolute slogans and the most revolutionary methods, make the achievement of these aims possible and ensure the securing of the gains of the revolution.

6. *What the victory of the democratic revolution of Iran means.*

With regard to what has been said, it is obvious that as long as the political power in Iran remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie (any "section" of it), the domination of imperialism over our country will not be eliminated and hence the democracy required for the mobilization of the working class towards socialism (the only meaning that the victory of the revolution can have for the working class) will not be achieved. On the other hand the concrete form of the fighting-political organs securing this democracy (revolutionary provisional government, people's democratic republic, liberation army, armed workers'-peasants' soviets, and...) itself depends entirely on the proportion of the forces of the revolutionary strata and classes in these struggles, the revolutionary tactics and methods which the growth of the struggles will place before the revolutionaries (uprising, mass struggle against invading forces, and...), the degree and method of intervention of the imperialist powers in the suppression of the Iranian revolution, etc. ; and therefore cannot be precisely predicted at present. What is certain, is that only the independent and self-reliant strength of the armed workers and toilers, with the leadership of the revolutionary communists of Iran, can be the real and objective guarantor of the consolidation and defence of the gains of the democratic revolution, and [only this] can constitute the main source of power of the organs of the revolutionary government - in whatever form - against the imperialist reaction.

We must stress that the slogan of the establishment of the people's democratic republic which includes, in the most resolute and comprehensive form, the conditions necessary for the preservation and defence of the gains of the revolution, is the fighting slogan at the present stage.

### **SOME POINTS ABOUT OUR TASKS**

In the present situation, the formation of independent communist organisation around Leninist principles with the objective of the ever greater mobilization of the working class, and the enrichment of the consciousness of the proletariat in democratic struggles and in this way the ever more growth and advancement of these struggles, is the *most fundamental* task of the communists. The *urgent and immediate* task of all Marxist groups and organisations (with whatever means) is that they devote all their energy and strength to such concrete political activities that are practically towards the realization of this fundamental task.

a. The move towards independent communist organisation and ultimately the formation of the party of the working class, has for years constituted the fundamental problem of the Iranian communists. It is not our intention here to once again prove the necessity of the formation of the communist party of Iran, a principle which in fact requires no proving, and to talk at length about this fundamental task. The principle of securing the hegemony of the working class over other classes and strata [struggling] alongside the working class in the democratic revolution, by itself confirms the ever more ideological, political and organisational independence of the proletariat in this revolution. Our attempts here are directed more at illustrating the general and necessary features of the practical tasks of Marxist groups and organisations, active in the democratic revolution, which must serve the realization of this fundamental aim.

b. If we have accepted that the proletariat needs its own independent organisation; if we have accepted that the securing of the proletarian hegemony in the present movement bears a decisive necessity, the practical move towards the realization of these aims, from this moment on and with whatever means, becomes our urgent task. Communists can and must accomplish their urgent tasks, only on the basis of dealing with the problems of the democratic revolution of Iran from the standpoint of the independent interests of the working class, through propagation, agitation and organisation among the workers around the concrete problems of the struggle which the revolutionary conditions of the society have placed on the path of the vast and mainly spontaneous movement of this class, through propagation and agitation of Marxism-Leninism at society level, through a relentless exposition of the compromising [nature] of the

liberal-bourgeoisie (and through any other concrete action serving the advancement of the workers' movement). This is the *only* real criterion for distinguishing the communists from petty-bourgeois opportunists and compromisers. Acceptance of the slogan of the necessity of the hegemony of the proletariat *in words*, and evasion of the fulfilment of these urgent tasks and of the move towards the realization of the independent communist organisation *in deeds*, is to the effect of selling out the workers' movement and opportunist surrender to eclectic petty-bourgeois ideology and the acceptance of the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie and, in the final analysis, the ending in defeat of the democratic revolution in Iran.

c. Any negligence and disregard of these tasks under the pretext of "preserving people's unity", is in reality nothing but service to the ruling bourgeoisie in Iran. *Only* the move towards the realization of the ideological, political and organisational independence of the proletariat, can in effect make the *principled alliance* of revolutionary classes and strata possible. In fact, the more independent the political organisation of the proletariat in the democratic revolution, and the more the reliance of this class on its own ideology and strength, the more principled will be the basis upon which it unites with other revolutionary classes and strata, and as a result the democratic revolution of Iran will acquire greater advancement and depth. *The objective grounds* for the unity of the various classes and strata - including the working class in the democratic revolution is provided by the material need of these classes for the revolutionary strength of each other. But the *subjective conditions* of unity can only be created by proletarian ideology. It is only the proletarian ideology which, precisely because of the anti-imperialist nature of the democratic revolution of Iran, is able to present such revolutionary slogans, guidance and methods that are acceptable on the part of other revolutionary classes and strata, with their different class demands in the democratic revolution, and hence in effect make the alliance of the people under the banner of the proletariat possible. The principled unity of the proletariat with other revolutionary classes and strata must be founded on this basis. Upon any other basis and under any other cover than the programme of the proletariat, the "people's unity" will be, *in effect* and *ultimately*, at the service of the bourgeoisie.

d. It is for these reasons that *every concrete action* of Marxist groups and organisations, which have placed at the forefront the principle of securing the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution and the principle of moving towards the realization of the workers' independent organisation, must take place from the standpoint of the independent interests of the working class. Without fulfilling this necessity, the ever greater independence of the working class and hence the revolutionary and firm unity of the people will be impossible and the democratic revolution of Iran will not come to a conclusion.

FORWARD TOWARDS UNITY WITH THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT:  
FORWARD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN:  
VICTORY TO THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE OF IRAN:  
FOR A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC!

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