

BOLSHEVIK MESSAGE



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PAPER OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN—THE COMMITTEE ABROAD

(2ND SERIES)
JULY 86

COMMEMORATE THE 100th ANNIVERSARY

(The following is a reprint of the May Day message published by the CPI—the Committee Abroad. The translation is by the Association of Supporters of the CPI in Britain—B.M.)

This year's first of May is one hundred years since the revolutionary workers in Chicago confronted the world masters, as a united body, and declared that they were no longer prepared to work as bosses wished. One hundred years ago, workers in Chicago struggled for an eight-hour working day, and withstood the armed forces of the class enemy, and suffered sacrifices for the realisation of their class aim. To commemorate their heroic memory and the internationalist aspect of their demand, with the proposal and adoption of the second International, the first of May was declared in 1889, the international workers' day; and ever since then workers all over the world commemorate and stop work on this day, as the day of their class solidarity in their struggle against capitalism and the world bourgeoisie.

During the past 100 years, since May the first 1886, events have taken place in the capitalist world and human life, which then would not have been even imagined by the revolutionary workers of Chicago, and the masses of workers all over the world.

Development of the productive forces, discoveries as well as scientific and technological achievements which are the product of labour and experience of workers, have now created the conditions under which, not only is it possible to have a considerable reduction in the daily working hours, but also to be able to meet all the needs of the people of the world. In one word, today with the aid of the scientific and industrial progress of mankind, the realisation of a society where there would be no unemployment, poverty and starvation, where people could work according to their ability and consume as much as they need, has become possible, tangible and feasible, more than ever before.



of MAY DAY



GRAPHIC DEPICTING CLASH BETWEEN WORKERS AND POLICE AT HAYMARKET SQUARE RALLY, MAY 4, 1886

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE !

Yet, since the ruling social relations are the same as before, the world markets are still of the same class as the bosses in the hands of one hand. The capitalist system, instead of serving the needs of workers and masses of people to provide them with an honourable life, have been in the service of a few ever growing classes of exploiters. It has produced as possible profit, as well as military provisions to protect the high status of an exploiting minority.

Capitalism, during this 100 years, has stepped into the highest and the most developed stage of its existence as imperialism. The whole world has repeatedly been divided and redivided amongst the monopolies and imperialist states, and right now imperialist bosses are preparing to redivide the world and wage the "Third World War". The capitalist system, because of its social insecurity, lack of political and social rights for a large majority of workers and masses of people all over the world, represents the most advanced stage of the capitalist system. Another imperialist war, are the most significant and general characteristics which have shadowed today's world and the lives of millions of workers and toilers worldwide.

In the dominated countries, poverty, unemployment, destitution, lack of rights, oppression and harsh dictatorship drastically prevails. In Ethiopia, millions of human beings die of starvation. In South Africa millions of Apartheid are chained. In Iran, the dark Islamic rule of capital has denied workers and masses of people of the most elementary human rights, and the necessities of decent human life. This situation is the same in the Latin American countries and other countries in Africa and Asia.

In the Western imperialist countries as well, the bourgeoisie is more and more over-represented. The ruling class is living in standards and democratic rights of workers. In the USA capitalists intend to halve the nominal wages of workers. Pregnant women have been denied maternity benefits. In Britain, despite over four million unemployed, and record poverty, the Thatcher government still talks of plans further unemployment, reduction of wages and limiting the rights of organisation and protest of the workers. In France, the so called socialist government had commenced attacking workers with its "flexibility" law and the threat of mass layoffs and plant closures. In Italy, Mr Craxi, the "socialist" prime minister, has undertaken the responsibility of organised attack of bourgeoisie against workers. In Germany, the "socialist" government has reduced the rate of the automatic wage increase in accordance with inflation (Scala-Mobile).

In the Eastern bloc countries too, the living conditions of the working class deteriorates every day. The conditions of the Polish working class are the epitome of the present rule of the Generals, characteristically show the situation which the working class faces in this imperialist bloc. In Russia, the final world war Dictatorship has experienced a record rate of increase in the economical productivity of labour power and observation of further discipline in the work place.

The reality is that the few decades of boom after the Second World War has long ended. The world bourgeoisie, with the help of the destruction and butchery of the human society and the reduction of the world in this war, has passed through over three decades of boom. The world bourgeoisie, with the help of the world which was brought under the sinister domination of imperialist capital. Now that this period of boom has ended, and the masses of the under-represented workers and masses of people, vastly produced and unmet commodities, imperialist rivalries, has practically and formally placed the workers and humanity under such conditions as to order to survive and avoid a disaster with dimensions incomparable with the first and second imperialist wars, hence leaving them no choice but to struggle against the imperialist system and its effects. This is the reality that during this 100 years the working class in all countries and areas has struggled against the exploitation and the rule of capitalism and imperialism. The working class has experienced great victories and defeats during these hundred years.

The deep crisis of capitalism during the early years of the twentieth century led to the first imperialist war. Despite the treachery of a large section of the Western Social democracy and its turning away from revolution and proletarian aims, our class together with the Communist and socialist political parties, and the power in Russia, and the start of revolutions in Germany, Hungary and Finland. Although this magnificent victory produced a

motivating force and a great material and moral credit in the service of progress and escalation of class struggle of workers world-wide, and also gave it an immense acceleration and impetus, the revolutionary currents and the new Communist International which was based on the victory of the October Revolution, was never able to eliminate the effects and consequences of the Treachery of the Social Democracy and Social democracy from the revolution in the ranks of working class and reunite the ranks of this class.

A large and determining section of workers remained under the banner and influence of social democracy, within the frame of reformism and the struggle to catch capitalism. Subsequently the mistakes of the Bolshevik Party and the rest of the communist parties on one hand, effects of treachery of the social democracy and reformism on the other, provided the grounds of the defeat of revolution and revolutionary workers movements in Germany, China, France and elsewhere. The Bolshevik Party from the proletarian and international path and policy, state Capitalism strengthened and established, and held political power in the hands of workers and toilers worldwide.

In this manner, in the threshold of deep crisis of the end of the thirties which led to the second Imperialist World War, the condition of working class was one of fragmentation, lack of perspective and unmet human necessities. The working class in all sorts of policies of nationalist and revisionist currents. Despite wide spread struggles and heroism of masses of workers and toilers, the working class suffered heavy losses. In spite of lives, these struggles have not been able to lead to the victory of the working class and realisation of its objectives.

After the Second World War, the working class has been in all parts of the world has continued and escalated. In this period also, in the absence of a revolutionary and proletarian perspective and political leadership, the working class has been in a state of confusion. In these struggles, it has been possible for the bourgeoisie and various revisionist and petit bourgeois currents to convert the struggle and sacrifices of workers for freedom to ladder the new representatives of bourgeoisie and defenders of capitalist system to power. Today's world still observes an ever growing struggle of workers and toilers in all capitalist countries. In most of the countries of the world workers tired and angry of this situation start the heaven with their spontaneous strikes, disruptions, strikes, and demonstrations. In South Africa, the struggle of workers has shaken the structure of the system of Apartheid. Workers and people of the Philippines have been the first step to the overthrow of the dictatorship of Marcos, and have forced the bourgeoisie to admit that the situation has not yet been back to "normal". Hell burns in the ranks of the revolutionary workers struggle. In the near future, the Western imperialist countries, heroic miners in Britain with their year-long strike have created historic spics.

The struggle of the workers in Car Industry and train services in France, the nationwide strike of steel workers in Germany, the nationwide strike of the workers in Denmark, over 100 workers in Yugoslavia during 1984, uninterrupted struggles of workers in Poland, all in all manifests that capitalism has not been safe from the storm of workers' struggles.

In Iran, workers and toilers with the 1979 revolution toppled the dictatorial rule of Shah. Yet, the uprising of workers and people in the absence of a leading communist organisation and with the lack of maintaining of a strong and united army, the working class bourgeoisie, was halted half way and the Islamic rule of capital put the restoration of pre-revolution conditions on a par with the aid and cooperation of the ruling party and the Fedayee (majority), Islamic republic waged an unprecedented and unrelenting struggle against the workers and communist movement and inflicted heavy blows on the workers movement.

But advanced workers and communist revolutionaries of Iran, by organising the primary and secondary currents of communist and revolutionary marxism and summing up their previous experience, succeeded in founding their own class party. The Communist Party has emerged in Iran as the leading force of the working class despite oppression and dictatorship of the religious, reactionary Islamic republic, despite the pressures of the imperialist and capitalist class of the Western world. Iran, is present in the social scene of Iran, as the most important and the most effective militant force against the dictatorship of the Islamic republic. Workers, toilers and oppressed people of Kurdistan who enjoy a higher degree of organisation and political consciousness, under the leadership of the Kurdistan

Organisation of the Communist Party of Iran - Komala - have been leading an uninterrupted armed struggle against Islamic republic since it came to power.

The Islamic republic, despite carrying out all the oppression, massacre and untold suffering necessary has not seen able to smash and force the workers and revolutionary movement in Iran to succumb and surrender. Against the growing exploitation, attacks on the standards of living, the erosion of the democratic and democratic rights, workers have pursued their struggle and strikes in various forms and levels, and even after seven years of the rule of Islamic republic, they have prevented the bourgeois labour law, which legalises the slavery relation between workers and capitalists, to be passed.

Today, all over the capitalist world, the struggle and resistance of workers against the effects of the crisis and the growing wave of bourgeois attacks, has become a reality. A new era of a wide struggle of workers against the bourgeoisie and all its rotten and imperialist relations which are woven over the human society, now exists.

To explain the present situation and the way out of it, two analyses and two alternative paths are given. Capitalism and its revisionist agents on the one hand, preach submission to the existing situation, placing hope in states and ruling politicians, and awaiting tomorrow. Where they face real workers struggles, they urge the workers, under the false cover of "socialism", "communism", and protection of the national and trade interests, to a mere parliamentary, trade unionist and fragmentary struggle within the frame of capitalist laws.

Revisionists tell the workers that there is no longer any need for a workers revolution and proletarian dictatorship in order to achieve socialism. Socialism will be reached by gradual reforms and winning the majority of the parliamentary seats by the "Labour Parties". The idea looks very attractive. However, the current crisis as technical, coincidental, and unrelated to the nature of the capitalist system, and by comparing the social conditions and the situation of workers in the Western countries with those of Poland, Russia, and East Germany and the ruling social order in the Eastern bloc countries, all the workers should be aware that "The free Western World" is better than the promised socialism of Marx and Lenin.

In contrast, true communists and conscious workers, declare clearly and loudly that the existence of poverty, unemployment, starvation and famines, along with the use of the most advanced technology, machinery and mountains of produced commodities, is not a strange quirk but the consequence of the nature of capitalist system. The workers in the Western countries accumulate profit and not to provide the necessities of human beings, 1400 years ago, in Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx while pointing out the glaring, but the characteristic of capitalism, of grave diggers of this system. He declared that the struggle of workers against capitalists and their states is a ceaseless struggle and urged the workers to organise a proletarian party in Communist Party, as the precondition to a successful struggle for the destruction of this system. Marx regarded workers as their own saviours and their own liberators and urged them not to reform this system but to struggle for seizure of political power, revolution and workers' state.

Today, once more we stress on the correctness of these principles by relying on the objective realities, the effects of capitalist crisis, the nature of the struggle of workers world-wide. That still in many countries of the world, workers should struggle and revolt to achieve 8-hour working day and an honourable life, and that in the so called advanced countries the same demand of Chicago Workers of a hundred years ago, which was only realised after years of workers struggles, are being taken back, all manifest the weakness and fragmentation in our ranks. We workers have not yet succeeded in realising that necessary precondition of our victory, which is organised in a true workers' communist party, both in various countries and on a world scale.

Militant Workers Revolutionary Communists!

This barbarian which capitalists and their states have placed before us, must not reveal and reject the false leaders; we must organise and unite our ranks in our own class party and organisation, the true revolutionary communist party in every country and in every world scale, by writing and

coordinating widespread and escalated workers struggle yet scattered all over the world, and the life of this sinister inhumane system.

Workers and revolutionaries who have gathered in the ranks of the Communist Party of Iran, extend the salutes on the 100th Anniversary of the struggle of Chicago Workers, from the bloody bullwarks of struggle against capitalism and the infernal regime of Islamic republic in Iran, to all Comrades in other countries. Workers and communists of Iran as an equal battalion of the world army of workers, have sworn not to yield even for a second in the struggle against capitalist system.

On this historical day more than ever before they hold their hands for fraternal unity and comradeship towards you, and are prepared to place all in their power along with you to build the militant international organisation of workers, a world Communist Party, to destroy capitalism and free human beings from this hated system.

- LONG LIVE WORKERS INTERNATIONALISM!
- LONG LIVE THE MEMORY OF THE HEROIC WORKERS OF CHICAGO!
- COMMEMORATE THE 1ST OF MAY, THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY!

COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN
- THE COMMITTEE ABROAD -

25-486

From P. 28

MAY 85, MAY 86, WORKERS' STRUGGLES IN IRAN INTENSIFIED!

- Protest over the death of a woman worker.
- National Industrial Group (Shoe Manufacturer)
- Women workers are segregated from male workers
- Paymanir Company (Subsidiary of the ministry of energy)
- Victorious struggle of workers to get their unpaid wages.
- Miyandob (North - West of Iran)
- Victorious strike of workers at a brick factory to raise their wages.
- Arj Factory - Tehran
- Strike forces the management to retreat.
- Bus corporation - Tehran
- Workers win their demand over unpaid wages.
- Miandob - Western Iran
- Victorious 14-Day joint strike by workers of 7 brick-factories for a wage-rise.
- Glass Factory - Ghazvin
- Victorious strike in glass-making factory for a wage-rise.
- Tehran Offset Prints
- 3000 workers and their strike successfully.

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CRITIQUE OF THE POLITICAL PLATFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY ("BATTAGLIA COMUNISTA") PART 2

The following is the translation of the 2nd and final part of an article originally published in the 2nd issue (Dec.55) of the theoretical organ of the CP, *Bessoye-Soyuzism (Towards Socialism)*, criticizing the Political Platform of the PCInt, (*Pattio Comunista Internazionale-Battaglia Comunista*). The PCInt is one of the groups of the "Left Communist" trend in Europe. Its Political Platform was ratified in its 2nd Congress in 1952, and reconfirmed, with minor changes, in the 7th Congress (1957). The first part of the translation of this article was published in the previous issue of *Bolshevik Message*, which dealt with issues such as the characteristic feature of capitalist production, the relation between party and class, tasks of the party and the question of trade-unions. The present section deals with the question of imperialism, imperialist wars, democracy and national liberation movements. Readers wishing to obtain the Platform of the PCInt, which was a supplement to the present article in *Bessoye-Soyuzism*, may write to the PCInt address, at C.P. 1753, 20100 Milano, Italy.

B.M.

5- IMPERIALISM AND IMPERIALIST WARS

World wars, caused by the internal and even more incurable contradictions of the capitalist system, have given birth to modern imperialism and opened up capitalism's crisis of disintegration whatever may be the form of its domination. (Article 6 of the Platform)

This is the novel and entirely wrong and distorted definition of the PCInt of imperialism. According to the definition, world wars are an outcome of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system, just as imperialism and the disintegration crisis of capitalism are that of world wars! The situation, however, is entirely the reverse.

At the beginning of the present century, the internal contradictions of capitalism in the most advanced industrialized countries resulted in the increasing concentration of capitals, the merging of banking and industrial capitals, the emergence and domination of finance capital, i.e., in imperialism; and the contradictions among imperialist states in these countries created world wars. The first and second world wars were imperialist wars - wars among imperialist states for the partition of the world.

This is the gist of the Marxist theory of "imperialism" and of "world wars" which the PCInt, by directly linking the internal con-

tradictions of capitalism to war, and deducing imperialism from imperialist wars, has turned entirely on its head. The PCInt, of course, speaks, not of "imperialism" in general, but of "modern imperialism"; but if by "modern imperialism" we do not mean exactly "the imperialism of the present era" then the issue has only become more blurred and distorted.

Does the PCInt believe that modern imperialism is a new phase in the imperialist era? Have world wars created a higher stage in the "highest stage of capitalism"? If this were the case, what then are the characteristics of this modern imperialism and how is it distinguished from old imperialism? Why and how did war result in modernizing imperialism? When, specifically, was the starting point for this new phase, and which of the two previous world wars, with some thirty years' interval, should be counted as the cause for imperialism entering into the new phase? Which economic facts and objective developments in the composition and functioning of imperialist capital distinguishes qualitatively the post world war period from the previous period of imperialism, and so on and so forth. Since there is no answer in the platform to the above questions and contradictions and we think it very unlikely that, did PCInt have an explanation, it would not have passed it over by a passing reference to "modern imperialism". We must draw the conclusion that in the above statement the term "modern" is used merely as a complementary epithet for imperialism, without any specific and conscious theoretical implications. That is, the PCInt views on the world wars, on imperialism, and on the relation between the two is true all the same in an end down name. Still, however, despite all evidence to the contrary, we take the thesis of "modern imperialism" seriously, and accept that the PCInt really regards imperialism after the world wars a higher stage of imperialism, we must say that its views on the imperialist era and imperialist wars, are strictly and unequivocally wrong by virtue of historical facts and theoretical basis of Marxism! For, irrespective of how many phases the PCInt should divide the imperialist era into, the fact remains valid that, firstly, world wars were caused by competition between imperialist states rather than the internal contradictions of capitalism; and, secondly, any new phase in imperialism can only be caused by a qualitatively new stage in the development and expansion of the capitalist mode of production, rather than by political developments such as wars.

The PCInt views, however, despite being a tangled web, have their own internal logic and consistency. A party which explains the capitalist system on the basis of "the contradiction between the forces of production and relations of productions", should be expected to deduce world wars from "the internal contradictions of capitalism" and imperialism from war! This, in fact, is a variety of Marxism which explains everything on the basis of economy to the extent that it explains nothing at all.

6-THE QUESTION OF DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL LIBERATION WARS

The advocacy of "national socialism", support for the "new democratic" states or for the "liberation of oppressed people" is opposed to Marxism and must be rejected as part of bourgeois class rule. "Anti-fascism" is still one of the most recent ideological and political lies behind which capitalism plays the great card of its own class rule. (Article 8 of the Platform)

The party considers the period of national movements to be definitely closed. This is also true for the ex-colonial countries with predominantly pre-capitalist economic structures. In these countries the development of indigenous capitalism becomes bound up with the network of international imperialist interests by means of very tight bonds so that both can dominate the indigenous proletariat. In the period between the Second and Third World War, that is, in the historical period of the widest and most severe imperialist control over the world, to struggle in solidarity with any kind of national liberation movement means placing the party on the political terrain of the class enemy; it means acting on the terrain of the bourgeoisie, the direction of which all national movements are forced to take.

Therefore the Party rejects alliances with the bourgeoisie, either of the West or of the East (Asia included), as well as participation in national wars. Just as it yesterday rejected the wrong dialectical conception according to which the Party should struggle for the victory of bourgeois revolutions over feudal regimes in order to facilitate the capitalist revolution, so today the Party rejects the false thesis concerning the necessity of alliances (united fronts) in order to ease the democratic revolution. The only result of the latter can be the passing of the countries in question from one imperialist bloc to another. (Article 9 of the Platform)

The PCInt which has always openly opposed

the kaleidoscopic range of new "schemes": "partisanism", "national liberation movements", "frontism", "defence of constitution", petit-bourgeois pacifism, etc., will act energetically to clear these false conceptions from within the working class in order to restore the real historical conditions of the bourgeois-proletarian antagonism and reestablish a new relation of forces. (Article 11 of the Platform)

Today, within the perspective of ever more intensive material and psychological preparations for the Third World War, the objective possibilities for an international group which has openly and definitely broken with Stalinism, with democracy, with war and with the more recent forms of opportunism. (Platform, the section on international situation)

The above statements in the clearest possible way reveal the theorized idealism, fatalism, and passivism of "the Internationalist Communist Party" in its attitude toward democracy and democratic and liberation struggles and revolutions.

"The Internationalist Communist Party" This indeed is a misnomer for a party which, as it admits, for over thirty years has "unequivocally, decisively, and openly" called the workers to denigrate the struggle against fascism, to oppose the liberation of oppressed nationalities, boycott national liberation movements, and break away from democracy. None the less it is not the case that such views are put forth by a trend which lays claims to Marxism. These views and positions are in fact the modernized version of an old deviation in Marxism which was expressed in the Russian social democracy and was thoroughly and profoundly criticized by Lenin. (cf. "The Junius Pamphlet" Vol. 22, Collected Works p.305, "The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economicism", Reply to Kievsky (Pyatakov), and "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economicism", Vol.23, Collected Works, pp.1-76).

The prominent representative and supporter of this view, which Lenin called "Imperialist Economicism" was Pyatakov (Kievsky). Influenced by the First World War, and through a metaphysical generalization of the position and assessment of the Bolsheviks in the war, he put forth these indications that due to the world wide domination of imperialist capital, the era of national and liberation movements and wars has come to an end, the question of the right to self determination is a matter of the past, and Marxists are not to give active support to this slogan and to defend national struggles and movements.

The PCInt Platform repeats these outmoded,

criticized, and refuted views from the same economist viewpoint, and in the same spirit and essence, this time in the case of the post Second World War period; it has extended it to its logical conclusion, i.e., total break with democracy and all democratic rights.

Therefore, in so far as concerns a radical and theoretical criticism of thesis such as "the contradiction between Marxism and support of the liberation of oppressed peoples," "the end of the era of national movements," "the necessity for the Marxists to break with democracy and anti-fascism," criticism has existed for 80 years, and we shall document our discussion with Lenin's views in the above mentioned sources. The PCInt, of course, may offer a Leninist critique of its views, or find it inapplicable to present day conditions. One thing, however, is obvious: it is the present day perpetrator and representative of Kievsky's views and of imperialist criticism in the European social democracy in the early years of the present century, and, along with a break with "democracy, anti-fascism, and liberation movements," it has, in fact, broken with Leninism.

Let us now see what the Kievsky of the "era between the second and the third world war" has to say specifically and how justified it is in its break with Leninism.

Has the Era of National and Liberation Movements Come to an End?

Lenin's reply is as follows:

National wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies in the imperialist era are not only probable but inevitable. About 1000 million people, or over half of the world's population, live in the colonies and semi-colonies (China, Turkey and Persia). The national liberation movements there are either already very strong, or are growing and maturing. Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will inevitably take the form of national wars against imperialism.

(Collected Works, Vol. 22, p.310, Original emphasis)

Here Lenin clearly speaks of the possibility and inevitability of national movements in the imperialist era (and not in a particular period or juncture in this era). The historical realities after Lenin, specifically after World War 2, have borne his views out. In the post war era, not only have liberation and national movements (both in the specific sense of struggle against national oppression within the framework of one country, or in the more general sense of democratic-anti-imperialist revolutions in dominated countries) not subsided or ended, but have increased many more times in both extent and number. The anti-imperialist movements and revolutions of dominated nations

throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America (from India and Algiers to China and Vietnam, and from Mozambique and Angola to Iran and Nicaragua) and also the decades-old struggles in Ireland, Eritrea, Basque, Palestine, Kurdistan, etc., to secure the right of self-determination and obtain the right of self-determination are there to bear us out. Therefore to prove that national and liberation movements do exist requires no theoretical argument or discussion. The PCInt itself has acknowledged their existence by boycotting and rejecting participation in these movements. It would not be possible to boycott something which does not exist!

But have these movements lost their revolutionary and progressive character? Is the era of these movements over in this sense? Definitely not! Undoubtedly all and every national movement is not progressive and revolutionary. It is quite possible to have a national and "anti-imperialist" movement conducted by reactionary classes - movements bereft of any democratic and revolutionary aspects. The position of Marxists towards these movements is quite clear. As Lenin has said:

No Marxist will forget, however, that capitalism is progressive countries with feudalism, and that imperialism is progressive compared with pre-monopoly capitalism. Hence, it is not every struggle against imperialism that we should support. We will not support a struggle of the reactionary classes against imperialism; we will not support an uprising of the reactionary classes against imperialism and capitalism.

(Collected Works, Vol. 23, p.63)

It is clear, however, that the PCInt position is not that of "the struggle of reactionary classes against imperialism." It bluntly considers as bourgeois, and therefore reactionary, any national and liberation movement in our time, and that is exactly where it goes wrong. It fails to understand that it is not possible to accept the fact of "the most severe imperialist control over the world" and "the domination of indigenous and international capitalism" over the working and toiling masses, in imperialist dominated countries, and meanwhile regard the struggle of these masses to eradicate the oppression caused by this control and domination as devoid of revolutionary substance and character. Indeed, not only have many national and liberation movements in our time not lost their revolutionary and democratic character, but because of the expansion of imperialist influence and domination, and the intensification of exploitation, dictatorship and political and economic disenfranchisement of the masses of people in dominated countries (a reality that no one can fail to observe in almost all African, Asian, and Latin American countries) they have become progressively radicalized in terms of their

objective substance and content. The political meaning of "indigenous capitalism bound up with the network of international imperialist interests" and "the domination of both over the proletariat of the dominated countries" is nothing but reaction, brute force and dictatorship, that is, a form of political superstructure which can best guarantee the profitability and accumulation of capital in these countries. It is for this reason specifically that national and liberation movements in these countries are increasingly made to move away from a feudal and bourgeois-liberal critique of imperialism in their objective substance and goals, with their democratic and revolutionary character becoming more prominent and conspicuous. As to the extent to which national movements are radicalized and will respond to this historical necessity in practice, this would depend entirely on the part played by the working class and the practice of the communists in these movements - a point which we shall examine in detail later. What we like to emphasize here is that putting revolutionary-democratic goals on the agenda, as well as the radicalization of the substance of anti-imperialist movements in our time, is as much an objective necessity as the total denial of democracy and brute political dictatorship and reaction is a necessity for imperialism. Those who fail to realize this fact, have entirely failed to understand the real meaning of "the imperialist era" and "the historical period of the most severe imperialist control over the world"; they have failed to grasp the political substance and requirements of this period and this era.

At this rate, the PCInt can close its eyes to reality, as a result of its economist understanding of imperialism and of failing to understand the political meaning and consequence of "the domination of imperialist capital over the world" - whose only consequence appears to be the inevitable outbreak of the third world war. The PCInt can refuse to see the national liberation movements of our time, or to deny the revolutionary and progressive character of these movements, but the fact remains that over half of the world's population are unable to refrain from engaging in revolutionary struggle against imperialism by virtue of their objective living conditions. So long as imperialism exists, national liberation movements and struggles will also exist, and so long as reaction, brute force and dictatorship form a constituent part of imperialist domination, the existence of revolutionary-democratic movements against imperialism is also a historical necessity. The period of revolutionary wars and movements against imperialism can come to an end only with imperialism itself.

Can National Liberation Movements in our Time Achieve Victory?

The assessment of PCInt of all varieties of

national liberation movements as "acting on the terrain of the bourgeoisie", rejecting support for "national movements" as part of "the ideology and tactics of the forces for the preservation of bourgeois class rule" and believing that "the only result [of these movements] can be the passing of the countries in question from one imperialist bloc to another," all indicate that the PCInt has already (at least up till the outbreak of the third world war!) made up its mind about the fate of any liberation movement: from its point of view all these movements are bourgeois and therefore doomed to failure! What has led the PCInt to this conclusion is the desire for severe control of imperialist powers over the world, "tight bonds between the indigenous and international capital" etc! - that is, the logic of a full economist determinist. The determinists fail to understand that the fate of revolutionary movements is not decided on the basis of economic laws and conditions. These conditions are the cause and impetus for revolution, but once the revolution starts, the course of its development and its outcome is determined, not in the sphere of economics, but in the sphere of class struggle, in politics.

Speaking of the impossibility of victory for economic reasons, is particularly absurd in the case of national liberation movements, for these movements (either with the objective of solving the national problem within the framework of one country, or as movements against the domination of imperialism) are, in terms of their substance and goals, democratic and political movements. It is to solve the national question and achieve the right of self-determination, that is, the political independence of the oppressed nation or country from imperialism or the oppressor nation. In rejecting Kievsky, who also relied on arguments such as "the domination of imperialist capital over the world" and "the world war" to prove the unfeasibility of the fate and victory of national movements, Lenin writes:

Central to all the disquisitions of the self-determination opponents is the claim that it is generally "unachievable" under capitalist or imperialist conditions, or "unachievable" is frequently used in widely different and inaccurately defined meanings. That is why in our theses we insisted on what is essential in any theoretical discussion: an explanation of what is meant by "unachievable".... All democratic demands are "unachievable" under imperialism in the sense that politically they are hard to achieve or totally unachievable without a series of revolutions.

It is fundamentally wrong, however, to maintain that self-determination is unachievable in the economic sense.

(Collected Works, Vol. 23, p.40)

Therefore, if in the real world the oppressed masses have decided to determine their destiny through revolution, i.e., the only way of obtaining self-determination in the imperialist era, if national and liberation movements and revolutions exist - as indeed they do - then issuing verdicts as to the eventual defeat of such movements for reasons such as that of "the indigenous capital being bound up with international capital" or "severe imperialist control" and so on is entirely absurd and meaningless.

Everything depends on the role and practice of the proletariat, that is the only consistently revolutionary class in our time, in these movements. When the PCInt, believing in, and referring to, the inevitability of the bourgeois orientation of national movements, exempts the proletariat from playing this part, it has already prepared the grounds for the defeat of these movements.

Who Is Placed on the Political Terrain of the Enemy?

"Lack of unconditional support for national liberation movements and boycott of participation in them" this sums up the position of the "Internationalist Communist Party", which, in avoiding being placed on the "political terrain of the bourgeoisie", has turned out to be identical with the position of the most reactionary bourgeois parties.

The position of the masses toward national and democratic movements is the exact opposite of what the PCInt says. The Marxists consider themselves duty-bound to defend unconditionally the right of self-determination and therefore the revolutionary movements aimed at fulfilling this democratic right. This means that so far as the "democratic" and "national oppression and the freedom of oppressed nations in determining their destiny is concerned, they are fully on the side of, and in accord with, national-democratic movements, and against imperialism and the oppressor nation. The Marxists, meanwhile, are required to campaign actively within these movements, to strengthen the proletariat, to popularize its slogans and objectives, and to gain the support of toiling masses for the substance and content of its victory and the particular destiny that the proletariat puts in perspective. Active support for national-democratic movements against imperialism and the oppressor bourgeoisie, and active support for the interests, aims, and slogans of the proletariat against the wavering, inconsistency and betrayals of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation.

This is the only principled, correct, and revolutionary position in dealing with any kind of national-democratic movement in historical time - The period before the first world war, between the first and the second world wars, and between the second and the third world war! As long as these movements

exist, the Marxists will deal with them in these terms.

So much for the Marxist principles in the attitude toward the national movements. But specifically in our time, i.e., in the period of the decadence and total reaction of capitalism, and the increasing departure of the bourgeoisie from democracy in general and "the eradication of national oppression and obtaining the right to self-determination" in particular, the weight and power of the working class in national movements is increasingly turning into the precondition of the expansion and radicalization of these movements and their growth and prepreparation up to the point of victory. Today "the close bondage between the indigenous capital in dominated countries and imperialist capital" has caused various bourgeois strata in dominated countries and nations to waver and show inconsistency in the demand for the eradication of national oppression, because of the interests they have in common with the dominating bourgeoisie, to give up completely the struggle for this objective, and, once such a struggle breaks out from below and by the people, to stand against their "own" nation. Lenin's views on the matter apply now more than ever to the world.

All national oppression calls forth the resistance of the broadest masses; and the resistance of a nationally oppressed population always tends to national revolt. Not infrequently (notably in Austria and Russia) we find the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations talking of national revolt, while in practice they encourage reactionary compacts with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation behind the backs of, and against, its own people. In such cases the criticism of revolutionary Marxists should be directed not against the national movement, but against its degradation, vulgarization, and against the tendency to reduce it to a petty squabble.

(Collected Works, vol. 23, p. 61)

In our time, examples such as Austria and Russia of eighty years ago (examples which have led the PCInt toward its critique against national movements) are many. Today the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations, much more than Lenin's time, has revealed its tendency toward compromising with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nations and its betrayal of indigenous nations. That is exactly why the proletariat's confrontation of this tendency in these movements has assumed such a decisive role.

This is a point that both the "frontist" social-petty bourgeoisie, and the PCInt, and the "European Left Communism" trend in general, fail to grasp. Both these trends consider support for, and participation in, national movements to be identical with "alliance with, and support for, the bourgeoisie of the oppress-

ed nation". The former calls upon the proletariat to support and compromise with the indigenous bourgeoisie; in order to "take part in the movement", while the latter boycotts and refutes the movement, in order to draw its line with the bourgeoisie. The practical outcome of both positions, however, is the same: abandoning the fate of national movements to the indigenous bourgeoisie, to allow its compromises and betrayals to operate at large, and, finally, to render these movements barren and defeated.

PCInt is puritanical. To avoid being contaminated by the bourgeois impurities of national movements, it takes the movement to task for all of these impurities and abandons it completely. From the point of view of PCInt any national movement is "the political terrain of the bourgeoisie" and getting involved in them is "compromise with the bourgeoisie". For fear of "being placed on the political terrain of the enemy" the PCInt jumps into the lap of the bourgeoisie that is, abandons the entire movement to the bourgeoisie. It falls into the trap that promoting the national movement and the widespread resistance of masses of the people to national oppression to the level of a revolution, specially in our time, is carried out despite the will and wishes of the bourgeoisie. Also, to the extent that this revolution approximates the real and radical solution of national oppression, to the same extent will the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation show more willingness to compromise with the bourgeoisie of the dominant nation, and to the same extent will the proletariat be charged with heavier tasks in advancing the movement.

The deepening and radicalization of the struggle against the oppressor bourgeoisie, wiping away nationalist illusions and mentalities, and revealing for the masses the bourgeois character of national oppression, promoting the class struggle within the movement, and introducing and propagandizing the objectives and the meaning of its victory in a way that should assure the bourgeoisie of the struggle and the interests of the proletariat in this struggle, are all unflinching tasks of communists in national movements.

None of these, however, interest our PCInt. The practical tasks of communists in the real and live struggle are the last to concern it. It is only alarmed by the risk of "compromise with the bourgeoisie", and in its own mind has found the way of avoiding it: he who refrains from action, is safe from compromise! It does not wish to enter a "compromise" with the bourgeoisie, so it entirely refuses all support for, and participation in, any kind of national movement. What the PCInt does not grasp is that the real and practical result and outcome of this refusal and boycott is nothing but a compromise with the bourgeoisie - a compromise with the chauvinist bourgeoisie for failure to support the struggle of the oppressed na-

tion, and compromise with the indigenous bourgeoisie by preventing the proletariat from participation in the national movement.

By announcing that the PCInt "has always openly opposed the kaleidoscopic range of new 'schemes', 'partisanism', 'national liberation movements', etc" and "will act energetically to clear these false conceptions from within the working class" the PCInt is practically rubbing shoulders with the oppressor bourgeoisie. The movement of broad masses of the people against national oppression, is not a "kaleidoscopic range of new schemes" in the reality of our time, and nothing would please the bourgeoisie more and serve it better than having some people deny this reality and try to clean it from within the workers in the name of communism and defence of the workers' rights. This is what the official bourgeois speakers and propagandists have for years been engaged in: dealing with national movements throughout the world. If the PCInt through the forty years of its existence has been engaged in opposing national liberation movements and cleaning the "wrong conception" of these movements from within the workers, then surely one can say that it has not for a moment stepped outside the "united front with the chauvinist bourgeoisie". Yes, it is indeed possible to find oneself on the political terrain of the enemy via puritanism.

Break With Democracy is Break With Socialism

The PCInt is not only opposed to "the right to self-determination of national liberation movements", but is against all democracy and movements over democratic demands.

PCInt declares openly that "today, within the perspective of ever more intensive material and psychological preparations for the Third World War, democracy, along with Stalinism and the war, is a "form of oppression which an open and decisive break should be made! Put this theory next to the thesis that "anti-fascism" is bourgeois lies and deception, and what you will have would be one of the new forms of "consistent anti-democratism" - its

PCInt has made an open and decisive break with democracy, i.e., it believes that in our time support for democracy and the struggle for time support for democracy and the struggle for democracy, introducing, demanding, and struggling for realizing these democratic rights and demands (the liberation of women, the separation of religion and state, the right of nations to self-determination, the freedom of speech, conviction, etc.) and taking part in and gaining the breach of these rights by the bourgeoisie, support for democratic movements and revolutions and taking part in them, all are condemned and rejected, all are opportunism, and should be resisted like all other opportunistic tendencies.

The fearful perspective of the "intensive

preparations for the Third World War" has apparently driven the PCInt into forgetting even the ABC of Marxism. Otherwise the slightest familiarity with Marxist principles should enable one to see that without democracy and the struggle for democracy, without getting educated in the process of this struggle and benefiting from its achievements, the working class would be unable to destroy capitalism and establish socialism. One would know that the working class requires democracy, for democratic conditions provide the most suitable grounds for the deepening of class struggle and its open and decisive expansion. It would know that at a time when the bourgeoisie has openly and decisively broken with democracy, it is only the proletariat that can, and must hold the banner for the struggle for democracy, and become the leader and backbone of democratic movements and revolutions. Lenin has written in "A Caricature of Marxism":

All "democracy" consists in the proclamation and satisfaction of "rights" which under capitalism are realisable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is impossible.

(Collected Works, vol. 23, p. 74)

In continuing the same argument, Lenin regards this view of Kievsky according to which the right of self-determination is impossible under capitalism, and unnecessary under socialism, to "theoretically and scientifically and politically and practically chauvinistic" because "it fails to appreciate the significance of democracy".

... socialism is impossible without democracy because: (1) the proletariat cannot perform the socialist revolution unless it prepares for it by the struggle for democracy; (2) victorious socialism cannot consolidate its victory and bring humanity to the withering away of the state without implementing full democracy.

(Ibid)

This is a summary of the theoretical basis of Marxism on democracy and its importance from the point of view of the socialist struggle of the working class.

Maybe these views are no longer valid in our time, the post war period? Maybe we should break with democracy because capital has openly and decisively broken with it and has managed to keep it away going by increasing violation of democratic rights in metropolitan countries and brute, fascist dictatorship in dominated countries?

Maybe the struggle for democracy is opportunistic, because we live in a time when even the most basic democratic rights can be achieved through struggle and revolution revolu-

tions that we witness daily in dominated countries? Maybe opposition to fascism is deception because fascism itself is a reality and bourgeois governments reveal their fascistic nature increasingly in metropolitan and dominated countries alike?

It is indeed a reversed logic. It is the logic of one who does not understand that the imperialist era is the time of the decadence and decline of capitalism and not that of the struggle against capitalist reaction and dictatorship.

No, resorting to "the period between the two wars" and "preparation for war" is not going to save PCInt either. PCInt is so dazzled by the perspective of the imperialist war which has not yet come about, that it fails to see the anti-imperialist wars which are being fought at the moment. The PCInt does not understand that our times is not only the period of war between the imperialists, but also the period of revolutionary war against the imperialists, the period of anti-imperialist democratic revolutions which prepare the grounds and preconditions for socialist revolutions:

The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations.

Any "teachings and practical directives" and objective realities gives us highly developed capitalist nations side by side with a number of economically slightly developed, or totally undeveloped, nations.

(Ibid, p.60)

In "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" Lenin explains the ideas of the relation between democracy and the socialist revolution further:

The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economic and political, battles of the proletariat against the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

(Collected Works, vol. 22, p. 144)

This is the relation which exists in Marxist theory and in life itself between democ-

cracy and socialism. In its break with democracy the PCInt has turned its back not only to democratic revolutions, but to the proletariat, to the socialist revolution itself.

7 - "A CARICATURE OF MARXISM" IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD WORLD WARS

We have reviewed the PCInt views on the capitalist system, on imperialism, the party, the unions, and national and democratic movements, and in each case showed its errors and the contradiction of its views with Marxism. In summing up, it would be necessary to point out the basis and substance of the theoretical deviations of PCInt, i.e., what relates the individual theses and stands as a unified whole, and gives it a non-proletarian character.

No far as it concerns positions on specific issues and real movements and struggles, the PCInt platform is a platform for inaction. Throughout the platform there is not a single positively-defined slogan and demand, nor a specific directive concerning working class struggles. What exists is rejection, prevention and denial: do not build unions, do not improve the existing unions, do not support the struggle for the elimination of national oppression, do not struggle against fascism, do not take part in national movements and democratic revolutions, do not struggle for democratic rights and demands - this, clearly, is the sum of the "teachings and practical directives" of the Platform for the workers. These "teachings and practical directives" can be summed up in: refrain from class struggle in any real and tangible form it can take! The "Marxism of PCInt" does not only interpret the world, it also shows the way of how NOT to change it! It is a caricature of Marxism, a caricature which one will constantly have to prove the most obvious points such as why one should struggle; why is the revolution the revolution; why is democracy desirable; why fascism is undesirable, and so on.

In theory, however, the PCInt interprets the world in such a way as to justify passive politics. In the struggle against fascism, the PCInt class struggle is solidified, and life, with all its problems and calamities, has come to a standstill. Imperialism is the charmer magician of this world; the world goes round according to his wishes and at his service; trade unions, the economic struggles of the workers, the struggle against fascism, liberation movements, democratic revolutions, are all part of imperialist ideology and tactics, and pawns to imperialist powers. PCInt incessantly speaks of "imperialist domination over the world", "severe control by imperialist powers", "world wars", etc. only to prove the supremacy and slightness of the bourgeoisie, and draw the ineffectiveness of any struggle as the

conclusion. From its point of view the entire world in our time, the time destined to end in the third world war, has turned into the political terrain of the bourgeoisie, and whoever should make a move has served the interests of the bourgeoisie.

"Economics" enter this theoretical system only to open the way to determinism and fatalism. In determining its strategy, tactics, and tasks, the PCInt does not go beyond the framework of "objective economic relations, and the development of the means of production", because it knows of no other strategy and tactic other than waiting and anticipation - waiting for the day in which the economic laws and conditions would issue the permit for "attacking the state head-on". Economics enter the theoretical system of PCInt in order to take the place of politics and proletarian struggle. From the point of view of PCInt, time is not yet ripe for revolutionary practice and communist intervention in class struggle, the existing revolutionary movements are not "proletarian", and, of course, economic grounds are not available for engaging in the ideal proletarian struggle!

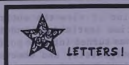
Thus in the thinking system of PCInt, "imperialism" proves that democratic struggle is too late, while "economics" prove that the struggle against capitalism is too early - the passivism of the present is thus theorized.

"Imperialist economism" is the best epithet by which this "caricature of Marxism" can be defined. Lenin has described the logic and the method of reasoning of the "imperialist economism" of his time as follows:

Imperialism is highly developed capitalism; imperialism is progressive; imperialism is the negation of democracy - "hence", democracy is unattainable under capitalism. Imperialist war is a flagrant violation of all democracy, whether in backward monarchies or progressive republics - "hence", there is no point in talking of "rights" (i.e., democracy). The "only" thing that can be "opposed" to imperialist war is socialism; socialism alone is "the way and the only way" to advance democracy in our minimum programme, i.e., under capitalism, is a deception or an illusion, befuddlement or postponement, etc., of the slogan of socialist revolution.

Though Kievsky does not realise it, that is the real source of all his mishaps, and the source of all the contradictions.

If we add to these "hence's" that it is the period between the second and third world wars, and "hence" all national movements are bourgeois; "hence" support for the freedom of oppressed nations is contradictory with Marxism; "hence" unions have turned into instru-



LETTER BY THE COMRADES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN PLATFORM (INDIA) AND OUR REPLY (FINAL PART)

The following is the third and last part of the letter by the comrades of the Revolutionary Proletarian Platform (India) to us and our reply to it. The first two parts of the letter (on the question of the Party, trade-unions and revolutionary democracy) were published, along with our reply, in the 2nd and 3rd issues of Bolshevik Message.

* * *

FINAL PART OF THE RPP LETTER:

ON THE QUESTION OF KURDISTAN

Theoretically we recognise the question of self-determination of nations in the same spirit as put forward by Lenin. Due to lack of materials on Kurdistan it is not possible for us to express a definite opinion as to whether Kurdistan is a nation demanding the right of self-determination or a religio-linguistic area which needs democratic rights within the Republic of Iran. However, we consider as improper, your understanding that since there is a possibility of a compromise between the Iranian and the Kurdistan bourgeoisie on the question of Kurdistan, the Communist Party of Kurdistan should take the leadership of the struggle for secession. The possibility of this compromise exists only when the Kurdish bourgeoisie finds itself a hostage in an imminent proletarian revolution. In such a situation the demand for the secession of Kurdistan and the destruction of Iranian and Kurdish capitalism by Kurdish proletariat alone would be wrong from the standpoint of strategy, as well as construction of socialism after the revolution. In that situation the Kurdish proletariat and its Communist Party should abandon the slogan of secession and stress only on the unity with the Iranian proletariat. Today when the Kurdish bourgeoisie is demanding freedom and the right to self-determination, the Communist Party should support this demand but at the same time should use various means to create conditions for open class struggle against the Kurdish bourgeoisie and should expose the real aims of the Kurdish bourgeoisie behind the demand. In no situation should the C.P. become the main spokesman of secession and self-determination.

We are confident that in future too we would exchange views regularly and come nearer to each other, progressively settling the existence of theoretical & political differences between us through theoretical-political debates, since these differences appear to be more of tactical nature than those of principles. We recognise the necessity and urgency of the rebuilding of a Leninist International but we feel that its formation requires some more time and during this period the

two revolutionary proletarian parties & groups of the world shall attain ideological unity through mutual exchange of views which will be the basis for a programmatic unity. This period shall also see the maturation of many embryonic Marxist-Leninist currents of today into fledgling proletarian parties. If taking advantage of the han-taq you can successfully complete the socialist revolution in your country, then your party can take more significant steps in this direction.

We send our warmest greetings on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the formation of your party as well as the Tist Congress of the OSCPIA.

We shall welcome the publication of a critique of our views expressed in this letter in a future issue of Bolshevik Message. Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter & kindly send any literature of CPI or UCM on the agrarian question of Iran, on the Trade Union question and on Kurdistan.

Comradely yours,
A.Ghosh*
for the CC of RPP

* * *

* letter published by the comrade after resignation, the contents of the present letter cannot be wholly defended by him- Note by BM.

OUR REPLY:

In our opinion, the points put forward by the comrades of the RPP in the part of their letter on the national question and Kurdistan contain serious and blatant errors. Since these points, before being concerned with the specific national question in Kurdistan, are general principles, which must, in view of the comrades, form the basis of the practice of communists in such movements - principles which according to the comrades correspond with Lenin's attitude to the national question - we find it necessary to examine the comrades' views at a more general level, before specifically dealing with the national question in Kurdistan, the various aspects and characteristics of the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan, the role and place of the various classes and parties in it and our positive alternative. Fortunately, some of the questions

relating to Kurdistan have been previously discussed in articles and documents published in the Bolshevik Message (both the old and new series), and we refer the comrades to these. (1)

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION: WHAT IS THE COMMUNIST POSITION?

The RPP comrades believe that the proletarian party must never itself talk about the right of self-determination and secession. (Throughout the comrades' letter, the words secession and self-determination have been used interchangeably, as though the recognition of the latter, i.e., the right to self-determination, means recommendation and defence of secession itself.) They believe that only when the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation talks of this right, is it permissible for the proletarian party to support the right conditionally:

Today when the Kurdish bourgeoisie is demanding freedom and the right of self-determination, the Communist Party of Kurdistan should support this demand but at the same time should use various means to create conditions for open class struggle against the Kurdish bourgeoisie and should expose the real aims of the Kurdish bourgeoisie behind the demand. But in no situation should the CP become the main spokesman of secession and self-determination.

In our view the unconditional recognition of the right of the oppressed nation to self-determination is the unbreachable duty of communists and conscious workers. This task weighs on the shoulders of the communists and revolutionary workers, regardless of whether the bourgeoisie of the oppressed or of the oppressor nation talk of it or not and under whatever conditions this may be. The unconditional defence of the right of the oppressed nation to self-determination means leaving the decision on the political destiny of the oppressed nation to the free vote of that nation; it means condemning and rejecting any military or bureaucratic intervention of the central government to prevent the free exercise of the will of the oppressed nation in determining its own governmental system; it means not limiting the freedom of the oppressed nation in deciding the form of its rule, which undoubtedly includes the right of secession and forming an independent state - if the oppressed nation so wishes. Failure to recognise the right of self-determination for the oppressed nation, as a democratic right, means to condone the chauvinism of the oppressor nation and is contradictory to the Marxist attitude to the national question, just as not recognizing equal rights for men and women, is to side

with male chauvinism.

Of course it is not only the democratic aspect of the question which is of concern to the communists. National oppression is an actual problem of the proletariat itself. The existence of this oppression is harmful to the proletariat, its international unity and its class development. National oppression prevents the free political and class development of the workers of the oppressed nation, leading to their political and cultural backwardness. National oppression prevents the solidarity among the various classes within the oppressed nation, as they find themselves up against a "common enemy" and a "common oppressor". The outcome of this is nothing but the piling and concealment of the class antagonisms within the society, and concession to the national oppression of the oppressed nation. The existence of national oppression intensifies nationalism among the workers and toilers of the oppressed nation, who before seeing themselves as part of the international army of labour, whose daily exploitation by capital has given them common interests, consider themselves as part of a nation, alongside the bourgeoisie and the propertied classes of the oppressed nation, who are to fight against the oppression imposed by the superior nation.

On the other hand national oppression creates the grounds for chauvinism among the workers of the oppressor nation so that they condemn the class comrades of the oppressed nation of a superior nation (or even race), all these damage the unity and solidarity of the working class, create mistrust, splits and hostility among the workers of the various nations, and create the grounds for the workers of each nation becoming props in the hands of the bourgeoisie of the respective nations.

Hence the working class stands for the equality of the rights of nations and their free and voluntary association. Thus the working class achieves the solidarity and unity of the ranks of its class in the best way and draws the support of the workers and toilers of the oppressed peoples for common existence. By recognising the rights of nations to self-determination, by calling for voluntary unity instead of forcible annexation, the working class draws a clear line of demarcation between itself and the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation, before the workers and masses of the oppressed nations and turns into the champion and consistent defender of their justified rights.

But if the acceptance of the right of self-determination is demarcation with the chauvinism of the oppressor nation, this is not automatically the case as concerns the nationalism of the oppressed nation - with which a line of demarcation must also be drawn, which in par-

LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

ticular is the task of the conscious proletariat of this nation. Moreover, the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation which fears the closeness and unity between the workers of its own nation and the workers of other nationalities and wants their separation, by instigating nationalist sentiments among the workers of its own nation, intensifies national hostility among the toilers of the various nations. Therefore the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination cannot by itself cover the whole of the proletarian position on the national question.

Emphasizing the common cause, interests and struggle of all workers and defining and propagandizing the content of the destiny which the oppressed nation must fight for, is the complementary component of the proletarian attitude to the national question. The achievement of the right to self-determination is a general demand of any national movement, for which the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation also struggles - however inconsistently and with wavering. But there is no common ground between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the national movement on the question of how the oppressed nation is to govern itself, that is to say, what the content and form of this autonomous government is to be, after the achievement of this right. The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation which at best merely wants the right of the bourgeoisie of the central government in administering the affairs of that nation be entrusted to itself, cannot and does not stand for radical changes in the state bureaucracy, the standing army, the living and working conditions of the workers and toilers, the inferior position of women, religious superstitions, etc. Whereas communists, particularly by relying on the definition and agitation of the kind of the government which the proletariat of the oppressed nation wants after the achievement of the right to self-determination, put the proletarian solution of the national question against its bourgeois alternative, and in this way struggle for the establishment of proletarian hegemony in the national movement and the leadership of this movement.

The Programme of Komala for the Autonomy of Kurdistan and the "Declaration of the Basic Rights of the Toiling People of Kurdistan", approved by the Kurdistan Organisation of our party, are clear examples of the proletarian alternative on the national question. We invite the comrades to study these two documents.

THE PLACE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

In Lenin's view the struggle of the working class for socialism is not an isolated struggle taking place in vacuum, but is a struggle in a society in which there also exist non-social-

ist protests and movements. Struggles which include not only the working class, but also other oppressed and exploited classes. Independent of the will of this or that individual or organisation, these legitimate movements have their own specific objective bases remain, and so long as these objective bases remain, they cannot be eliminated by the will of any party or state. From Lenin's standpoint, to the same extent that these movements do not directly attack the capitalist system and stand for definite democratic developments in society, they do not represent the "bourgeois" form of struggle at the same time, to the extent that they struggle in a revolutionary manner, i.e., in a forcible manner and from below, for bringing about these changes, and do not remain confined within the bounds of bourgeois legality, they are supported by the communists. These struggles and movements exist not only in the developing phase of capitalism, but also, and even more intensely in its decaying stage, in the imperialist era. This is because the entry of capitalism into the imperialist phase has been attended by the intensification of exploitation, dictatorship and the political and economic lack of rights of the masses in 2/3 of the world. Therefore the leadership of these movements, their radicalization by strengthening the proletariat in them and popularizing proletarian slogans and aims, and drawing the support of the toiling masses for the content of victory of these movements and the particular form of self-determination that the proletariat wants in the operation of these movements, alongside the exposure of the waverings and treachery of the bourgeoisie, are the principled, correct and revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in every historical era. To tie the question of the participation of the communists in these movements - including the national movement - to the operation and participation of the bourgeoisie in these movements, means to tail-end the policy of the bourgeoisie in these movements. In other words to leave the determination of the proletarian policy to when the bourgeoisie has declared its policy before these movements is to deny the need for an independent policy by the communists towards these movements. It means that, as though, since these protest movements do not go beyond the bourgeois bound, they must be entrusted to the bourgeoisie, with the communists merely taking the position of radical opposition to this position.

To take up this position means to side with Menshevism and abandon the Bolshevik attitude towards revolutionary non-socialist movements and protests which exist in every society - particularly the dominated countries where the question of democracy and democratic demands remain unresolved and where other oppressed strata and masses exist, besides the proletariat.

Moving from this premise, it is forgotten that a large part of the people who have national demands and slogans are the very proletarian and toiling masses who make up the motive force of the proletarian revolution. The RPP comrades forget that it is not only the bourgeoisie which has national demands, but workers of the oppressed nation also have national demands, which must be met. Communists are never confronted with an abstract proletariat and a political programme such as that which is concrete and specific. The same workers who are under the oppression and exploitation of capital, who suffer from poverty, are deprived of unemployment benefit, a 40-hour working week, the right to strike and many other welfare and political rights, are also under national oppression and are humiliated and persecuted for their cultural, linguistic and other national peculiarities. One cannot remain indifferent towards these needs of the proletariat of the oppressed nation, for independently of our will or intention such national protest movements take place and exist and will continue to exist as long as the social relations of the capitalist era have not put an end to the rule of the bourgeoisie. The workers and toilers of the oppressed nation not only join these movements, but because they make up the bulk of the masses of the people in every capitalist society, they count as the main force of these popular movements. These movements, the communists are faced with two alternatives: Either they take up the leadership of the proletariat, advancing its aims, slogans and perspectives in relation to these movements and popularizing them; or they entrust the leadership of the movement and thereby of its proletarian and toiling section to the bourgeoisie and imperialist parties. In other words, instead of leading the proletariat in these movements and thereby aiding its organisation and class consciousness and preparing the grounds for its further advance towards the social revolution, they leave the leadership of the movement, and of the proletariat and toilers within it, in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This would give a free hand to the bourgeoisie to bolster nationalist illusions within the proletarian masses and turn them into a prop for its own ends. To this problem Menshevism and Bolshevism have their own particular answers:

For Bolshevism the realisation of the right of self-determination, like any other demand, serves to expand democracy and facilitate the class struggle of the proletariat. Thus it deems it necessary for the communists to participate in and lead the national-revolutionary movements. For in the Bolshevik thought the working class would not succeed in its task of abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism without democracy and the struggle for it and without learning in the process of this struggle and making use of its gains. We tak-

ed at length about this question in the second part of our reply to the RPP. It would suffice here to remind the readers by quoting the following from Lenin:

... Marxists know that democracy does not abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their domestic slavery is capitalism, not lack of rights. The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. The fuller national equality (and it is not complete without freedom of secession), the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

(A Caricature of Marxism & Imperialist Economics, Coll. works, Vol.23, p.73)

THE PLACE & ROLE OF THE BOURGEOISIE OF THE OPPRESSED NATION IN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

As we explained before, the RPP comrades consider the attitude and tactics of the communists towards the national question to be a function of the approach and position of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation towards this question. Starting from this wrong point of departure, comrades arrive at a wrong conclusion in dealing with the stand of the CPI on the national question in Kurdistan. Comrades write:

... We consider as improper, your understanding that since there is a possibility of a compromise between the bourgeoisie of the Kurdistan bourgeoisie on the question of Kurdistan, the Communist Party of Kurdistan should take the leadership of the struggle for secession.

The alleged position which the comrades have attributed to us is totally wrong. Firstly it is not from fear of compromise by the Kurdish bourgeoisie that we believe in the necessity of securing the leadership of the proletariat and communists over the national movement. Since even if the Kurdish bourgeoisie does not compromise with the central government in Iran, the fact that it is putting forward a particular autonomous government which is totally against the interests and rights of the Kurdish workers and toilers, is reason enough for us to insist on the necessity of proletarian leadership in this movement and of advancing the proletarian alternative as regards the content of the autonomous government. Secondly we stand for taking the leadership of the struggle for the right of self-determination, not the struggle for secession. We support the right of self-determination up till and including secession, but do not advocate secession ourselves. This apparent

dualism in the position of the communists on the national question, i.e., that they defend the freedom of self-determination, but do not themselves call for secession has always been met by misunderstanding and objections on the part of many opponents of Lenin's national approach to the national question. In reply to these objections we can only repeat what Lenin said in reply to Kievsky more than 70 years ago:

We demand from our governments that they quit the colonies, or to put it in precise political terms rather than in agitationist outcries - that they grant the colonies full freedom of secession, the genuine right to self-determination, and we ourselves are sure to implement this right, and grant this freedom, as soon as we capture power. We demand this from existing governments, and will do this when we are the government, not in order to "recommend" secession, but on the contrary to facilitate and accelerate the democratic association and merging of nations ...

If we demand freedom of secession for the Mongolians, Persians, Egyptians and all other oppressed and unequal nations without exceptions, we do so not because we favour secession, but only because we stand for free, voluntary association and merging as distinct from forcible association. That is the only reason!

(A Caricature of Marxism & Imperialist Economism, Coll. Works, Vol. 23, p. 657) But besides this, the BPC has a further objection to us is that we do not have a correct assessment of the possibility of compromise by the party of the bourgeoisie in the national movement in Kurdistan, and that therefore we arrive at incorrect conclusions. The comrades do not rule out the chances of compromise by the bourgeoisie in the national movement, but restrict it to very particular conditions. Their assumption is that, except for these very particular conditions, the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation historically and definitely is an advocate of "freedom and right of self-determination". (The comrades have bestowed this honour on the Kurdish bourgeoisie for those following the reports of the confrontations between Komala and KDP, published in the previous issues of the BM, it should be clear how erroneous this is.) Comrades believe: "The possibility of this compromise exists only when the Kurdish bourgeoisie finds itself a hostage in an imminent proletarian revolution." In that case, i.e., when the Kurdish bourgeoisie from force of more imperative exigencies gives up the slogan of self-determination, the proletariat, too, should give up this democratic demand, and abandon it to the hands of history as an outmoded slogan! It should be clear to anyone acquainted with Lenin's views on the national question how

this outlook departs from Marxism:

By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the possibility of abolishing national oppression completely; the possibility becomes a reality "only" - "only" - with the establishment of democracy in all spheres, including the delineation of state frontiers in accordance with the "sympathies" of the population, including complete freedom to secede. And on this basis, in turn, there will develop the practical elimination of even the slightest national friction, the emergence of the highest national trust, accompanied by an accelerated rapprochement and fusion of nations that will be completed when the state withers away. This is the Marxist theory, the theory from which our Polish colleagues have mistakenly departed.

(The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up, Coll. Works, Vol. 22, p. 325)

But this theoretical error is not the whole issue. By overlooking the place of struggle by the revolutionary proletariat for the right of self-determination in the framework of its general struggle for socialism; by entrusting to the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation tasks which the communists themselves have in relation to such national-revolutionary movements and by subordinating the activities of the communists to the moves and manoeuvres of this bourgeoisie, comrades are unavoidably led to exaggerating the ability of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation in meeting the requirements of the national movement.

For Marxists the assessment of the role and place of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation in striving for national independence rests on an appraisal of its economic interests in this political change. The bourgeoisie's interest in achieving national independence means above all that the political conditions of determining the degree of exploitation, the ways of utilizing the labour and commodity markets, and all other factors relating to the production and reproduction of social capital, be left to itself. In the period of development of the capitalist society from the womb of feudalism, i.e., when the growth of national capitals was still possible, these factors gave a progressive character to the bourgeoisie in these movements. A class which because it stood for the full realization of its economic ideals and demands, acted resolutely and without wavering in the struggle for national independence. But now due to the close ties which exist between the indigenous capitalism in the dominated countries - where the national movements are mainly in existence - and imperialism, the bourgeoisie of an oppressed multi-national nation regards the profitability of its movement as the result of the general conditions which are produced and reproduced thanks to the domination of social

capital in that country. (2) Here the bourgeoisie is inconsistent in the demand for the eradication of national oppression and for the right to self-determination; it totally gives up the struggle in this path, and when such a struggle breaks out from below and by the masses, it stands against its own nation. To think otherwise is incompatible with the contemporary history. It only instigates illusions amongst the workers and toilers of the oppressed nation concerning the bourgeoisie of that nation and bestows an honour on it which it has never historically deserved. Today the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation has more than ever demonstrated its tendency for compromise with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation and for betraying its "own" nation. Precisely for this reason challenging these tendencies has attained a decisive role in the fate of these movements.

Moreover, there are also numerous examples which show that sometimes the imperialist states themselves for their own interests and in order to prevent the emergence of a really revolutionary movement, "compromise" with the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation. In other words they stand against the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation over their own interests, the exploitation of workers and toilers, how to run the state bureaucracy and the standing army, and how to limit the political and economic rights of the workers; and leave the administration to the "independent and national" bourgeois state.

These examples show that in the imperialist epoch, i.e., in the period of the decadence and complete reaction of capitalism and the ever more break of the bourgeoisie with democracy in general and the "elimination of national oppression and the achievement of the right of self-determination" specifically, the weight of the struggle for the working class in the national movements has more than ever turned into the precondition of the expansion, deepening and victory of these movements. These show that the communists must not only refrain from taking part in these movements or to subordinate their political activity to the policies of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, but quite the contrary, while unconditionally defending the rights of nations to self-determination, must place on their agenda the active and all-sided leadership of these movements. Only such a set of conditions will lead to the deepening and radicalization of the struggle against the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation, to the withering away of the nationalist illusions and mentality of the workers and toilers, to the clarification of the bourgeois character of the national oppression before the masses, to the development of the class struggle within the movement and to the advancement and propaganda of the aims and the meaning of the victory of the movement, in such a way as to ensure the realization of the interests of the

proletariat within the movement.

THE CASE OF KURDISTAN

The Kurdish nation is an oppressed nation, which, as a result of the revision of the world among the imperialist states in the wake of the First World War, has been partitioned among four countries of the region [Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria], and has been deprived of the right to form its national state. The existence of national oppression together with the various methods of suppression, has contributed to the economic and cultural backwardness of this nation.

The Kurdish nation in the Iranian Kurdistan has repeatedly risen against this national oppression and in order to obtain the right of self-determination. These struggles which have been directly against the dictatorial central governments of Iran, were, in the past, led by tribal chiefs, Sheikhs and feudals, and in recent decades, by bourgeois forces. In relation to the leadership of the national struggles, these forces were not only unequal, but also treacherous, and in Kurdistan too, they trampled upon the interests of the toilers and oppressed them.

(From the Programme of Komala for the Autonomy of Kurdistan)

At the best of times these forces have tried, relying on the army, to exert pressure on the armed forces of the central government in Kurdistan, threaten its rule in the region and force it to make concessions in the legal and bureaucratic relations between the central government and Kurdistan. Thus these forces, unwilling and unable to bring about radical changes in the economic, social and political situation in Kurdistan, in the impoverished living conditions of the workers and toilers of the region, in the dominant superstitions and religious culture, in the inferior position of women, etc., tried to bolster their own position as the local ruling class. The history of the struggle of the Kurdish nation, carried out under the leadership of these forces, there is no sign of the advancement of the economic demands of the workers and toilers, or of the organisation of the toiling masses in their ruling organs, whether in towns or the villages. Thus the national movement and risings in Kurdistan suffered successive defeats and the toiling masses were used as cannon-fodder. The history of this nation has been written with the blood of the workers and toilers and against a background of conciliation and treacheries by the local reactionaries and the Kurdish bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary upsurge of the year 1978-79 in Iran gave a new impulse to the national movement in Kurdistan which was in progress

at a slow pace. During the '79 revolution, all the cities of Kurdistan were liberated by the armed revolutionary people. The majority of garrisons and army barracks were disbanded, the bureaucracy and other state institutions were disintegrated, and a real soviet movement was taking shape. This state of affairs was unbearable for the bourgeoisie in Iran. So shortly after the February Uprising, the new Islamic regime dispatched its however disorganised armed forces to Kurdistan.

In the context of the rising movement of the people against the bourgeois Kurdistan Democratic Party, which had had a 40-year presence in Kurdistan, grew rapidly. Communists in Kurdistan which were mainly organised in the "Toolers' Revolutionary Organisation of Iranian Kurdistan-Komala" which had just publicly announced its existence, were still weak compared to the bourgeois party.

The KDP, despite its influence and despite the prevailing illusions among the masses towards it, while approving of the Islamic Republic regime, announced its preparedness for any compromise with the central government, from the very first day. Its bourgeois nature could not act as a shield against the masses, who follow on such questions as the professional army, the privileged bureaucracy, religious superstitions, sexual oppression and the inferior position of women, and the workers' rights and state. i.e., it whitewashed and sanctified all the existing institutions and traditions of the bourgeois society.

But on the other hand, the adoption of such policies and positions by this party was being done in front of a people who at the same time were being slain by the army of the Islamic regime, who saw the reshaping of the privileged bureaucracy as a serious threat to their freedoms which they had won through the real soviet movement, who realized the implications of religious rule and superstitions in the shape of the Islamic Republic, etc. All of these, of course, were forcing the KDP to take up two-sided and inconsistent positions. Nevertheless, in its attempts to come to terms with the central government, the KDP showed full consistency.

Against this treachery of the Kurdish bourgeoisie, the communists in Kurdistan from the very first day promoted the mass movements, organised armed movement against the military as a result of the central government, mobilized the rural toilers to expropriate the landlords and Khans and to organise peasant unions, formed district soviets, exposed the compromising acts of the KDP, etc, and in this way aided the continuation of the revolutionary movement. It was in the context of such endeavours that the revolutionary masses of Kurdistan realized the legitimacy of the slogans and demands of Komala and joined its ranks. The liberating ideas and demands which Komala advocated turned into the demands of a large section of the masses in Kurdistan. At the same time the growth and development of

revolutionary Marxism in Iran (and within Komala itself) drew Komala to correct and promote its programme and methods in general and towards this movement in particular. The founding of the Communist Party of Iran, in whose formation Komala played an essential role, was an important factor in the advancement of this movement and in the organisation of workers and toilers and revolutionary communists in Kurdistan.

Today the people of Kurdistan took two main forces in this movement. First force which came from the very start of the re-escalation of the movement has been involved in compromises both with the central government and the bourgeois opposition of the regime - which it was counting on to replace the present regime. A current which has repeatedly demonstrated its anti-democratic and anti-working class nature. The whole programme of the KDP in the final analysis consists of creation of some changes in the bureaucratic and legal relations between the central government and the autonomous government of Kurdistan.

Secondly, the people of Kurdistan know a force which has continuously endeavoured for the organisation of workers and toilers, and itself has actively and resolutely taken part in the revolutionary movement and has led it. A force which has put forward a particular politico-social alternative as the perspective of victory of this movement before the workers and toilers. The Programme of Komala for the Democracy of Kurdistan calls for: soviet democracy, universal arming, unconditional freedom of political activity, complete equality of men and women, the separation of religion from the state, the fulfilment of serious welfare demands in the interests of workers and toilers, and tens of other demands. These are not demands for the toilers, but will be implemented immediately wherever the occupying forces of the central government are driven out of Kurdistan. Among the changes which have already taken place in Kurdistan because of the presence of communists are the changes in the attitude and mentality of the people towards women. This has shown itself in the expanded participation of the women in the mass struggles and in the armed movement.

The democratic expectations of the masses have been raised and the substance of the liberation struggle against the Islamic Republic has been enriched. Thus firm grounds have been laid to prevent the just demands of the people from being subjected to the bargainings of the political representatives of the bourgeoisie. Many workers and toilers have turned to communism and identify themselves with the "Komala current". The growth of communism in Kurdistan has become an undeniable fact.

All these gains and advances of the communists have made the KDP, whose weapon of nationalism and religious superstitions has lost effectiveness, to cast about. This party which saw

how its programme and policies were losing credibility against our programme and activities, in the eyes of the people, was finally forced to impose an all-out war on us in Kurdistan in a bid to restrict the scale of our activities. We have extensively written about this war and we wish to refer you to some of these. (3) The outcome and experience of the war, so far, has forced the KDP and the other political forces in Kurdistan to acknowledge that the strength and growth of communism among the masses of Kurdistan and the vast sympathy and support for Komala is much greater than they thought.

All these show, moreover, that the revolutionary-interventionist Marxism can and must become the leader of every existing protest movement in capitalist society. In this way it can aid the expansion and growth of communism in the context of these movements, free the vast masses of workers and toilers from the illusions spread by the bourgeoisie and make them motive forces for the realization of the proletarian programme towards these movements.

Comrades, if theoretical polemic is necessary to show the correctness of the principles of Marxist revolutionary interventionism in the national movements, to expose the current bourgeois distortions of the Leninist attitude to the national movements, to nullify the outwardly left but essentially opportunist tendencies, in our view the irrefutable growth of communism in Kurdistan and the protection of the revolutionary substance of the current movement there and the increasing discredit of the Kurdish bourgeoisie within the movement,

practically and more emphatically than any theoretical reasoning affirm the correctness of the Leninist attitude to the national movements.

J.Reza



FOOT NOTES

- Please see Bolshevik Message, Old Series:
 - "A brief history of Komala", BM No.2
 - "Kurdistan & the Communists", BM No.3
 - "One year after the 3rd Congress", BM No.4
 - "Interview with comrade F.Partow", BM Nos. 5 & 6
 - "Kurdistan & the social-imperialism of the ICC", BM No.5
 - "Recent events in Kurdistan", BM No.7
 - "Interview with comrade Alizadeh", BM No.9
 - "Communique of the CPI-Committee Abroad on the Orman event", BM No.12.

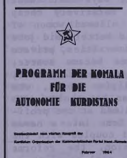
2-Please refer to the pamphlet "A Consideration of the Marxist Theory of Crisis and some Deductions about Dependent Capitalism", M. Hekmat.

3-Please see the following articles in the 2nd series of BM:

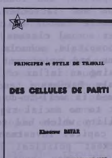
- "Armed offensive against Komala, a sign of the Kurdish bourgeoisie's fear and impotence", BM No.1
- "The continuation of civil war in Kurdistan & our policy", BM No.2
- "Resolutions of the 3rd Plenum of Komala on the current war between Komala & the KDP", BM No.3.

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TO BE PUBLISHED
SOON



THE PROGRAMME OF
KOMALA FOR THE
AUTONOMY OF KUR-
DISTAN - IN GERMAN-



THE PRINCIPLES AND
STYLE OF WORK OF
PARTY CELLS
- IN FRENCH -

From P. 11

ments of imperialism; "hence" anti-fascism is a bourgeois tactic; etc. the picture of the "imperialist economism" of our time would then be complete.

Unlike Kievska, however, PCInt is aware of what it says. The truth is that the problem of the authors of "the political platform of the Internationalist Communist Party" has not been politics, communism, or internationalism. The Platform is drawn up only to protect and safeguard the "sacred theory of the Italian Left" from the "impurities" of the real, living struggle - the "theory" which, in its turn, calls on its followers to wait, anticipate, and observe the world go by, until the auspicious hour when they find themselves at the "head of the socialist revolution", arrives. "Refraining from practice and being counted as revolutionary" constitutes the whole raison d'être of the caricature of the Internationalist Communist Party in "the period between the second and the third world wars"!

Hamid Toghvaee
Dec.85

Women of a Revolution:

A look at Women's Struggle and Oppression in Iran

Since March 8, 1979.

What has been happening to women in Iran perhaps more than any other factor emerging from the 1979 revolution, has proved a perplexity to many observers of Iranian politics. That an economy based on the most savage exploitation of the working class, plagued with unprecedented inflation, mass unemployment, the civil war in Kurdistan and a full fledged war with Iraq, should stretch its resources to the repression of women of such absurd dimensions as segregation in the assembly line, in buses, on sidewalks, and in the broad lines, that in its present critical condition it should allocate resources to appointing special guards to patrol the streets in search of women offenders who have failed to fully comply with the Islamic veil, appears rationally inexplicable. In this, as with many other factors concerning revolutionary periods we have to look for explanations other than sheer economic ones.

This is not to deny that the Islamic Republic has a lot in common with its other bourgeois counterparts throughout the world in trying to alleviate economic problems at the cost of the cheaper labour, or the increasing unemployment of women. The trend is world-wide. Enoch Powell's threat to women's right to abortion, Victoria Gillick's efforts to legally deny contraceptives to young women, Reagan's religious stance, his declaration that the existing unemployment is caused by too many jobs occupied by women, the investigation of pan-Islamic seotility in countries such as Sudan and Pakistan and its ominous shadow over other "Islamic" countries, are indications of variously successful forays by the bourgeoisie into women's rights, giving a defensive, rather than an offensive tone and content to the women's movement everywhere, and serving, in the final analysis, to impose a lower standard of living on the working class as a whole. But it is one thing to object, for instance, to the inadequacy of amenities for unmarried mothers, and entirely another to come to grips with a situation in which "adulteresses" are being stoned to death or put in sacks and pushed off cliff tops. What appears to be a historical gap turns out, in closer analysis, to be one of difference in political circumstances. The onslaught on women's rights in Iran has not been a mere readjustment of the bourgeoisie to the economics of a period of recess, as it has been in many other parts of the world; it has been coupled with a savage

effort to curb and crush a revolution with deep-rooted democratic demands - a revolution embedded in the economic crisis itself. In Iran the principle of the freedom of the women as the mainstay of freedom in society, as a whole, was turned upside down, as in effort by the Islamic Republic to reverse the revolution, stripping women of their most fundamental rights became one more tool to deprive the whole population of their hard gained freedom.

The course of events has been so revealing, the process of the revolution itself has been so educative, that merely by looking back from the vantage point of the present, seven years after March 8, 1979, when the first celebration of International Women's Day was suppressed by the newly installed regime, we have the rights and the wrongs of the matter at hand. Iranian women were never allowed to celebrate the occasion before 1979. The only day in which they were remembered by officialdom was February 10, the day in which the Shah's father had declared an end to the veil - a violent and humiliating process through which women were officially forbidden to wear the veil. This was part of Reza Shah's mandatory reforms which included the abolishing of the veiling labour power and turning Iran into a modern bourgeois state. The Shah's land reform some thirty years later and its social and economic consequences likewise directly affected women's lives. An increasingly large number of women who had left the villages on their own or in the company of the rest of their uprooted family poured into the cities in search of occupation, and found their ways into sweat shops and factories. The relatively cheap domestic labour which had allowed women of other social classes to hold better paid jobs in hospitals, schools and universities, private firms and government offices became scarce, causing an influx of foreign domestic labourers, mainly Pakistani and Filipino women, who worked in well-to-do Iranian households with next to no social rights. Aimed at the profitability which had turned Iran into a haven for capitalist investment, and coupled with the starkest political oppression, the reforms brought women about as much real equality as they brought the whole population political freedom! What they did mean was that Iranian women had as much - if not more - to gain from the revolution as the rest of the population. They were vocal and active participants in all spheres of revolutionary struggle, and it is

Down with the Islamic Republic regime!

against this background that the events of March 8, 1979 and after should be assessed and analysed.

As the women were preparing for the day, the rumour went around that working women were advised to wear the veil from the following week. In the midst of the revolutionary fervour of the people who had just had a taste of their own strength in pulling down the Shah's regime, one of the world's most stable and best established monarchies, the rumour justified the misgivings that many people had had from the start about the lukewarm pledges of the clerical leadership to democratic rights in general and the rights of women in particular. Celebration turned into a demonstration of protest as tens of thousands of women poured out on the streets of Tehran in the middle of a heavy snowfall chanting "At the dawn of freedom, women's rights are amiss." Hizbullahis (at that time unofficial but fully organized bands of religious fanatics) drove vans into the demonstrators' lines, pushed women into gutters, and used obscenities to drive them away.

The demonstration, the first to be held against the Islamic regime by the new government, was a display of the force of the revolution and its democratic demands. The treatment that the demonstrators received was likewise indicative of the methods in which all revolutionary demands and protestations of women, workers, students, nationalities, and religious minorities were to be met by the government. The demonstration was proof of the fact that the demand for the liberation of women, ambiguous and unspecified as it was, was an urgent task of the revolution. The suppression of women was only one aspect of the suppression of the revolution as a whole.* What happened, in effect, was the first organized onslaught on the revolution channelled through the suppression of women's rights.

As the regime consolidated its basis of power, it turned to other means to subjugate women. Its Islamic constitution gave it a free hand to introduce reactionary legislation on women in the name of the Islamization of society. The original Islamic attitude to women, dating really one and a half thousand years back in history, is not only reactionary, but barbaric. The enslavement of women in Islam is a fact that few people would contest.

* The wheels of suppressing the revolution were set in motion. The people were asked to return the weapons they had confiscated during the uprising. The offensive on the Kurdish people began just before the Iranian New Year (March 21). The sapping of workers' councils and student organizations was carried out more deviously, but nonetheless as vigorously, from the very beginning - as did the assault on the freedom of the press, with the closure of leading popular newspapers.

Girls are considered marriageable at the age of nine, and formal marriage itself is an open and avowed exchange of the woman's "submission" for the control of her material life by the husband, i.e. a simple transaction in which the human body is exchanged for money. "Prosperous" men are allowed to "purchase" as many wives as they can afford (up to four "permanent" ones and as many "temporary" ones as they wish.) Women can be divorced in absentia, have no desire to share in the control of their own lives, breast feeding, and generally enjoy about the same social rights as idiots and imbeciles: the testimony of a woman is either disallowed, or when accepted counts for half that of a man. A woman inherits half the share of her brothers. And according to the Koranic text, failure to submit to the husband's sexual desires involves corporal punishment. Thus laws were put into effect which deprived women not only of social and political rights, but of vestiges of social existence and human dignity.

As the revolutionary crisis in Iran continues and the Islamic Republic turns to Pan-Islamic measures in the region as a means of its survival it finds it necessary to tighten the rope around women's necks. Iranian women today are left with the nightmare of everyday life under the Islamic Republic in which the laws of sexual apartheid are enforced meticulously. The most obvious segregator, of course, is the veil. But there are additional measures taken to keep these mobile cages containing "untouchable semi humans" away from areas of association and activity of "superior and pure" human beings in factories, schools, offices, means of public transport. The most effective method, of course, is segregation by means of brick or mud walls - to imprison women in the house. In Islamic Iran all routes to meaningful social, educational, recreational activities for women are blocked by various means and regulations, leaving them no outlet other than to take part in behind-the-scenes prayer sessions and religious ceremonies. In anticipation of mass protests at various intervals from the regime its agents loose on women in the streets under the pretext of the most minute deviation from the never specified standards of Islamic cover - a streak of hair showing under the scarf, shoes with heels, the crime of wearing lively colours. The punishment depends on the sadistic whim of the persecutors, varying from flogging to being knifed, or dragged by the scarf behind a moving moped. If, however, this is the condition of women on this earth, they should indeed be grateful for what has been granted them in heaven: on the latest official Islamic day for women (the birthday of the prophet's daughter Fatima) Khosrovi himself went so far as to assure women of their special place with the Almighty, proven by the numerous visits paid to Fatima by the Archangel Gabriel after

the martyrdom of Fatima's son!

All this will become politically meaningful if we consider the fact that the tactics of the bourgeoisie in Iran, designed to deal, not with a relatively stable political situation as in the Shah's time, but with a full-scale revolution of nationwide dimensions, were meant to operate at two levels; they were expected to achieve two interrelated goals: to force both a political and an economic setback on the revolution - to drive the people out of the streets and return the situation back to "normal", and to force a much lower standard of living on the working class. At the political level the Islamization of social laws swayed the bourgeoisie of a powerful weapon, not only in suppressing the democratic demands of the revolution and appeasing the regime's reactionary and fanatical following, but, going beyond this initial stage of suppression, it served the regime as a deterrent against further protest. In a show of counter-revolutionary power, the Islamic Republic interfered in every private aspect of everyday life to drive the message home that its control over people's life was supreme, to subdue the revolutionary mood, and to reduce people's revolutionary demands to the humble desire of being left in peace.

Economically "Islamization" proved the easiest method of driving the women back into the kitchens to serve as unpaid slaves of capital. Religion helped the Islamic Republic better than most other excuses used by secular governments to make thousands of women redundant. With the withdrawal of all day centres, the closure of the few nurseries and child-care centres which existed, with the reduction of feeding time for nursing mothers, and, recently, with totally segregating previously mixed work places, such as the Melli Shoe and Leatherwork complex, working conditions for women in general and working class women in particular deteriorated drastically. Difficult and humiliating working conditions for those women who still remain within the workforce are such that despite dire financial need many women have embraced a bill passed by the Islamic Parliament on half-time employment (and pay) for women and women assigned to phase women out of social production.

At the beginning at least, very few "opposition" political forces, including women's

* At the international conference on Women in Nairobi last summer the official Iranian delegation was singled out not only by its hideous appearance (women clad in black veil) or by being the only delegation chanting "War, war, till victory" in a gathering dedicated to "peace", but also by judging it entirely Islamic to say nothing at all on the two other themes of the conference - "equality" and "development".

organizations which had emerged in the course of the revolution, realized the significance of women's rights as such, or the far reaching political and economic implications of their suppression. This, of course, was an aspect of their confused analysis of the new regime itself. The Mujahadeen, for example, beginning had no definable differences with the Islamic regime, who still pay lip-service to the equality of men and women under their "Democratic Islamic Republic," and to whom goes the dubious credit for inventing-the "Islamic" costume which was adopted by the regime as a substitute for the veil, did not seem disturbed by the contradictions that their stand involved. In proper Islamic fashion, they bypassed the issue. The petty-bourgeois organizations on the left who spoke in the name of Marxism identified any whole-hearted defence of women's rights with the "immorality and decadence" of the Shah's regime. Organizations such as Fedayee and Paykar announced the March demonstration on such grounds, and by so doing found themselves in words, if not in deeds, rubbing shoulders with the regime itself. They evaded action on such burning issues as the question of compulsory veil by declaring that such issues were "not the concern of working class women." Thus, with every new encroachment of the regime on women's rights they contented themselves by issuing a statement of protest in which the solution of the problem was deferred to the dawn of socialism itself! It is not surprising, therefore, that the women's groups attached to such organizations based their demands for rights by directing their efforts not toward finding solutions for the urgent problems of women, but toward rallying crowds around the main organization. When in the summer of 1981 the regime gauged it apt to introduce the Islamic veil for working women, they virtually took steps to disperse the throngs of outraged women who refused to be physically treated as commodities to be "seen" only by the men to whom they legally belonged.

The course of events in Iran proved once more the Marxist tenet that the proletariat is the only supporter of real democracy and the liberation of women as part of it. Revolutionary women who refused to be physically treated as commodities to be "seen" only by the men to whom they legally belonged.

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long before the formation of the CPI. In an article called "The Women's Problem is the Workers' Problem" it contended the ideas prevailing among the Marxist opposition that the working class had more important issues to deal with than the situation of women. We believe that without such a conviction of belief that without such a conviction of belief women will not change irrevocably. But we believe as adamantly in practising our ideas, in taking practical steps toward that goal. While at a more general level this involves, a struggle to overthrow the class and the political system whose interest is served by the

inferior position of women - the bourgeoisie and its state machine in general, and the dark reign of the Islamic Republic in particular- we believe in paying immediate attention to the condition of women. The minimum part of the programme of the CPI expresses women's demands in the articles concerning social, political, and economic independence and equality, down to the specific demands concerning the welfare of working women. The demand for the separation of church and state which does not concern women alone, and has therefore not been included in the section concerning women's rights, is a guarantee that religion should never again be used against the people.

But by "practice" we also mean what has been happening in Kurdistan. Here, Komala, the Kurdistan Organization of the CPI, is not only an opposition force, but has developed, over the course of seven years of armed struggle, against the Islamic Republic, into a major social, political and military force with vast popular support. It is here that theory has a chance to be tested in practice. In Kurdistan, a region in which the barbaric custom of women's circumcision still survives, Komala has used its strength and popularity to campaign for the cause of Kurdish women. Through Komala efforts, Kurdish women were gradually finding their way into the people's councils in the unoccupied parts of Kurdistan. This was regarded as a prelude to the total involvement of women in wielding their own destiny. The total occupation of Kurdistan, however, has deprived the people of these organs of self government. The national propaganda organs of the CPI, its radio and publications, armed with hundreds of agitators throughout Kurdistan, incessantly point out the intolerable condition of women, making them familiar with their rights as free, equal, and responsible citizens. It is not surprising, therefore, that as a communist force, Komala enjoys increasing popularity among the Kurdish women. The actual and potential support of Kurdish women in cities and villages, the volume of the letters they write to Komala radio, and their noticeable presence in the ranks of professional revolutionaries, where they are educated, armed, and organized in mixed units to struggle alongside the men, is proof of the fact. Komala is proud to declare that up to eighty percent of these women have working class origins.

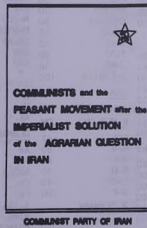
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If objective conditions have deteriorated for women over the last seven years, if the condition of women in Iran has turned into the symbol of oppression under the Islamic Republic, subjective conditions have by no means remained the same. The lessons of the Iranian revolution are so fully and broadly learnt in many areas that unlike the beginning of the revolution, to speak of "progressive religion" now has an aversive resonance to many ears. Organiza-

tions, gatherings, circles and publications in defence of women's rights are formed throughout the world in ever increasing numbers. Iranian women are turning into a real threat with which the Islamic Republic has to contend daily. This immense political potential is not lost to the Iranian opposition. The Islamic organization of Mujahadeen has found it necessary to avail itself of a "Corollary to First in Charge"- in ordinary human speech they have granted leadership status to Rajavi's new wife. Many political organizations on the left who denied the relation between the struggle of women and that of the working class are laying claims to being champions of women's rights. For its part, the CPI has been giving practical directives to male workers to coordinate their struggle with the daily struggles of women workers against sexual apartheid in factories. These are the perspectives we see before us expressed in a recent article (Kommunist 22) called "Apartheid and Comments on Resistance:"

We not only want the liberation and equality of women, but moreover, what we are aiming at is that in the future history of Iran "liberation of women" be associated with the name of "workers." Tomorrow, every free Iranian woman who speaks of the history of her liberation must have spoken of the history of the revolutionary movement of the Iranian working class. This should be so, not only because at the moment the Iranian working class has the task of leading a mass revolution, but also for the simple reason that encroachment upon women's rights is a direct encroachment upon the rights of half of our class, and therefore direct encroachment upon the rights of our class as a whole.

Zohreh Kyan



Party publications

"**ECONOMIST**" is the central organ of the CPI published in Farsi. Its 24th issue was published recently:

Economist No.24, March 1986

- Workers' Solidarity Funds. **Habib Farzad**
- National Council of Resistance and the "democratic" religious government. **Abdollah Mottahidi**
- Communique of Komala on the Jan.24th clashes in the Fedaiien (Minority) headquarters. **Women's trivial demands, or Mojahedin's trivial reasoning? Azar Majedi**
- We, KDP & the army. **Irak Farzad**
- "Rah-e-Kargar" in Yemen: revisionism's discredit. **Korosh Modarresi**

"**FISHRO**" (in Farsi) is the organ of the Kurdistan Organisation of the CPI-Komala. Its 11th and 12th issues appeared recently:

Fishro No.11, Nov./Dec.85

- Any inscription by the Islamic Republic in Kurdistan is forbidden!
- Let us totally defeat the counter-revolutionary policy of forced evictions.

REPORT: THE BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CPI - THE COMMITTEE ABROAD



- The KDP: once again pinning hopes on the Islamic Republic.
- On the UN general assembly resolution on the violation of human rights in Iran.
- The decisions of the central revolutionary court of Komala on two other active collaborators of the regime.
- News of the workers' and mass struggles.

Fishro No.12, Jan.86

- The 7th Congress of the KDP: the leadership in deadend. **Jafar Shafiee**
- Let us form and organise workers' circles. **Korosh Modarresi**
- Towards another insurrection (commemorating the Feb.79 uprising)
- "Rah-e-Kargar" in Yemen: revisionism's discredit. **Korosh Modarresi**
- Interview with comrade **Haibib-ullah Gavily**, the military commander of Komala in South Kurdistan.
- About the recent trips of Khameneiee.
- News of the workers' and mass struggles.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN is the political and nationwide organisation of the working class in Iran. The ideology of the Communist Party of Iran is Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party of Iran has set its task the organisation and leadership of all aspects of the struggle of the Iranian working class against the bourgeoisie, and on the basis of its programme is fighting for the seizure of political power by the working class, the destruction of the capitalist system, the establishment of socialism and marching towards communism.

Communist Party of Iran believes in proletarian internationalism and considers its task solidarity with the struggles of the world working class, struggle for the world unity of the working class, and endeavour for building a new Communist International.

The first article of the "Constitution of the CPI"

TO BE PUBLISHED SOON



برنامج الحزب الشيوعي لإيران

المصالح عليه من طرف:

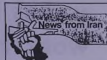
المؤتمر الثامن والعشرون للحزب الشيوعي لإيران

سبتمبر ١٩٨٦

THE PROGRAMME OF THE CPI
- IN ARABIC -



In revolutionary
Kurdistan



NOTE ON THE PUBLICATION OF NEWS FROM IRAN AND KURDISTAN IN THE BM

This is to inform the readers that the news of struggles in Iran and Kurdistan, so far published in Bolshevik Message, will no longer appear in the BM. We have decided to exclude the reporting of the news in the BM, because these are already published in the biweekly newsletter of the CPI-the Committee Abroad, the Report. The news of the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan is also covered as biweekly newsbulletins in English and French by the Komala Representative Bureau Abroad. Readers wishing to obtain these newsletters may contact the Associations of Supporters of the CPI in respective countries, or write directly to the BM and/or the Komala Representative Bureau Abroad.

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MAY 85. MAY 86,

WORKERS' STRUGGLES IN IRAN INTENSIFIES!

(The following is the reprint of a leaflet published by the Association of Supporters of the CPI-Britain on the occasion of May Day-BM.)

The Hundredth Anniversary of the May Day arrives when the class division is deeper than ever, and after all these years our class is engaged in great battles for some elementary rights. The memory of the heroic miners strike was still alive when the printworkers at News International Group entered another battle to save their jobs. The news of workers protests, strikes, sackings, redundancies . . . , in various industries are constantly spreading around.

If here in Britain the workers at Forge Master Steel Plant managed, after 15 weeks of struggle, to win their demands and saved 700 jobs, in Iran 5000 of their class comrades at Esfahan Steel Factory were expelled recently. If 6000 workers at News International have been sacked, the printworkers at Keyhan and Abrar Publishing Groups in Iran are at the moment on strike for better living and working condition. The story is the same all over the world.

The working class in Iran is denied of every elementary right. The right to assemble, to organise and strike is openly trampled on. 60 hour working week is a very common practice in work places in Iran. Expulsions are made with no regards to the fate of the workers. The condition of the work places is appalling. Unemployment is well above 7 million. Child labour abuse is widespread. Women workers are savagely exploited. In addition to the various reactionary and mediaeval treatments of women in Iran, they are segregated from their brothers and are prevented from any contact with their male work mates. Many key industrial work places have been militarized and the armed guards are there to terrorize the workers.

Although the extent of repression and exploitation of the workers is horrifying, the opposition to the existing conditions is equally high. The workers in various sectors have stood up to the violation of their right. The unrest, go-slow, protest and strike have hit most sectors of the industry and on many occasions the workers have managed to force the management and bosses to retreat. The workers are challenging the exploiters and their state. The welcoming of a movement to set up "workers solidarity fund" amongst the workers indicates the determination of the Iranian working class to confront the Islamic Republic Regime.

Since last May, the workers movement, in the forefront of a general protest has enjoyed a considerable escalation. The following are some selected extracts from the English publications of the Communist Party of Iran (report and Bolshevik message); **covering the events since May 1985:**

- Workers strike in oil industry (2nd July 1985) demanding:
 - 1) Better living condition
 - 2) Re-payment of benefits which were stopped by the orders of oil minister
 - 3) Dismissal of oil minister
- Steel Factory in Esfahan:

Reduction of wages under the cover of compulsory retirement.
- Tabriz Tractor Factory:

3000 workers are made redundant.
- Zamyad (Radiator) Factory:

Workers protest over unpaid wages.

- Iran - National Car Factory:

The Islamic management imposes night-shift work on workers.
- Iran - Sypa Factory:

Workers protest over the cut of allowances.
- Arak Car Industry:

Protest against changed working hours.
- Fomanat Textile Factory - Rasht:

Protest against reduction of wages.
- International Transport Company:

200 workers are sacked.
- Land Rovers (Assembly Factory of the British made Land Rover car in Iran) 40 workers are sacked.
- Starlight (Textile) Factory:

Workers protest against expulsions.
- Transfo Factory - Zanjan:

Workers say no to production rise.
- Pooshesh Factories (Textile) - Rasht:

40 workers are sacked and further 40 are given notices.
- Tobacco Factory - Tehran:

60 women workers are sacked.
- Caterpillar Factory - Tehran :

Workers throw out the managers and take over the factory for 10 days.
- Shokoh Textile Factory - Esfahan:

The factory closed down - 100% lost their jobs.
- Sepehr - Electric Factory - Ghazvin:

8 workers die.
- Chit-E-Ray - Tehran:

Workers go on strike to get their unpaid wages.
- Electro-Lux Factory - Tehran:

Workers strike for 8 hour working day.
- Tehran Gas Company:

Workers go on strike for wage rise and better living condition.
- IR Cable Factory - Saveh:

180 workers are expelled.
- Starlight Factory - Tehran:

See P.3

FREEDOM , EQUALITY , WORKERS' STATE