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IRAN-IRAQ WAR IN ITS EIGHTH YEAR

The following article by comrade Iraj Azarin was written in October 1987 analysing the new developments in the Iran-Iraq war. The Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPI, which was held recently, has also passed a resolution regarding the military presence of the U.S.A. in the Gulf. This resolution will be published in the next issue of Bolshevik Message - BM

In the last few months two series of important developments have taken place in connection with the Iran-Iraq war. The first aspect of these developments has been the political-diplomatic measures taken at the international level with the consensus of all the imperialist states. The stated aim of these efforts has been to put an end to the eight-year-old Iran-Iraq war. Among these developments we can mention the issuing of Resolution 598 of the UN Security Council, Pérez de Cuéllar's visit to Iran and Iraq, and the fact that the Islamic Republic this time, in contrast to previous occasions, has not rejected these measures in advance under such labels as "imposed peace", etc. It has even sent the President, Khamenei, to address the UN General Assembly. Another development - of perhaps, greater importance - is the plan which Pérez de Cuéllar seems to have on the basis of proposals by

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and with special mandates from the Security Council. A plan which has been described by the Islamic Republic as more positive than the 598 Resolution and a "negotiable" one.

These, however, constitute only the first aspect of the recent events. The other feature of the developments has been the arrival of the U.S. and a number of other imperialist states' navies in the Gulf, the confrontations between the U.S. and Iranian forces in the Iran-Ajr incident, the U.S. attack on two Iranian oil-military platforms, and, from the Iranian side, the laying of mines in the Gulf waters, the shelling of some Kuwaitee and even Saudi Arabian oil installations, etc.

The above developments raise such questions as whether the imperialist states are now planning to put an end to the Iran-Iraq war. If so, does the arrival of the warships and the instances of military confrontations between the U.S. and Iranian forces indicate that the American state is intending to oust the Islamic Republic regime, as Weinberger said when visiting the Gulf region? Do the Islamic Republic's implicit moves of approval regarding the ending of the war suggest that the Islamic regime wants to accept the proposed plan for the war's termination? Or is it so, that the Americans by applying military pressure on the Islamic Republic want to force it to end the war?

It is necessary for the Iranian workers to get to know these developments and have clear answers to the

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE !

above questions. This is important because the Iranian workers must from the midst of these confusing events - made even more confusing in the propaganda of the reactionary states of the region and in the capitalist press commentaries - find the way of their independent class struggle and carry out their fight all the more unitedly and firmly. For the workers and toilers of Iran, whose lot from this eight-year war has been nothing but massacre, homelessness, poverty, and the intensification of political and social repression, the only real solution to this situation, as we have repeatedly stressed, is putting an immediate end to this reactionary war and stepping up the struggle to overthrow the Islamic Republic regime. For the Iranian workers (and generally for all the workers and toilers of the region) whose only way of liberation is socialism, and whose first duty in this direction is the overthrow of the capitalist reactionary regimes, the understanding of the recent developments means generally getting to know the developments taking place in the camp of their enemies, in the camp of world counter-revolution, the camp of imperialists and the reactionary states of the region.

IMPERIALIST RIVALRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST & THE PLACE OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Middle East is one of the most sensitive focal points of "East"- "West" rivalries. Generally, this is the region of influence of "Western" imperialists, and since the 2nd World War and following the decolonization of the region and the driving out of Britain, has been specifically the sphere of influence of U.S. imperialism. Owing to the proximity of this region to Soviet Union's southern borders, it has had much strategic and military significance from the point of view of the West and the U.S.A. The vast economic interests of the Middle-Eastern countries for western imperialist capitals, the significance of oil, etc, need not be emphasized. In the case of the USSR, although the economic interests are not so outstanding compared with the rival imperialists, nevertheless the objective of widening these interests (mainly in the form of extended trade) has been important. But precisely because of the Soviet Union's neighbourhood with the Middle East region, the latter, has much importance for it strategically and militarily. The Soviet Union has continuously tried to obtain a firmer political foothold in the Middle-East and become established there as an effective force (For example, the Soviet attempts to be recognized as a force which should be counted in the Arab-Israeli disputes). The question of Afghanistan in the last decade has also contributed to the U.S.S.R.'s sensitivity regarding the region. In addition, with the declining of U.S. imperialism's first-degree role in the Western imperialist bloc, the other imperialist states of this bloc, such as France, Britain, Germany and Japan, have each obtained, to

different degrees, new economic (and in some cases, political) positions. This has generally led to the reduction of U.S. imperialism's share of influence in the region, and these states, consequently, have followed political objectives and approaches in the region distinct from those of the U.S.

But that which had made the Middle East region - or at least the Gulf area - the unquestionable region of influence of the U.S.A., received a heavy blow by the Iranian Revolution and the Shah's downfall. Thus, in the last decade, the specificity of the region has been the vacuum of regional hegemony following the Shah's downfall - a vacuum not yet filled. The Shah's regime owed the opportunity to impose its hegemony over the region to the Nixon Doctrine which (especially after the Viet Nam experience), instead of direct politico-military presence of U.S. imperialism, followed the line of giving shape to proxy-states, i.e., states which, enjoying full powers, could themselves secure and safeguard American interests. Shah as the gendarme of the region ably took up this role, allowing the entire bourgeoisie of Iran to enjoy this superior position. (In this period the decadent Iranian Nationalism gained a new lease of life and mobilized behind the Shah.)

Shah's downfall created this vacuum in the political system of imperialism in the region. From the military aspect, the U.S.A. and its imperialist allies, by creating the Rapid Deployment Force (later under the name of Central Command) using bases in Egypt, Sudan and Oman, tried to secure (with success) a minimum of military capability against probable military threats from the Soviet side. But the regional power vacuum remained as before, both politically and, even, militarily.

Looked at from this angle, the Iran-Iraq war may be examined and explained in the context of the existence of such a vacuum in the region following the overthrow of the Shah's regime and the attempts of two states in the region to fill this vacuum and achieve a hegemonic role. From the point of view of the interests of the imperialist political system in the region, the Iran-Iraq war has been an arena providing the possibility for the victorious side to come out of the war as the dominant power in the region. In the first one or two years of the war it seemed that if Iraq could win and thereby contribute to the formation of a substitute regime for the Islamic Republic, it could probably take up such a role (a corollary of this being a leading role in the Arab world). However, it quickly became clear that Iraq, with its limited military capacity - reflecting the potentials of its economy, geography and population-size - could not meet such an expectation. The spring of 1982 and Iraq's retreat from Khorramshahr marked the end of this stage of the war.

Down with the Islamic Republic regime !

Having used the war for a period as a means of suppressing the revolution in Iran, and having overcome the revolutionary crisis and purged itself at the top, the Islamic Republic utilized the war, from 1982 onwards, as a means of proving to the imperialists its capacity for taking up the role of a hegemonic force in the region. In this period of the war the Islamic Republic, by giving form to a distinct pan-Islamic current in the region, tried to introduce a new force in the power equations of the area. Thus, with itself at the head of this pan-Islamic current, and considering the position which would be won by filling the regional power vacuum created after the Shah's downfall, it tried to gain a lasting and stable place for itself in the political system of western imperialism*.

THE WAR IN DEADLOCK &

THE COMMON POINT OF IMPERIALIST INTERESTS

The main feature of the present stage of the Iran-Iraq war is essentially due to the fact that this war, from the military point of view, is at a complete stalemate. The Islamic Republic [IR] which from 1982 onwards had been able to change the tide in the battlefields in its own favour, did not succeed to achieve decisive victories even with the greatest degree of economic and military mobilization. Despite the repeated claims by the military and political heads of the regime concerning the final offensive and imminent victory (or precisely because of the repetition of such claims), it remains an indisputable fact that this war cannot be won in military terms. In the eyes of western imperialists the Iran-Iraq war may have been a tumbling-dice at whose first period, Iraq, and at whose second period, Iran - with its flag of pan-Islamism - had the chance of winning and thereby occupying an important empty space in the imperialist political system, as a dominant regional power. Having fallen into deadlock, however, the war no longer by any means serves such a purpose. Continuing in its present condition, it not only does not have the same function for the imperialists as it had before, but it has even turned into an opposite phenomenon, in the sense that the continuation of such a war has itself become a factor endangering the relative "stability" of the Gulf region and the Middle East as a whole.

The political implication of the military stalemate of the war for the region is that pan-Islamism has not been able to create a dominant regional force and a

different political order in the area. However, the war's continuation and the extra-territorial and pan-Islamic claims of the I.R. regime has given shape to and is promoting a pan-Islamic current in the Arab and "Moslem" countries of the region against their respective states. The existence of the newly-emerged pan-Islamic current in the region, and in most of the Arab countries, gives rise to disunity and splits in their regimes. (For instance the way for the regimes of the region to deal with the pan-Islamic current has been in some cases to add to their own Islamic colourings, and in some others, to increase the emphasis on the separation of Islamic religion from the state and incline towards a more secular regime.)

In short, if pan-Islamism and its standard-bearer in the region - the Islamic Republic - is not strong enough to turn into the dominant regional current, then it must be so restricted as not to be able to undermine the already established currents and regimes which for the present time, in any case, constitute the components of a relative order and "stability" in the region. The continuation of the present halfway situation, i.e., a pan-Islamic current in the region whose role is merely to put pressure on and cause splits in the regimes of the region, is an undesirable situation from the viewpoint of the interests of American and western imperialists. Therefore, from this point of view, the continuation of the war's stalemate counts as a negative factor for the interests of imperialists. Of even greater importance, from the standpoint of all western imperialists, is the fact that the continuation of the war in its present stage has allowed the rival Soviet bloc to increase its influence in the Middle East. In the course of this war Soviet Union has been able to extend its economic relations both with the Arab states of the Gulf and with Iran. Furthermore, politically, it has been able to get close to the governments of the Gulf countries which traditionally count as the "faithful allies" of the U.S.A. The news of Kuwait's and even Saudi Arabia's purchasing of arms from the U.S.S.R. (and Kuwait's request from the Soviets to provide naval protection for its oil-tankers) is greatly worrying for all the western bloc imperialists and in particular the U.S.A. In fact the continuation of the Iran-Iraq war and the pan-Islamic claims of the I.R. regime has become a factor strengthening the Soviets' foothold in the region and sharpening the East-West rivalry there. An essential element in the agreement of all western imperialists regarding the Iran-Iraq war is the necessity of driving back the Soviet Union from the political positions it has gained in the mean time.

On the basis of the above, under the present conditions the common interests of the imperialists is that the existing political system of the region is preserved. The Iran-Iraq war has not been able to, and cannot any longer, meet that long-term need of U.S. imperialism (and generally western imperialism), i.e., having a "proxy" with regional powers. So long as this is not possible, the ideal situation for

* We have previously dealt with this specificity of the Islamic Republic regime in detail. We have tried to show that the I.R. regime seeks to gain the consent of the imperialists and consolidate itself as a capitalist state in Iran (as a country dominated by imperialism) not through proving its ability in organizing the production and starting a new round of capital accumulation, but essentially and primarily through meeting the political need of imperialism in the region.

the imperialists would be that the enslavement of the toilers of the region and holding back the revolution is done by the already existing regimes. Thus any factor which undermines the political situation of the region and the security of the existing regimes, without itself being capable of establishing a more lasting or "stable" repression at a regional level; any factor which by weakening the present regimes creates the possibility for the rival Soviet imperialism to exploit the situation to get close to these regimes, is considered by the imperialists of the western bloc as an element causing "instability" in the area. The "stability" of the region is now the common point of interests of the imperialists (including Soviet Union which we shall consider below).

Under such conditions, the continuation of the existing situation of the Iran/Iraq war, with the military stalemate which we mentioned above, is not in line with the common interests of imperialists. However, not every form of ending of this war is desirable to them. That which can meet the common interest of the imperialists is the ending of the war, while ensuring the survival of the existing states in the region. The imperialist states have repeatedly said that they are "neutral" in relation to the Iran-Iraq war. The actual content of this statement in the present conditions is that they want to preserve the political system of the region and the political regimes of the belligerent sides. Such a situation, of course, even in the imperialists' own vocabulary, cannot be called "peace", for the achievement of "peace" in the region from the viewpoint of imperialists (as was obtained for example, in 1975, following the Algiers' treaty between Iran and Iraq) can only be the result of a long-term balance of forces, which at the same time resolves the basic problems of imperialism in the region. The situation desirable for imperialist interests in ending the current war is more one in which the present political system of the region (including the I.R. regime) is preserved. Although this would not intrinsically resolve the problems which the imperialists have been facing in the last ten years, it is nevertheless better than the continuation of a war which in its present state can only result in the deepening of the crisis of the region's political order.

But how can a situation be created where one can both end the war and, at the same time, not allow either of the belligerents (and any of the Gulf regimes) to come out of the war as a loser and in a shaky state? The haggling over resolutions and plans, repeated diplomatic contacts to win the consensus of all, threats and appeasements, are all signs that apparently no one has yet managed to precisely define such conditions.

So although, at the most basic level, the general and common point of interests of the imperialists,

faced with the stalemate of the war, is in concluding the war, to prevent "instability" in the region, this is itself accompanied by contradictions, and confrontation of opposed interests. We shall refer to these below, but it is first necessary to take a look at the position of the Islamic Republic in the eyes of the imperialists.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC'S POSITION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE IMPERIALISTS

Since the start of the second stage of the Iran-Iraq war in 1982, the Islamic Republic has followed the policy of, through winning the war and making pan-Islamism into the predominant reactionary force in the region, acquiring an established position in relation to the western imperialists and in the regional political system required by them. Although the I.R. regime was not able to achieve this objective, nevertheless the second stage of the war has brought it relative successes which have made the I.R. into the accepted and established government of Iran in the eyes of the western imperialists.

The first item in this positive record of the Islamic Republic for the imperialists is no doubt the suppression of the revolution of Iran's workers and toilers. It was also this role of pan-Islamism and the pan-Islamic currents in the opposition of the regimes of the region which completely reversed the revolutionary waves resulting from the February Revolution in Iran and the Shah's downfall. By activating pan-Islamic reaction within the ranks of the toilers of the region, it also made a mockery of their democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist demands. The I.R.'s pan-Islamism has already played a degenerating role in the struggle of the people of the region and in driving back the rank of the revolution. The record of pan-Islamism in the Lebanon and against the Palestinian question is the best example of this reactionary and counter-revolutionary role of pan-Islamism. Promoting the reactionary opposition in Afghanistan and distorting the resistance and struggle of the Afghan toilers against the regime and the Soviet army, the sabotaging role in the Iraqi regime's opposition, etc, are other examples of the same function. Apart from this feature of pan-Islamism, its "anti-Soviet" capability is also important for the western imperialists. The role of the reactionary Islamic opposition in Afghanistan - supported openly by the western imperialists - as well as Iran's vicinity to the Central Asian and Caucasian republics in the U.S.S.R. - add to pan-Islamism's attractions for the west in imperialist rivalries. The efforts by the U.S.A. in this regard (such as McFarlane's negotiations in Tehran over common interests regarding Afghanistan and S.U.) testify to this effect.

Another factor which has helped the acceptability of the I.R. and its approval as the government of Iran by the western imperialists, is the fact that out of

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the bourgeois alternatives which have traditionally been supported by the imperialists, none has shown the capability and requirements for replacing the Islamic Republic. The regime's pan-Islamic war was even able, to a large degree, to mobilize Iranian Nationalism behind itself or at least deprive the liberal and monarchist opposition, of a nationalist criticism and exposure of the Islamic Republic. (Neither of the standards of liberal nationalism and Great-Iranian nationalism - Mossadegh's and Shah's respectively - enjoyed the favourable position which, in a period when the imperialist political system is falling apart, the Islamic Republic does, from the view point of the imperialist states. Thus, even Mossadegh's record of "negative balance" has faded in the hands of the liberals.)

All these factors have resulted in the fact that the western imperialists have consented to and approved of the Islamic Republic as the established government of Iran - although the Islamic Republic regime and pan-Islamism may not be feasible or desirable as the dominant regional power*.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S.S.R. REGARDING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

As we pointed out, the Middle East as a whole and the Gulf in particular have been the established region of influence of the western imperialist bloc. The Soviet Union follows here more a counter-acting policy, aimed at undermining the position of the rival bloc. The revolution in Iran and the downfall of Shah's regime was naturally to be welcomed by the Soviet Union since a prime ally and the regional gendarme of the U.S. had been toppled. Soviet Union's support for the Islamic Republic has, above all, followed the aim of preventing the restoration of the previous situation, i.e., the arising of a powerful state allied with the U.S. Generally speaking, any chaos and disturbance in the position of the rival imperialists would in itself be advantageous to the Soviet Union. What's more, Soviet imperialism was hoping that a pan-Islamism of the Islamic Republic kind would be able to instigate movements and currents against American and western interests in the whole of the region*. On the whole, the Iran-Iraq war, right from the very start, created

new problems for Soviet Union. Although the war offered a chance to Soviet imperialism to pursue the policy of getting closer to the Arab states traditionally allied with the U.S.A. and to try to widen its limited economic interests in its relations with Iran and/or Iraq, nevertheless, in so far as the war was capable of shaping (for the western imperialists) a regional force of the same type as the Shah's regime and a substitute to it, it did not correspond to the Soviet imperialism's interests.

U.S.S.R.'s involvement in Afghanistan and the role of the reactionary Islamic opposition there, gradually made the Soviet imperialism apprehensive of the consequences which pan-Islamism's growth would face it with. The role of pan-Islamism in the Lebanon and in confrontation with Syrian forces was not in the Soviet interests either. Also, with the revealing of the limited capacity of the pan-Islamic bands and the fact that an anti-American Islamic movement did not take shape, the Soviets increasingly gave up hopes on the advantages that pan-Islamism could bring for their imperialist interests. In the present stage of the war, i.e., with the revealing of its military stalemate and of its destabilizing potentials for the regimes of the region, it is clear for the Soviet imperialism that the weakening of the political system of the region would make U.S. imperialism's political (and even military) intervention very likely. Therefore the interests of the Soviet Union at the present stage of the war lie in the termination of the war, thus pre-empting the possible intervention of the rival imperialists (especially the U.S.), perpetuating the political vacuum in the region, and preserving the smaller share of influence of the U.S.A. compared to the European imperialists.

IMPERIALIST CONTRADICTIONS AND RIVALRIES

The existence of basic common interests among the imperialists is a fact confirmed also by the recent world-wide diplomatic efforts. But the recognition of the existence of such a common denominator in imperialist interests naturally does not mean that the way for the pursuing and realization of the policies governing these common interests is smooth and trouble-free.

* The so-called "Iran-Contra" affair was not an isolated case. Britain, Germany, Japan, etc., had long before followed such a policy in practice and profited from it. One other sign of the Iranian regime having gained legitimacy with the U.S. imperialists was provided by the disclosures about the CIA's funding of the activities of Dr. Amini and General Madani (ex-figures in the Shah's regime and army, now in the broad monarchist opposition of the present regime - BM) and the later cut in this funding. Meanwhile, the paper of Shapour Bakhtiar complained that for ousting the I.R. regime one could no longer lay hopes on getting help from the outside.

* What did not naturally matter at all for the Soviet imperialism in all this was the anti-democratic, anti-working class and counter-revolutionary nature and practice of pan-Islamism and the Islamic Republic regime. The U.S.S.R. tried to use all ideological justifications to present "the essence of Islam" and the Islamic Republic regime as "anti-imperialist" so as to support this newly arrived current in the region. The pro-Soviet parties - in Iran specifically the Tudeh Party and their accomplices, the Fedaiyen Majority - unflinchingly participated in the bloody crimes of the Islamic Republic regime to this end.

The fact is that the world imperialist system is full of rivalries, conflicts, and contradictory policies and interests*.

On the whole, as repeated by the spokesmen of imperialist states themselves, the Iran-Iraq war is among those rare cases where all the imperialist forces, despite their sharp rivalries, can agree over a general policy, namely, the termination of the war, while preserving the position of the regimes of the region. But this commonness of interests, in this rare case too, stops at this general level. As we said before, during the last decade and especially in the course of the Iran-Iraq war the position of each of the imperialist states in the region (the U.S.A., Soviet Union, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, etc.) has undergone certain changes, whether economically or politically. As well, the vacuum of a hegemonic force in the region has allowed for the activation of, and increase in, the manoeuvring capacity of the local states with respect to each other and the imperialist states. All these give rise to the fact that we are witnessing in the Gulf region and against the Iran-Iraq war a series of measures and policies which contradict one another in practice. This is due not only to the rivalries existing within the world imperialist system, but also, to the contradictions between the short-term, and the basic, long-term interests of each of the single states and forces.

For instance, the U.S. policy, while pursuing the fundamental interests of safeguarding the region's "stability", must also restore its lost hegemony over the western allies (France, Britain, etc.) And this gives rise to conflicting reactions and practices on the part of these states. Or in the case of the U.S.S.R., the presence of American warships, although in pursuit of common interests, is a "downright breach" of the original intention, i.e., the resurgence of the U.S.'s indisputable influence in the region.

* It is not possible to have a correct understanding of the significance of the rivalries among the imperialists, the states in the region, and the contradictions existing in their policies without referring to the more fundamental features which the world imperialist system is manifesting at the present period.

The political-economic system established after the Second World War, following the re-division of the world as regions of influence among the imperialist states, has begun to decline during the last two decades. This has been such that today we can speak of a general world crisis, both at the level of the economic system and the political system. The form in which this crisis has emerged (at both an economic and political level) is none other than the aggravation of the internal contradictions of the world imperialist system and the development of these contradictions to

These facts, when combined with the added factor of the local regimes' interests, place further contradictions in the way of securing imperialism's fundamental interests. For example, in the case of the Islamic Republic the ending of the war must be accompanied by a guarantee of its survival; and this is not possible unless the I.R. regime can leave the war still with a challenging posture. However, the presence of U.S. warships, and particularly the military encounters between Iran and the U.S.A., is itself an obstacle to securing a "respectable" position for the Islamic Republic in the event of the war's termination. On the other hand, the U.S.A., for other reasons, has to dispatch its navy in support of Kuwait (and Saudi Arabia) and take on the posture of military confrontation with the Islamic Republic's intimidating operations. For, with the disclosure of the "Iran-Contra" scandal and the U.S.A.'s arms shipments to Iran, the Soviet Union has been able to gain a political advantage with the Arab states to the disadvantage of the U.S.A. Now the Americans must at all cost shift the balance in favour of their own influence among the Arab states. These are only a few instances of the real contradictions in the "Gulf affair".

Thus, whilst there exists a common basic interest among the imperialists, one cannot speak of a joint effort. This is a contradictory course, going through not a straight line but a broken and twisted path. Each force and state is after its own particular interests, and each is really sharing in this "common benefit" only when its other interests are ensured. It is thus that no policy or measure has been able to continue to its logical conclusion. For example, in the U.S. attack on Iran's two oil-military platforms, the crew were warned in advance to evacuate them. After the attack, Reagan said that the U.S. does not wish to have a military confrontation with Iran. Iran's president, Khamenei, cried out that the U.S. action was not in the long-term interests of the U.S.A. in the region! Regarding the same operation,

the point of the break up of the whole system. At the economic level, the rivalry among the imperialists (and not only between the East and West blocs) has greatly sharpened and found specific expressions. The trade crisis between the U.S.A. and Japan (embracing the other countries of the western bloc, too) which the imperialists themselves have openly termed a "trade war", is a recent example of this sharpening of the internal contradictions of imperialism at the economic level. Only a few days ago the financial crisis of the western imperialist system, subjecting the world stock markets to a 'free fall', provided another such example. The inability of the west European states and the U.S.A. and Japan in coming up with a united policy against the crisis of the stock markets clearly shows how the diverging and conflicting interests of each one of them even prevents them from adopting a single solution which in the long run would

Rafsanjani complained that the platforms were located in international waters, where the Japanese tankers pass, and that such an action might threaten the "stability of the region!" This is just an example of the contradictions involved in the policies and actions of imperialists and the local states.

The truth is that the greatest contradiction and the most important log-jam in realizing the desired "stability" of imperialism arises in connection with the Islamic Republic. Ensuring region's "stability" by ending the war means creating conditions under which the Islamic Republic, despite having lost the war as the main arena for giving expression to its pan-Islamic feature, can remain intact as the government of Iran. This requires some changes in the I.R. regime so that it may conform itself to the new conditions. But it is not certain beforehand whether the I.R. would be able to endure such changes without there emerging major splits at the top, and, consequently, a political crisis inside the country.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC'S CONTRADICTIONS AND PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

The fact that the I.R. regime cannot achieve victory in this war is too clear to be unknown to the heads of the regime. Now it is more or less two years since the Islamic Republic has not been able to bring about any serious changes in the war fronts. Since 1986 there has not even been any attempts to launch the "big offensive". Not being able to achieve victory, the collapsing state of the economy (which no doubt inevitably intensifies the general discontent and mass protests), as well as the world-wide diplomatic-political pressures to end the war, have made the leaders of the Islamic Republic understand that it is no longer possible for it to continue with the same policies in the war with Iraq. The response by the heads of the I.R. regime (from Khamenei to Rafsanjani) towards the world diplomatic measures to end the war, as well as the very cautious reaction regarding the possibility of military confrontation with the U.S. forces in the Gulf (both unprecedented acts

benefit the whole imperialist system. (The interesting point is that at this precise moment in China, the economic disorder has drawn the leaders to adopting economic plans based on the model of free-market capitalism, and, specifically, opening a stock exchange!) In the eastern imperialist bloc, Soviet Union is itself grappling with serious economic difficulties which have made it put a radical re-examination of the economic and political policies on the agenda and send Gorbachovism forward. In the other countries of the eastern bloc, economic and political confusion and deadlocks have necessitated fundamental changes in the economic structure. The recent measures by the Vietnamese and Polish states are only the latest examples of this kind.

At the political level, unlike the period just after the 2nd World War and despite the enormous scale of nuclear armaments by the U.S.A. and Soviet Union, the present world does not reduce into a bi-polar world. During the last decade U.S. imperialism has increasingly lost its unchallenged status of leadership in the western imperialist bloc. (The weakening of America's hegemony over the countries and states of the western bloc has been due both to economic causes and also to U.S.A.'s political defeats in the face of the liberation movements in the "Third World", particularly Viet Nam.) What today counts as a main feature of world imperialism is the fact that the American state is unable to secure easily its political hegemony over her allies - whether among the imperialist states or even among most states of the dominated countries. As a whole, the imperialist world political system which was the product of the 2nd imperialist world war, now, with the aggravation of its internal rivalries and contradictions, is heading for a collapse. The activation of the European imperialist states (such as the role of Britain, Germany,

France, etc., in the Middle East and their different relations with the Islamic Republic and the Arab states) which sometimes inevitably come into conflict with U.S. imperialism's objectives and policies, is a result of the same declining supremacy of the U.S.A. in the western bloc.

Another component of the crisis of the world political system of imperialism, which has also been discussed before in our literature (see Naser Javid, "Pan-Islamism and War", *Komunist* No. 28, Sep. 1986) is the questioning of the political and governmental system which has been established in countries dominated by imperialism. The complete domination of the capitalist mode of production in this series of countries and its politico-economic consequences in the form of economic and political crises (i.e., the ending of the perspective of development for the bourgeoisie) has been followed by a period characterised by the failure of the already established regimes. (The crisis of military dictators, Shah's regime, Marcos, etc.) As well, the period has been marked by the intensification of regional conflicts to the point of political crises and wars between states in the dominated regions - states which even, in most cases, lie within the same imperialist world camp and in the same region of influence of a single bloc.

The chaotic and contradictory situation of the imperialist world today has resulted in the confusion of the world bourgeois camp almost everywhere. In the case of the Gulf region and the Iran-Iraq war, too, it is precisely these basic features of the imperialist world in the present period which in the final analysis has given rise to the confused measures and policies of the whole bourgeois camp (from the eastern and western imperialists to the reactionary states of the region, pan-Islamism, etc.)

in the way the I.R. regime operates) clearly point to the fact that the Islamic regime has understood that it cannot pursue its objectives and policies by the old methods. The whole point is this: can the Islamic Republic conform itself to the current situation? Can it continue as the standard-bearer of regional pan-Islamism without getting itself involved in an open war for asserting pan-Islamism's superiority in the region? The fact is that the developments in the war and the current stage of the war put the I.R. and its Shia't pan-Islamism in a crucial stage of its life. A stage in which it should define, and look for, a new perspective for itself.

The outcome so far of the Iran-Iraq war has shown that the Shia't pan-Islamism of the I.R. regime is not capable of turning into the predominant force of the region. The almost ten-year survival of the Islamic Republic, now inevitably confronts it with the problem of administering the country and getting down to the economy. The pan-Islamic current which for the first time in its history has come to power in a country like Iran must deal with this sphere. It must learn how, while maintaining the extra-territorial appeal of pan-Islamism, to coexist with the regimes of the region and assume a normal role in world diplomacy. But these realities inevitably create thrusts in the Islamic Republic regime itself towards conforming it to the new conditions - conditions certainly very different from those it considers ideal and dreams about. What has been labelled the "realistic", "pragmatist", "moderate", etc, wing of the regime (with Rafsanjani as its spokesman) is in content nothing but the internal mechanism of the pan-Islamic current to adapt itself to the new conditions to survive.

The imperialist states, who have not been able to give form to any other alternative but the Islamic Republic as the government of Iran and have recognized it as the established regime, are trying, by strengthening the above line in the regime, to help it in its efforts to change and adapt itself to the new conditions. This is a policy which allows for the Islamic Republic to fit in the imperialist political system - something for which the I.R. and the pan-Islamic current in Iran have been striving ever since coming to power; a policy made necessary for imperialism because of the world crisis it is facing. Despite the fact that the I.R. regime wanted - and desperately tried - to win this position as a regional power, rather than just as a national state, (for both itself and pan-Islamism), nevertheless, the realities and balance of forces did not allow for anything more. (The abstention of both the U.S. and Iran from widening the recent military confrontations between their forces is an example of the fact that both sides have understood this point.)

But despite the attempts of the regime's "pragmatist wing" and its influential position, the Islamic Republic's adaptation to these new conditions is a very contradictory process with many obstacles on the way. The first hindrance, no doubt, lies within the regime

itself, namely, the current which is fearful of this political turn and if not able to see the whole perspective of these changes and the guarantee for the future of pan-Islamism and the Islamic Republic will not give its consent to this change. This is the same line which apparently advocates the continuation of the war, but in fact does not have any real solution to the deadlock of the war. It pursues the policy of continuation of the present situation only until a safe solution is found. Another point debated by both "wings" of the I.R. is in what forms Shia't pan-Islamism would continue its move in the event of the war ending. It seems that the gangs of thugs the I.R. has been able to organise in this or that country of the region - with such examples as the Mecca and Tunisian affairs and probably a greater involvement within the reactionary Islamic currents in Afghanistan - are rehearsals for such a probable future. There are also real differences inside the regime and, generally, in the pan-Islamic current in Iran over the question of the state-interventionist, versus private, economic model. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic must be able to maintain its coherence in the face of the semi-legal Islamic currents of the medium capitals (such as "Resalat" and the "Freedom movement") which are in the opposition. The power struggle going on already at the top over the post-Khomeini era makes the attitude towards the war also into a field of political rivalries and purges at the top. Most important of all is the factor of the toiling masses' protests and struggles, confronting which is basically the *raison d'être* of the Islamic Republic regime. Can the move to end the war serve as a new means for inactivating the masses, drawing their attention to developments at the top, and another period of imposing economic and political hardships on workers and toilers? Or, on the contrary, would any hesitation and turns at the top only enhance the mass protests and struggles against the war and for the Islamic Republic's overthrow?

More could be added to the list of contradictions in which the Islamic Republic is entangled. (For instance, the coming elections for the Islamic Assembly.) But the point, in any case, is that the recent moves of approval of the I.R. towards the international diplomatic steps to end the war, as well as its unwillingness to make the presence of U.S. warships in the Gulf and the military confrontations with the U.S. into a propaganda issue for purposes of an all-out war mobilization, are unprecedented events which show that the heads of the regime are still standing at the cross-roads and have not yet been able to choose a definite path.

CONCLUSION

The Iran-Iraq war's deadlock has turned this war and the whole of the region into a focal point of the rivalries and contradictions of the world camp of capital and imperialism. All these rivalries and contradictions are taking place in the camp of

workers' and toilers' enemies. The substance of the conflicts among the imperialist and capitalist states is simply over the best and safest way of keeping the deprived people of the region enslaved. It is over deciding which force, which bloc, or state is going to get the biggest share of the product of exploitation of workers and toilers. They have all understood one thing: the continuation of the present state of the Iran-Iraq war will result in the weakening of some of the regimes of the region, and apart from the question of reductions and increases in the profits of the rival imperialists, the main danger is that the weakening of the local states would facilitate the outbreak of workers' and toilers' revolution - the age-old nightmare of the imperialists. Thus they all realize that the maintenance of the region's "stability" is the primary interest of all of them, but their rivalries and contradictions with each other and the political and economic difficulties which each of them is facing are so grave that they cannot easily resolve their disputes and conflicts.

The nature of the recent developments in the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf region should be clearly explained to the workers and toilers of the region. They must all know firstly that the whole of this war, the passing of resolutions and the dispatching of warships are to decide which group, on behalf of the capitalists and imperialists, is going to impose itself on us; and secondly, that the situation of the imperialists' and capitalists' world (from the Eastern to the Western bloc, and from the Gulf Sheikdoms to the Islamic Republic of Iran) is too chaotic to let them impose their rule on us easily. The recent developments in the Gulf are only one example of the critical situation in which the entire world of capital and imperialism is caught. And this example clearly shows what a suitable opportunity has been created by the fragmented camp of the enemy for the victory of the workers' and toilers' revolution.

If today the rank of the workers' revolution in the Gulf and the Middle East region is too weak to allow it to enter the arena as an actual force and, utilizing the dispersion within the enemy forces, rapidly achieve victory, this is not just a sign of our past defeats, but also an emphasis on the immense tasks of the conscious vanguards of the workers' revolution, the communists. In the face of this contradictory state of the capitalists' camp, communists must explain clearly that the interests of the working masses would not be secured by laying hopes on any of the forces at the scene. The only possible way for workers' and toilers' emancipation is the victory of socialism in the region, the driving out of all the imperialists and capitalists from the Gulf region and the Middle East, and sweeping the area from Islamic and ethnic reaction. The lasting fraternity of the workers and toilers of the region will only be attained by the establishment

of workers' states in the region.

Workers and toilers of Iran must clearly know the meaning of recent developments in the war and the Gulf. They must bring about the immediate ending of this war by relying on the power of their own struggle against this war and the Islamic Republic. The war the capitalists have set up can at best result in an imperialist "stability", i.e., repression and destitution under a "stable" government supported by the imperialists, unless the working masses come forward, step up their struggle to end the war, and all the more extensively put their economic and political demands against the Islamic Republic and the capitalists. Workers and toilers of Iran must turn the struggle to end the war into a spring-board which strengthens their fight for overthrowing the Islamic Republic. All the imperialist states have come to the Gulf; they roam the corridors of international assemblies, in the company of all the imperialist experts, to find a solution to the crisis-ridden condition of the states of the region, including the Islamic Republic. The Iranian workers have once already, by their revolution and pulling down the Shah, disrupted all imperialist calculations. To overthrow these Islamic representatives of capital and imperialism is certainly not beyond their ability.

Iraj Azarin
27 Oct. '87



Selling arms to the Islamic regime, the Spanish capitalists fill their pockets with money and dead bodies.

Drawing by comrade Ricardo in Spain sent
for Bolshevik Message

LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM !

STATEMENT OF
 THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN ON
 THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF COMRADE JAFAR SHAFI'EE
 (member of the central committee of the CPI)



WORKERS, TOILERS!

Comrade Jafar Shafi'ee member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Iran and member of the central committee of Komala who was leaving Kurdistan to go abroad on an organisational mission, lost his life as a result of a collision with the car that carried him on the evening of Thursday, October 29th in Iraq. The sorrow of his loss weighs heavily on our hearts and the hearts of all free-thinking, revolutionary and communist people.

Comrade Jafar was a well known figure in the communist movement in Iran, one of the founders of the CPI, a popular leader among the workers, party comrades, and the masses of toiling and struggling people in Kurdistan. He is among those to whom our party owes a great deal of its achievements.

To rear leaders of his kind, the communist movement and the working class should undergo years of struggle and many arduous experiences. He was among those communist leaders whose name, behaviour, and every act symbolizes and spurs the struggle toward liberation from bondage, inequality, and exploitation. He was the embodiment of a communist leader of masses of workers and toilers.

In his years of political and communist struggle against the unjust system of capital, against the regimes of the Shah and of the Islamic Republic, he undertook tasks of the heaviest responsibility. In various organisational positions, in the central committee and politbureau of Komala, in the central committee of CPI, as the chief editor of the radio "Voice of the Iranian Revolution", and of party publications, in his writings and speeches, in various political and organisational missions, he was a remarkable example of communist faith, ingenuity, and dedication. He was a distinguished, valuable, and untiring pioneer of our party in propagating communism, in informing, unifying, and organising the workers, in exposing the demagogues, and in struggling against the revisionists and the false claimants of Marxism and communism.

His absence is undoubtedly a great loss to our party and our class.

The name and the shining memory of comrade Jafar has left its unforgettable mark on the hope-inspiring resonance of communism, on the fight against the enemies of freedom and the exploited humanity, on exposing the enemies of the working class, and on directing our class on the path toward socialism and communism - a path chosen by hundreds and thousands of communist workers.

The path of the liberation of our class is filled with numerous heroisms, dedication and self-sacrifices of which Dr. Jafar's life and struggle was indeed the full manifestation.

The memory of our beloved comrade would inspire the conscious proletariat, his fellow strugglers and the communist pioneers of the working class in their effort to build up the world of free and equal people. The grief of his loss would turn into an even firmer determination in bringing down the system of poverty and enslavement.

LONG LIVE SOCIALISM !

CHERISHED IS THE MEMORY OF COMRADE JAFAR SHAFI'EE !

LONG LIVE FREEDOM, EQUALITY, WORKERS' RULE !

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran

SPEECH BY COMRADE JAFAR SHAFI'EE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CPI

The following is the text of the speech by comrade Jafar Shafiee, member of the central committee of the CPI and the central committee of Komala (the Kurdistan Organisation of the CPI), on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the founding of the CPI. This speech was also broadcast from the radio Voice of the Iranian Revolution - BM.

Party Comrades! Communist and advanced workers!

Let me offer my congratulations upon the fourth anniversary of the Communist Party of Iran to you, to all the Iranian workers, to all party workers ... and to all those comrades who are heroically resisting in the dungeons of the IR regime.

Commemorating the foundation of the CPI isn't merely the commemoration of the foundation of a communist party, but, in my opinion, that of a serious struggle for the purpose of transforming communism into a social-working-class force, that of a serious struggle to create the pre-requisites of the socialist revolution.

The CPI has been founded for the essential purpose of organizing the social revolution of the working class, establishing a workers' state, and the eventual organization of a socialist society. Our party has been founded for this aim and no other! And if we're to give a definition of it, that'll be it! That's why we - before its formation generally, and after its formation particularly - couldn't have had any feature but a serious anti-revisionist feature. That is to say, we had to be not only an anti-capitalist party, but at the same time a serious anti-revisionist party; the latter being our particularity. And it was in actual fact so. The reason is clear. The revolutionary Marxism in Iran, since its very conception, and especially ever since the foundation of the CPI, has been an opposition current, that is, a current in opposition to all policy, traditions, ideology, and outlook which have dominated the Left.

The tendency which haunted the Iranian Left as a section of the international Left was not a merely indigenous tendency. It was not a revisionism indigenous to Iran, but a universal-historical revisionist tendency; one which, under specifically Iranian circumstances, was tinged with specifically Iranian features. Class compromises were carried out in the name of the working class, in the name of communism; capital was protected against workers; and, in the best case, what we could see was vacillation in the struggle against capital. To us, it was clear that any ideal or tendency which, in struggle, was not all out against the bourgeoisie, could not be identified with commun-

ism. Any current which did not abhor capitalism could not be a communist current. Any current which worked against the interests of the working class could not be called communist. Any current which occupied other countries could not be a communist current. Any current which all the time and in all the ways, compromised with the bourgeois parties and currents, selling out working-class ideology and principles, could not be a communist current. And last but not least, any current which defended Khomeini could not be a communist current.

Thus we had to move in opposition to this revisionist deluge; for what prevailed was nothing but revisionism. So, in order to promote the current of revolutionary communism, revolutionary Marxism, we had to stand firm against this deluge. We were, of course, to a certain extent helped in this by the course of revolution itself; it would bear out our positions. So our characteristic was anti-revisionism. And if we are to point out only one characteristic feature for our party [to-day], I'd single out this all-round anti-revisionism.

As far as we're concerned, the course to be followed by the working class is very clear. It is our first and foremost, indisputable duty (given that there exist no socio-economic handicaps or any great material-historical obstacles) to establish the workers' state, and, thereby, to abolish the capitalist private property, to abolish the enslavement of labour by capital, and to build a free, equal society. But, the realisation of this ideal requires its own pre-conditions. It is a social act. So it can be carried out by a social force; and that is the working class. Communism as the science of emancipation of the working class, has tied in the emancipation of the whole humanity with the struggle and the revolution of a definite social class - the working class.

So another aspect of us, which is in fact an integral part of our anti-revisionist character, is the working-class substance of the communism we speak of; or, what we generally call "workers' communism". I'll here briefly touch upon this.

As far as the socio-economic situation within the existing system is concerned, everything is ready for a social revolution and the establishment of a workers' state. Capitalism has not only lived but outlived itself. Had there not been some historical factors at work, it would have been buried long ago. Besides, the establishment of the workers' state is not an aim particular to the future. We have already had the establishment of two workers' states in the past: the Paris workers' state, or the Communards' state; and the workers' state in Russia - the October revolution. Moreover, capitalism has long, by its very practice, proved that it is no longer fit to lead the

society, and must therefore go! The foulness, the distress, and the agony it has caused humanity is so abhorrent that great patience is needed even to talk about them. Unemployment, starvation, addiction, prostitution, suppression, etc., etc., have cast such a gloom over the life of humanity that it has been left with no opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of life. ... Such a system must be abolished. It's no longer entitled to survival! ... It has survived too long!

On the other hand, we are witnessing strong working-class movements. The working class is protesting against the present order. There's an immense working-class movement in South Africa. In Germany, France, and Britain workers have raised the demand for a 35-hours' working-week. Strong workers' movements also exist in the U.S.A., South Korea, Haiti, Chile, and so on. ... [In short,] the whole world is undergoing a revolutionary upheaval the background of which is the current economic crisis. But the question is, why doesn't the working-class uproot this capitalist system? Why are we not witnessing the establishment of workers' states, and the abolition of private property, in various countries? Why is that - while the situation is ripe? Our answer is that the rank of that social force of the revolution, the rank of the communist revolution, is suffering from a rupture. The social revolution, or the socialist revolution, is based upon two major pillars: the movement of the working class per se, and communism, i.e., communist leaders and communist organization. There has long occurred a break-up between these two major pillars. In the absence of revolutionary communism, in the absence of a powerful communist organization to lead the working class through this [social] revolution, at least the experience has shown, the working class achieves, at the most, minor gainings; and only temporarily. ... In the absence of revolutionary communism and a strong communist party, revisionist parties which are for the capitalist order, and are not therefore willing to strike at its roots, will gain the leadership of the movement. ...

Now, we intend to put an end to this break-up, and, by our practice, provide the most significant requirements of the working-class revolution, or the communist revolution. We believe this social revolution will be impossible without the union of, or the fusion between, communism and the workers' movement. We are determined to create a new round of the workers' movement in which the banner of communism shall be in the hands of the workers' movement. We want the struggling workers, whether in the presence or absence of a general political upsurge, to realise what they want, and not to content with anything short of the workers' state. We want them to know that their emancipation is in the abolition of the capitalist system, the abolition of wage-slavery, the setting up of workers' state and the building of a socialist and communist society. We want the million masses to enter the struggle with this aim and in accordance with this policy.

Against such power no bourgeois power can resist. We have organized the Communist Party with the aim of leading to victory such a social revolution as I tried to characterize.

What has so far been the impact of the party and its activity? I'll summarize this in a few points. First of all, it was founded in a critical situation. You all remember the formidable situation following the 20th of June 1981, in which the rabid bourgeois regime of IR had launched an extensive assault on the working class and the Iranian Left as a whole. It was under such circumstances that by establishing the party we organized a communist bastion against the assault. In this way, a communist-working-class pole was set up against the assault; and at a moment when despair and confusion has swarmed the left generally. Thus the party was a means to continue communist activity; and not merely to continue, but help it grow and flourish.

With the formation of the CPI and its subsequent activity, with the elaboration of the communist style of work, that, is, communist style of agitation, propaganda, organization, we have taken many serious steps towards the aim I explained earlier - "workers' communism". ... The result, after several years, has been that the Iranian workers have become responsive to communism and to the CPI more than ever. A considerable number of the most advanced workers have been won over to communism. A far greater number than those organizationally associated with us have been increasingly influenced by communism, and have followed the example of our trend, of our policy, and of our methods. And this is a great achievement for us.

This reality has been still more conspicuous in Kurdistan. Spreading communism widely, and rendering it an undeniable social reality in Kurdistan; frustrating the defeatist policy of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in facing the Islamic regime; preventing the domination of the policies of this party over the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses; constantly disproving and reducing it to silence; all our agitation; all our radios; all the activities of thousands of activists within the ranks of the CPI; all our party literature, and so on, all have been at the service of that same goal. Our future activity will also continue to be conducted with a view to the prospect I just tried to draw up:

Increasingly transforming communism into a social-working-class current; basing the CP upon a rank of the communist and the advanced workers within the working-class movement; and increasingly clarifying the descriptions of the new society we want to build. In these contexts the question of the Soviet Union, of course, occupies a special place.

We are conducting these policies and activities under special circumstances. At present, political struggle in Iran has particular class-political features. Take the IR regime itself. It has got bogged down in a series of deep economic, political, social,

and governmental crises. The disagreements within the ruling body have intensified to such an extent that if it were not for Khomeini's having life, it would be torn asunder from head to toe. Economically, socially, and militarily the regime is in the worst possible shape. Seven to eight million people are out of work, who, including their families, amount to twenty to twenty-five million. High prices have distressed the people more than flesh and blood can stand. According to an estimation, the rate of inflation, compared with the prices prevailing in the year 79-80 as a standard, is currently 500%! The number of people who have become refugees all over the world is colossal. There are one million Iranian refugees in Turkey alone. ... For such a regime it is getting more and more difficult to rule.

It is in a difficult international position too. Had it not been for the imperialism's fear of the future Iranian revolution, the regime wouldn't have kept its footing. So, the Islamic regime is, both from the point of view of those below, i.e., the working class and the masses, and from the point of view of those above, non-durable; and must go. Meanwhile, all bourgeois opposition forces are hastily getting prepared. Thus the issue of coalitions [within the bourgeois-opposition camp] arises; thus the issue of rapprochement with the imperialist Powers arises; for they want to secure themselves a significant position in the future political changes in Iran. It's therefore proper, indeed imperative, that the working class prepare itself more than other classes, especially in view of these shuffled and precarious circumstances; so that it would be able to seize political power in the midst of the future upheavals.

[So, to sum up,] the IR itself is in crisis; the Iranian bourgeoisie is in crisis; the world bourgeoisie in crisis; the imperialism is in deep political-economic crisis, and in the dominated countries is specially faced with a "governmental" crisis as well. Therefore, the question of political power is still quite an open question.

Under such circumstances the preparation of the working class, consolidating communism inside the class, turning communism into a social force, and the working class getting so ready that in the event of any serious political change it immediately sets up its own workers' state is a vital question.

This historic opportunity must not be lost. The working class should be educated in such a way that it shall turn itself objectively, materially, into a powerful contender for the political power. So that it shall rise up in the factories, pour into the streets, chanting the slogan, "Freedom, Equality, Workers' Rule!"; so that it shall rise up, break down the state machinery of oppression, and take the political power into its own hands. No negligence or slowness [on the part of the communists] is permissible. We are eager for the workers' state per se - something that the populists and the revisionists are too willing to postpone to some remote future. We are eager to establish it tomorrow; and if the working class were

prepared, we wouldn't hesitate to establish it tomorrow.

It's obvious that under such circumstances very heavy duties rest upon the Communist Party. A historical obligation rests upon us. If the working class succeeds to seize the power in Iran, it'll serve as a revolutionary bastion for the growth of "workers' communism" beyond the boundaries of this country. So, this is not only a domestic duty, but a significant and valuable internationalist duty.

Now, in a struggle over political power, force is decisive. Under the circumstances of the future political upheavals, should we not be strong enough to actually seize the political power, shall we make sure to grow at least strong enough not to let any bourgeois government establish itself firmly. This force, after it has made its appearance in the arena, would not only not let any bourgeois government establish itself, but would cause it constant disorder, would force it through successive revolutionary crises, until it would itself eventually capture the power.

The situation is particularly more favourable in Kurdistan; and it is the indisputable duty of the CP to try, in the midst of any political upheaval, whether in Iran or in Kurdistan, to draw the working class near the political power.

Our practice can also have serious international impacts. Revisionism, itself, is going through a state of crisis, and is not able to withstand the radicalization of the workers. It can't withstand the miners movement [in Britain] the workers' movement in South Africa, and the movement of the Paris Metro workers. Revisionism is becoming devoid of all content. The ground is prepared among workers for the absorption, both theoretical and practical, of communism. The issues that are being discussed in our party are therefore by no means exclusively Iranian issues. They are international issues. And in this field too we intend to make this tendency, this outlook, the international school of thought and practice of the workers all over the world; and we shall endeavour to achieve this goal.

My last word is that a party such as the CPI, which has put such a historical, fateful struggle on its agenda, is an achievement of the working class. This achievement must be guarded. Every advanced revolutionary worker must protect it. Every freedom-loving man who stands for emancipation must earnestly protect it. The CPI is an achievement to be dearly guarded.

Long live communism!
Long live the Communist Party of Iran!
Long live the working class!

ON THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE CPI (Final Part)

Interview with comrade Mansoor Hekmat

After the 2nd Congress of the CPI in March 86, the Party's central organ, Komonist, carried a series of interviews with comrade Hekmat (member of the Political Bureau of the Party) about the discussions of the 2nd Congress, which centred mainly around the question of workers' communism. The following is the third, and final, part of this interview published in Komonist No. 29, Dec. 86 - BM.

Q: In the previous parts of this conversation you spoke of the need to elaborate the theoretical foundations of a distinct trend, i.e., the "workers' communism". No doubt the way to go about this is not that a few commissions get down to work and produce some texts and finish the job so to speak. It seems that achieving this goal requires a process of theoretical work, and of ideological polemic within the party. How do you visualize the problem? Does it not require, for instance, a change in the norms of activity of the party's theoretical organs such as "Towards Socialism"; we mean more flexible norms, such as those governing the "Bulletin on The Soviet Question"*** at present?

A: Let me first begin with some basic premises again. "Workers' communism" is a distinct ideological-practical trend which to-day has the position of a minority, a scattered, incoherent minority with undefined and unestablished identity within the so-called communist movement on the world scale. When I use the expression "workers' communism" I mean something more than a simple synonym for "genuine Marxism", "real Marxism", and "revolutionary Marxism", or, in general, the epithets which call to mind a kind of purity of thought together with practical-political consistency and radicalism. The purpose of that expression is to emphasize, in addition to the theoretical soundness of this tendency towards the theory of Marx, the origin and the frame of reference, i.e., the social-class basis of this trend. If the majority of the trends within the present communist

movement were actually the political trend, as well as the organizational repository of the workers' struggle; if these trends had not socially broken off with the class that forms the basis of communism, and if they, in the course of their development, had not based themselves upon other social strata (from the "people" in the oppressed nations to the intellectuals in the industrially developed countries); if the course of history of communism and that of the workers' movement had not diverged, then the expression "workers' communism"

would be a flat tautology. But to-day, this emphasis on the working-class character of communism expresses a particular quality and characterizes a particular tendency. Fighting against revisionist views, and endeavouring to achieve Marxist, as opposed to revisionist, organization and politics — this is the origin of the expression "revolutionary Marxism". But the point, and this is an essential point, is that this theoretical and political effort and orientation must be completed with another, equally vital, fundamental element, and that is the recognition of the working class as the pillar, the basis and the pushing power of communism. The latter recognition is as vital as the recognition of Marxism itself. "Workers' communism" is a trend which intends to base itself upon both these fundamental elements, upon Marxism and upon the working class as a given social reality. It does not conceive of these two elements of its standpoint as separable elements. Thus "workers' communism", whether from the point of view of its historical development so far, or from the point of view of its current practice, or from the point of view of its practical attitudes, that is, its priorities in struggle, is a trend which has certain differences even with the purest and the most radical Marxist currents existing to-day. In the history of "workers' communism" not only the critical attempts directed against Stalin, Trotsky, Mao, Khrushchev, etc., but also the actual struggles of workers (from those of the British miners to those of the trade union movement in Poland, in spite of the non-Marxist, non-proletarian or compromising leaderships which have dominated them) will all find their proper places. The activities of our class are part and parcel of our history, in the same way as our ideological struggle, our attempts to found parties on the basis of Marx and Lenin's thoughts and their methods [of struggle] are part and parcel of our history.

Adopting this standpoint leads us to a different set of priorities. It is a fact about even the most radical wings of the existing international Marxist movement that the more they insist on their theoret-

* The theoretical organ of the party "Besooey-e-Sosalism" - BM

** The bulletin "Marxism & the Question of Soviet Union", published as a supplement to "Towards Socialism" - BM

tical purity the more sectarian, the more indifferent towards economic struggles and living conditions of the working class, the more indifferent towards on-going struggles for reforms, and the more impotent to influence their contemporary political milieu they become. Contrary to such wings, "workers' communism" puts its theoretical soundness at the service of the social strengthening of communism, the growth of the workers' movement, the practical advance of the working class in different fields, and the unification of different sections of the class. Contrary to the hitherto existing so-called "radical Marxism" - which step by step reduces the socialist revolution to the proletarian state, the latter to the revolutionary party, and the revolutionary party to the ideology - "workers' communism" seeks in socialism and socialist revolution the rising to power of the working class as a whole; a total change and a substantial material improvement in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the broad masses of workers and toiling people. In short, if we don't consider Marxism and the Marxist movement merely from the point of view of thoughts, views and policies, but regard it as the socialist movement of the working class, then our attitude towards the history of the Left movement up to the present, our conception of the course that must be adopted in the future, as well as our practical criteria and values used in judging the existing circumstances and processes will change all together. [To give you an example,] one sees in the Soviet experience the violation of principles, the other sees the revival of dictatorship. But we see in it, before anything else, the loss of the power our class had seized with utmost capability to crush one of the strongholds of private property and to liberate millions of human beings from the slavery of capital. [Or, to give you another example,] they choose the number of the pamphlets and leaflets they distribute in different quarters of town as the index of their practical progress. For us, however, the index is the degree of unity and practical strength gained by workers [as the result of our work during a certain period of time]. "Workers' communism" is the embodiment of that picture [of communism] depicted by Marx in the manifesto: an anticapitalist socio-class movement [fighting] for communism, in contradiction to the sectarian and religious-like character assumed by the radical Left factions to-day.

Now, in reply to your question, one should ask whether the Communist Party of Iran (CPI) has already been firmly established within this [trend and] tradition of "workers' communism". [I would say] we are definitely allowed to identify ourselves, in our propaganda, agitation, ideological struggle, and so forth, with the goal we are attempting to achieve. We may justifiably regard ourselves as belonging to the tradition of "workers' communism", for we are struggling to place ourselves in this tradition. But, as an objective assessment of the currently existing situation, we cannot do so. The CPI has not yet firmly

established itself within this tradition, for the simple reason that we're still at the phase of defining the particularities of this trend, of making it known. The CPI is a radical, principled Marxist party with strong working-class tendencies. But, "workers' communism" is not the only tendency at work among us. To-day, it is not the principles of this tendency alone which direct our course of thinking. [In fact] our party is itself the first parade-ground, the first junction of the main tendencies existing within the contemporary radical Marxism. The difference is that in the CPI "workers' communism" enjoys a very favourable situation and a motivating environment to grow. But there is a long way to go from this situation to the conditions in which the structure of the party, its leadership and its cadres, its daily practice, its practical tradition, etc., are firmly implanted in the framework of clear and well-established principles of "workers' communism" of Marx and Lenin. This requires a theoretical struggle. Nor is it a simple task. During such a struggle other tendencies, both within and without the party, must be criticized. "Workers' communism", through positive assertion of its attitudes towards various aspects [of struggle], must be transformed into a comprehensive and reproducing current in the party. And here the tool we have is criticism rather than study, or, better to say, our every piece of study must be geared to the needs of such a critique.

So, while appreciating the significance of the commission-style of work, I believe it does not provide the key to the problem. The chief context within which this task is to be carried out is opposition of views. But does it mean that to achieve this we have to publish the party's central organs with arrangements similar to those being applied to the "Bulletin on the Soviet question?" That is, do we have to bring out our central organs in the form of a public platform for debates? If you ask my personal view on this question, I'd say no. In our party both members and the lines (if there exist any defined and formulated lines) have the right to publish their views. The Soviet Bulletin is only one example of this [freedom]. The publication of signed articles - whenever there are sufficient numbers of members demanding their publication to justify the allocation of party's publication energy and possibilities - is another example. Personally financed publication of articles, on the author's own responsibility, faces no obstacles. And, finally, "Towards Socialism" itself contains an open column to publish debates and controversies. These are the channels available to party comrades to express their views publicly and freely. But, it is incumbent upon the central organ to direct the organization and activity of the party according to a definite line; and so far the party congresses and other official decision-making bodies have faced no problem defining our party's general course of policy. The party policies are very clear, and our central organs are the means to elucidate and to carry out these policies. As for

"Towards Socialism", [as the theoretical organ of the CPI], it is not a collection magazine or a platform for theoretical debates, but a journal which serves as a medium to elaborate on the theoretical foundations of the policies and orientations which have been frequently confirmed in practice throughout the CPI's activity during the past few years.

Q: Having considered the discussions of The Second Congress, what do you envisage to be the most urgent tasks of the party both in the theoretical and in the practical field?

A: I think with regard to task and priorities one should make a distinction between the party and the trend (or tradition) to which it belongs. We, as a political party, have one set of tasks and priorities and, as a certain Marxist tendency, a different one. These tasks and priorities, although seriously related, do not coincide completely. I have already, in a previous discussion (the editorial of TS, no. 1), pointed out that the liveliness of our party work is directly related to the dynamism of our general ideological tendency and its ascending quality. A political party is inconceivable in isolation from a theoretical base. No-one can belong to a descending tendency and, at the same time, build a strong party; at least one cannot do so for a long period of time. Conversely, the existence of vigorous intellectual and political tendencies is inconceivable without their practical [i.e., material] manifestations in the form of political parties. The death of the populist tradition in Iran simultaneously led bulky organizations into crisis. The Fedaei * tradition became an historical anachronism, and, together with this, Fedaeia, as an organization, became what we witnessed before and are still witnessing to-day. The crisis of Maoism, and the fate of Maoist organizations, presents another example. The New Left is an example to the contrary: a tradition, unable to advance in the field of party building, inevitably remained confined to an intellectual movement during the past two decades, and disintegrated.

We must correctly recognize these two aspects of our task, and respond to both practically. So I would prefer we distinguished these two levels: the tasks and priorities of the CPI in particular, and those of the "workers' communism", as an ascending trend, [in general].

Q: Very well, for the sake of continuity of the discussion we had better begin with the [tasks and] priorities of "workers' communism" as a tradition and a trend in the Marxist movement. The question is, what are the questions which, if resolved, will decisively affect the growth and the consolidation of this trend?

A: As I have already discussed this subject enough,

let me merely name those questions and pass on. The first and the most cardinal topic is the experience of the proletarian revolution in Russia, or the so-called "Soviet Question". The clue to many decisive themes lies in the answer to this question - themes from the economic relations under socialism and the structure of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the theory of party and the relation between the party and the class; from the course of developments in the Comintern to the relations between different classes on the morrow of the proletarian revolution.

The second question is that of a positive formulation of the features of "workers' communism", and, on that basis, a critique of the main trends and traditions existing within the entire spectrum of all those [groups] laying claim to communism. Here we need both an ideological formulation and an historical analysis of the concept "workers' communism".

A third topic is an objective, Marxist assessment of to-day's situation, both economic and political, in the capitalist world. This will be a starting point for the settlement of a series of questions confronting the communists of to-day; Questions such as the actual situation of the economic movement of the class, the crisis of trade-unionism, the protest movements against the existing order and their fate, the workers' revolution and the question of reforms, revolutions in the oppressed countries, the imperialist war, and so forth, are all posed within this framework.

In proportion as we are able to attain clear analyses, in these respects as well as in their more concrete peripheries, in that same proportion will we be able not only to secure a leading, strong position for the CPI, but also to help the formation and coming upon the arena of forces and trends akin to ourselves in other countries. Dealing with these questions is a vital necessity to raising the banner of a revolutionary communism at the international level. But, the link which immediately relates these tasks to the CPI is that we should, as we advance in these [theoretical] fields, define and organize the political practices that correspond to them. The communist party is the most important and the most immediately available means that the communism we have in mind possesses in order to realize its aims. Thus, a main aspect of our work is to render the results of these analysis into clear-cut policies for the party's activity in different fields.

Q: The party's tasks and priorities, of course, both derive from the perspective of our activity and are the continuation of the work we have been doing so far, i.e., what we're engaged in at present. What are our most important problems to-day?

A: To explain these problems one can point to the party's main fields of activity one by one. There are three main fields: secret organization of the party whose pivotal concern is activity among the workers and their party and non-party organization, activity in the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan, and

* The Fedaei trend with its main organisation as the "Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaei Guerrillas" which to date has undergone numerous splits and virtually disintegrated - BM

activity abroad.

Concerning the field of activity among the workers and their party organization, our primary problem in the present period is to form a strong rank of communist workers, and to transform the party into the repository of their revolutionary political struggle. This, in turn, requires the establishment of certain conceptions and methods [of struggle] in our current activity. We are going through a rich period of "training on the job" on [the subject] of practical communism. As can be seen from the pages of this very paper, "Komonist", during the period of the past few years a new, lively attitude towards communist work has been making its presence felt among us. It is our duty to carry on this trend to the point where the communist traditions of activity among workers, the communist traditions of unifying and organizing the workers and their struggles, become the natural and instinctive forms of activity. We must get to the point where any new comrade who joins us would follow suit and automatically work along that line. We have a definite length of time to accomplish this, not to the end of time. And the deadline is the future round of upsurge of the mass movement in Iran, which does not seem too far away. If the CPI can manage to base itself upon a firm foundation of immediate leaders* of workers during this period, then, during the coming [revolutionary-] political upsurge, it will definitely play a decisive role in calling the workers, as an independent force, to the battle-field. Otherwise there's fear of the party either being completely pushed over - except in Kurdistan - to the fringes of the course of events (like the radical Left was in the previous round), or, in the midst of the activation of the extensive non-proletarian layers of the population, of its character being overridden by the popular radicalism which intensifies during such revolutionary periods. In such a period it is the proletarian backbone of the party which will decide whether our party will have the power to lead this radicalism, without playing down its own class character, or itself will be drowned in it.

Another urgent question which confronts us in relation to the working class and workers' movement is the organization of real practical united-actions on the basis of common points of view existing between different currents within this movement. We neither consider ourselves the only current existing among workers, nor have we abandoned anyone who does not belong to us. We believe that in order for the working class to seriously confront the anti-worker policies of the regime, different militant trends within the class must unite, to different degrees, around slogans, demands, and programmes of action expressing their common points of view. We, far from any sectarian prejudices, are ourselves ready for such a move. Such demands as 40-hours' working-week, unemployment

benefits, pay rises, the right to strike, and so on, are not our demands alone; they are the demands of all militant circles within our class. They can serve as the basis of united actions. And what's more, we think different currents can even reach an agreement on the draft of a democratic labour law capable of bringing together and coordinating different aspects of the workers' struggles at this moment. This is the direction in which we should conduct our work. It will certainly take a lot of work. But we believe there is a serious possibility for success in this field.

In Kurdistan, besides the problem of basic communist activity among the working class, we have to respond to the problems of a specific revolutionary movement. For various reasons, and at least since August 19, 1979*, the class and the [popular] revolutionary struggles in Kurdistan have taken a course different from the rest of the country. The formation of an extensive armed struggle against the Islamic Republic (IR), the existence of special demands for the elimination of national oppression - and their being more prompted as compared with other democratic demands - and the existence of a different balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution, all provide particular circumstances for workers' struggle as well as communist struggle. Those organizations whose presence in Kurdistan has a somewhat formal, or symbolic, character, or who regard Kurdistan as their "rearguard", may be able to adopt a policy of "patience" to see what's going to happen in Teheran. And they may also be able to wrap up this patience in the veil of such postulations as "the fate of the movement in Kurdistan is closely connected with that of the Iranian revolution as a whole". We have no use for any such policy or any such banal statement. The Kurdish movement is closely connected with the nation-wide movement. Fair enough; There's no doubt about this, and no genius mind is needed to understand it. But the point is that to be able to speak of the connection between the Kurdish and the all-Iranian movement, one must first assume the existence of a living, rising movement in Kurdistan. For our party Kurdistan is no rearguard, but an important front-line. Komala [The Kurdistan Organisation of the CPI] is itself one of the pillars of this movement. It is the organizer of the rank of the workers and toiling masses within this movement. We should, therefore, have a defined program and a defined strategy to lead this movement to victory. We must be able to organize the main fields of struggle in Kurdistan, and to open the eyes of the workers and labouring masses to the paths they can take to advance in these fields. Therefore, we should do our best to provide answers to the current problems of this movement. The Second Congress of the party and, in greater length, the Fifth Congress of Komala, have already pinpointed the key issues in this respect.

* The day when the Islamic Republic launched its first all-out offensive against the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan - BM

* I.e., the actual/practical leaders of workers at the factory level - BM

The revolutionary rank of the Kurdish workers and toilers is confronting the bourgeois counter-revolution and its Islamic regime in three main fronts: first, the armed struggle against the regime's suppressive [military] forces; second, popular political struggle to achieve democratic demands [in general], and liberation from national oppression in particular - a demand which the suppressive character of the Iranian bourgeoisie has driven to the topmost position among other democratic demands of the Kurdish people; and third, the Kurdish workers' immediate struggles in the economic field, hinging upon workers' demands (both political and economic) in the strict sense of the word.

First of all we must organize the struggle in these three fields. Given the age-old inactiveness of the communists with regard to the organization of workers' current, immediate struggles, and given the fact that the political aspect of the mass struggles in Kurdistan has been overshadowed by the armed struggle, the clarification of our lines of policy in organizing these aspects of struggle demands our very serious attention. Armed struggle has so far been the practical guarantee for the prevalence of a balance of forces more favourable [than other parts of Iran] to the struggles of the working people in Kurdistan. It has also been the distinctive characteristic feature of the special circumstances prevailing in Kurdistan in the recent period. But, its forms and methods must now be revised and elaborated with a view to the new overall military situation. Kurdistan has been turned into a main battle-front in the reactionary Iran-Iraq war and has become intensely militarized. The mode of our military activities, practical aims of our operations, their tempo, and their forms of development should, in the light of the new conditions, be subjected to study and clarification.

Secondly, we should do our best to link up these three fields in a single, unified struggle. Our activity in each field should serve to enhance our activity in the other. Each successful workers' strike, each mass protest against the regime's levying troops, and each military operation of the Peshmargas*, all these, besides their immediate and independent values, can serve to create a political uplift and to develop an atmosphere of purposeful mass resistance in Kurdistan. The conditions and the balance of forces existing in Kurdistan are such that if we can help, for example, the formation of the construction workers or brick-plant workers' unions, which is an action objectively well-founded, it will not merely be a defensive weapon in the hands of the workers in the economic field, but something through which a funda-

mental leap will be taken in the popular movement as a whole; it will be a decisive blow to the authority of the bourgeoisie in Kurdistan that will, in its own turn, affect [our activity in] the military field. In the same way, our military operations, and our organization of the mass protests against different manifestations of the regime's oppressive rule in Kurdistan, will have serious, immediate effects on the present general balance of forces and will lend force to the development of struggle in other forms. Today Komala possesses the power and the social influence to present to the toiling masses of Kurdistan the perspective of a purposeful, comprehensive and effective struggle. It can familiarize them with its different phases and its multifarious fronts, and call them to the battle-field.

In short, an urgent aspect of our activity in this period is to draw the outline of this perspective, and to intensify the struggle for its realisation. It should be specially noticed that if communists fail to depict this perspective vividly, then the actual movement of the masses in Kurdistan will inevitably fall prey to the nationalistic narrow-mindedness which is inherent in any movement against national oppression, and which already has had its representative in Kurdistan [i.e., the Kurdistan Democratic Party]. It is a nationalism which has already revealed its attitude towards the workers' and toiling masses' demands, and which regards the armed struggle merely as a lever to wrest out minor concessions within the limitations of an essentially reconciliatory policy.

The fifth congress of Komala has taken serious steps to provide answers to these questions, but still greater energy should be applied by the whole party to clarify the different aspects of the problem [of our activity in Kurdistan].

We are also confronted with immediate and important tasks in respect of our activity abroad. We should admit that for a long time there have existed serious disorders - avoidable and unavoidable in our activity abroad. The chief cause of these disorders has been our long-time insensibility to the significance of activity abroad, and, consequently, our long delay in defining the principles and the aims of activity in this field. In the beginning, our existence and activity abroad was made possible primarily thanks to comrades who, by themselves, with a minimal practical contact with the party, had engaged in organizing communist activity. Such level of activity might not have faced any contradictions or essential difficulties in the beginning, especially prior to the wave of police suppression in Iran, and prior to the latter's consequences stretching abroad. But the extensive flight of Iranian political activists and Iranian immigrants abroad, and the re-transformation of foreign countries into an important centre for political activity for the Iranian opposition,

* Armed communist fighters of the CPI in Kurdistan -

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FREEDOM , EQUALITY , WORKERS' RULE!

necessitated the serious attention of the party to be paid to this field. The demand was met belatedly and imperfectly.

A feature of our organization abroad is the heterogeneous composition of activists with different practical perspectives, styles and methods of work, priorities, and political experience. To give you an example, those comrades of ours who have been active abroad for a longer time are very well capable of work in the international field, and of making contacts with and influencing the non-Iranian workers' and communists organizations; but not necessarily all of them have a correct estimation of the work among Iranian immigrants. On the opposite pole there are comrades whose experience is associated with underground work in towns in Iran, or work under special conditions of Kurdistan; but they have no deep understanding of work in the international field, or if they do, it is a difficult task for them to practically adapt to its requirements. The actual variety is much wider than the two examples I just gave you. These multifarious experiences are accompanied by a variety of attitudes and even habits and morals. So far, the creation of a uniform party organisation capable of conducting a coherent, routine activity has proved to be no easy job. Creating such an organisation, giving it a principled and uniform perspective, co-ordinating the activity of different party organizations, and launching a systematic and comprehensive activity abroad, are parts of an urgent task of ours in the present period. This is a task which has begun since some time ago, and we hope to bring it to a desirable completion within the next few months.

These were our immediate problems in the main tactics of current party activity. As for the main tactics of the party, I'll just touch upon a couple of points.

The first question is that of the overthrow of the Islamic Republic regime. Our tactical positions in this regard are quite clear. The important point is that the I.R. is in the throes of new crises, both economic and political. These crises are serious, and unfold the prospects of a revolutionary situation and of the downfall of the Islamic regime. The essential issue here is how to get prepared to meet the demands of such a situation, and how to guarantee that the anti-IR revolution should not repeat the mistakes of the revolution against the Shah's regime. In this connection there's a question that must be considered more attentively, and that is how to practically concentrate the forces of revolutionary democracy, and to materialize it, as an alternative, in a [unified] body. We are convinced that the CPI's minimum programme expresses the gist of the revolutionary democratic demands of the masses of people. But in the same measure as the prospect of the actual overthrow of the regime becomes clearer, in the same measure we should make sure that the cardinal points of this programme become the banner of the actual struggles of all those strata of the population who are sick and tired of the

IR. Demands concerning the mode of administration of the post-revolutionary society, equality of men and women, freedom of religion, a democratic labour law, and so on, can be both elaborated and spelt out in such a way as to become a rallying-point for different factions of the anti-IR movement.

The question of the non-proletarian opposition also enters here. The question as to what [regime] can actually replace the IR is still quite an open one, the answer to which will depend on the actual balance of forces that are at work in the process of struggle for the overthrow of the regime. To-day, there are various class-social forces willing to substitute or overthrow the present regime. We should be able to expose the true nature and the true inclinations of these currents to the labouring masses of people. This, considering the changes that are currently taking place within the opposition, is of special significance. The fate of Mojahedin and [their] National Council of Resistance is a well-known story which I need not repeat here. The Iranian bourgeois opposition in exile as a whole is to-day heavily influenced by the formation of opposing groups within the regime itself. This change has already affected the coalitions existing within the bourgeois currents opposed to the I.R. On the other hand, we see the recent proceedings within the Tudeh Party*, and the role presently played by Rah-e-Kargar** in organizing, within the same spectrum, an alternative current to the Tudeh Party. All these factors make it imperative that we reconsider the present situation of non-proletarian parties, and re-define our practical attitudes towards these currents.

Finally, I must touch upon the question of our criteria and principles in dealing with communist parties and groups at the international level. At this moment there do not exist any exact counterparts of us from the point of view of the theoretical and practical positions. What we have before us are radical left tendencies within the Marxist movement in general who are close to us in different degrees. What we must acquire is a set of minimum criteria and principles to mark out the shades of forces which are close enough to us to make it permissible for us to consciously enter into a process of exchange of views as well as practical co-operation with them. This is the precondition for our international relations to become more active.

Q: Considering what you have said, what has the politburo done practically during the period after the Second Congress by way of providing answers to the questions you mentioned here?

A: Apart from a short period after the congress during which we, as usual, allocated our present

* The pro-Russian party - BM

** The "Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran" - "Workers' Path"; another pro-Russian organisation.

capacities to different organs and different fields of activity, we noticed that there is a need for a concentration of our collective energy in order to prepare the answers to a list of priorities. Let me point out in passing that this is an old problem of ours. The politburo as an organ has various duties, from administering different branches of party activity to conducting theoretical work, to political leadership. The energy at the disposal of the politburo is divided among these different aspects; and the greatest harm is done, more often than not, to the analytical-theoretical work; for other tasks are usually urgent and cannot be delayed. This is a weak point. Nor is it easy to get rid of. Practical needs frequently impose rearrangements on us. The fact that we have not been able to keep the appointment of the same comrade to the editorship of our central organ for a long span of time is just one example of these drawbacks. Anyhow, during the period after the congress, we have managed to create this concentration of attention and activity. A list of priorities was made out and confirmed by the politburo; and on the basis of it a period of intensive, concentrated (or more or less concentrated) work has begun in which a greater number of comrades from the central committee are participating. The content of these pivotal subjects, or the list of priorities, is the points I have already mentioned here. Our aim is to, in a given period of time, prepare answers to as great a part of these questions as possible. So far, we have had a number of meetings and seminars on topics such as the Soviet Union, our [secret] activities in towns, the question as to how we can render the party a workers' party, our activity abroad, the present political situation, the question of the war and the I.R., the bourgeois opposition, our criteria in our international relations, the problems of the Kurdish movement, etc. Whenever our discussions on these topics are worked out and presentable, we will publish them. And the task of adopting the policies implied by them will be assigned to their routine channels, i.e., to their corresponding organs and comrades directly in charge. As you know the sum and substance of our discussions on the party work among workers, and the party work abroad, has been published; and the committees in charge of these fields have already begun implementing the corresponding policies. As for the question of the present political situation and the position of the I.R., articles throwing light on different aspects of this subject have been published in "Komonist" and/or broadcast from the party radio. Our discussion on the Soviet Union is a continued one. The "Bulletin on the Soviet Question", the second issue of which must have come out just about now, is a medium we employ to make our discussions publicly

known. I should point out that we do not publish our discussions on this question with the intention of declaring the official position of the party on the details of the Russian experience. Such a question cannot essentially be answered in official proclamations and resolutions of the party. Our aim is rather to elaborate and to present the analyses existing at the party level.

As for the criteria and principles of our international work, our discussions have advanced enough to enable us to build some practical activity upon them. Nevertheless, we still have to work to present a comprehensive analytical argument, especially because this question is closely related to another of our discussions, i.e., the origins and the characteristics of our Marxism; and the latter is still continuing.

Let me remind you that it's not the task of the politburo alone to deal with this [list of] priorities. As I pointed out earlier, what the politburo has at any particular moment in time on its agenda is a collection of matters concerning the activities of the party at different levels. In the same way, the settlement of each of these discussions will put a new series of tasks, of a more practical nature, on the agenda. After the settlement of, for example, the discussions concerning principles of our policy of organizing workers we should set about planning the propaganda for this policy among party activists. It will call for a series of articles for the [central] organ, a series of programmes for the Voice of the CPI, and so forth. The executive tasks concerning the implementation of such a policy will also be contained in this collection.

Q: What are the drawbacks to quickening the process of conclusion of these discussions? Has the progress made in this respect been on the whole satisfactory?

A: Comparing our work in this period with that in the previous one, I must say we have definitely done more in the present period. Yet it is possible to work with still greater efficiency. Concerning the drawbacks, one can say a lot. From technical-practical problems to complexities of theoretical issues there are obstacles that slow down the speed of work. But if I am to single out one drawback, I'd lay my finger on what I pointed out before, i.e., the fact that we have to work upon these priorities within the general framework of dealing with an extensive collection of routine executive activities. The existing capacities and capabilities can certainly be utilized more efficiently, and we shall try our best to do so.

Q: Why have these discussions been organized exclusively at the party central level? Why are they not put on the agenda of the whole party?

A: Actually, they have in no way been confined to the central level. What has taken place is that we, at the central level, have given priority to these issues, and have organized them, but the discussions per se have not been confined to the central level. The issues that are being discussed by us have long

* Reference to articles "The basis of the Party's work abroad", Komonist no.27, August '86, and "Our policy of organisation among workers", Komonist no.28, Oct. '86 - BM

been brought up not only in the party meetings, but also by our public papers as important issues demanding the close attention of all party members and activists. The "Soviet Bulletin" is itself an indication of the part our party comrades in the different party organs take in discussing this question. The question of turning into a workers' party, as well as the question of party work abroad, has also been the subject of discussion in numerous party meetings and seminars. Our comrades have therefore been asked many times to discuss, and to ponder over these issues. Our comrades, depending on their inclinations and their degree of preparedness, or the priority they give to their work in their own organ, can be active or inactive in such discussions; but the politburo as an organ has taken it upon itself to deal with these questions.

The discussions at the central level form, in fact, the thinking process of an organ, and whenever the holders of such thoughts find their views consistent enough and mature enough to be presented, they will certainly do so, and not merely at the party level but publicly at the level of the whole movement. In fact this has been the case up to now.

Q: What you have said so far gives an image of the preoccupations of the party leadership and the activities conducted at the central level. At the end it may be not a bad idea to give your assessment of the general climate prevailing in the party as a whole in the period after the congress. To what extent, in your opinion, have the orientations of the Second Congress come to prevail throughout the party? And, what advancements or obstacles have there existed in this regard?

A: If we leave the party's workers' organization in towns, which, in my view, has been closer to the orientations of the Second Congress from the beginning, I believe in other parts we can see peripheral and subordinate, albeit positive, results of the Second Congress more than we can see the effects of the chief orientation of the Second Congress which was "workers' communism". I should emphasize that this is my personal notion.

The Second Congress tried to call the attention of the party to the fact that its efforts so far have been in line with a special tradition in Marxism, with Marxist tradition in the true sense of the word which hinges upon the class character and class affiliation of our activity. We must awaken and call to the arena the [true] social base of communism, i.e., the working class. Without this even theoretical genuineness will remain socially ineffective. A part of our party cadres and activists have grasped this orientation completely. But, all in all, what has been more noticeable is the subordinate effects of the Second Congress. A significant and valuable effect of the Second Congress on our party was that it opened an extensive intellectual and political horizon before

our eyes. The Congress called for contemplation on unresolved problems of the communist movement instead of feeling satisfaction at and complacency over the "internal" achievements of one's own organization. This has brought a wave of new thoughts, and healthy and vivid enthusiasm to set foot in new, multifarious fields of theory. Expectations have risen, and preoccupations have increased. Dogmatism and one-sidedness, narrow-mindedness, and contentment with what has been already said or learnt, have all been replaced by curiosity and endeavours to assimilate all the theoretical achievements of all the different shades in the Marxist movement. This is a very promising mood; a mood which is easy to notice for anyone who has followed our publications, or has been in close touch with our comrades. But, this promising mood will not by itself answer our questions. Such a mood, unless it bases itself upon a clear understanding of the material process of growth of the revolutionary Marxist movement, and of the material spurs of necessity to provide answers to the problems of the proletarian revolution, will be frustrated and remain castrated no less quickly than has come into being. Our advancement won't take place in such a way that, following a series of theoretical works, some thinkers emerge who will be able to provide comprehensive solutions to the existing problems, will publish some articles, and will enable the Marxists of to-day to acquire mastery - like the time of Marx and Lenin - over the questions of their time. Social questions are answered by social forces. The process of providing answers to pivotal questions of the international Marxist movement is inseparable from the process of material progress, social ascent, and politico-practical interventionism of the "workers' communism". As I have already said, those thoughts and ideas which in this era have failed to have political, or party, expressions have actually come to a dead stop even as thoughts and ideas. The party organization of communism is as vital to its victory as the communist thought. So, the call of the second congress was made with a view as much to the elaboration of our class standpoint as to [the fact that] this standpoint should facilitate and enhance the practice of a specific party in a specific era. But, in my opinion, this aspect of the matter has not been given sufficient consideration. I think one of our tasks in the current period is to concentrate and direct the energy released by the second congress. We must, relying upon this newly created, promising and creative mood, call the general attention of party activists to the problems and the common practice which, if answered and if adopted, will make it possible for the party to make a material, social advance. It is, in my opinion, the responsibility of the leadership, more than any other part of the party organization, to materialize this concentration of energy and practical co-ordination through its theoretical and political interventions. [□]

LONG LIVE SOCIALISM!

A NOTE ABOUT THE DEBATES
ON THE QUESTION OF SOVIET UNION

In the continuation of the translation of articles from our bulletin "Marxism and the question of Soviet Union" (a bulletin of views and debates on the Soviet question), we had planned to publish, in this issue, the article "Critique of Mystical Socialism (Bettelheim's 'Transitional Periods')" by comrade Iraj Azarin. But due to the length of the article, we have had to publish it separately in the form of a supplement to the present BM. This supplement will be out soon.

So far, the following articles from the two issues of the Bulletin have been translated and published in "Bolshevik Message": "Introductory Theses on the Question of Soviet Union", by Hamid Taghvaei (BM no. 8), "Notes on: 'Socialism & the Analysis of Soviet Union'", by Iraj Azarin (BM no. 9), "Marginal Notes on the Recent Sweezy-Bettelheim Debates", by Mansoor Hekmat (BM no. 10), and "Trotsky & the Critique of the Socio-Economic Relations and the State in Soviet Union", by Farhad Besharat (BM no. 11). Apart from the next supplement, further articles from the Bulletin will be published in the future issues of Bolshevik Message.

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CORRECTION

Unfortunately the following typing errors occurred in the last issue of "Bolshevik Message" which may have affected the meanings at some places. These mistakes should be corrected especially in case translations are made from the English text into other languages. The correct versions are:

states	p. 1, 2nd column,	l. 7
powers	p. 2, " "	" 17
region's	p. 3, " "	" 3
congresses	p. 5, 1st "	" 14
growth	p. 7, " "	" 21
what	p. 8, " "	" 17 from below
some	p. 8, 2nd "	" 21 " "
principled	p. 9, " "	" 28 " "
became	p. 11, " "	" 15
became	p. 11, " "	" 30
reversed	p. 12, 1st "	" 29 " "
pretensions	p. 13, " "	" 4
became	p. 13, " "	" 12
International,	p. 15, 2nd "	" 6
could	p. 16, 1st "	" 5
and not by capitalists	p. 17, " "	" 21 & 22 - from below
with the method of state trustification		
convulsive	p. 17, 2nd column	" 28
became	p. 18, 1st "	" 5 from below
comprising	p. 18, 2nd "	" 3 " "
to the question	p. 19, " "	" 10
would look like	p. 22, 1st "	" 28
forging	p. 23, " "	" 25 " "
Babak Zahraei	p. 23, 2nd "	footnote
transitional	p. 23, " "	" "
mechanisms of its	p. 24, " "	" 28 from below
inevitability of this	p. 25, 1st "	" 5

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