

# INFORMATION IRAN

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## The struggle for power

The recent events in Iran seem to be inconsistent and at times confusing. Recognizing the kind of struggle which is now going on between different political-religious groups, in their attempt to seize political power, allows one to see these events in the proper perspective. This article tries to explain the contradictions and positions of these groups.

The provisional government, formed in the aftermath of the February revolt, was essentially a product of two elements. On one side it was the result of a year-long struggle and sacrifice of the masses, and on the other side it was the outcome of negotiations and conciliation that the national bourgeoisie (represented by Bazargan and the

National Front party) started with the reaction and U.S. imperialism (represented by Bakhtiar and the military). During the last months of 1978, when the negotiations were going on, many, including the national bourgeoisie of Iran, predicted that any future government in Iran would be dominated by the national bourgeoisie with strong representation from the comprador bourgeoisie and the military. The February revolt upset all the previous calculations. Its' impact on redistribution of power was reflected in the composition of the provisional government and the extent of power it could attain. The reaction's participation in the government was reduced from a dominant partnership to

minimum, but that of the petty bourgeoisie from insignificant to substantial. The national bourgeoisie,

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though still outnumbering other factions in the provisional government, lacks any executive power and its "authorities" are constantly overridden by representatives of the petty bourgeoisie.

After gaining political power, the petty bourgeoisie of Iran has split into factions. The upper class of the petty bourgeoisie, represented by Ayatollah Khomeini and his associates, is for the time being the dominant faction and exercises authority through its executive organs such as "Khomeini committees" and "revolutionary courts". The middle section of the petty bourgeoisie, represented by Ayatollah Taleghani, is not at all happy with the way the other faction handles the social, political, and economic problems and regard their policies as narrow-minded and dogmatic. This faction advocates a much more democratic approach and enjoys the support of the petty bourgeoisie. The lower section of the petty bourgeois class is represented by progressive groups such as Mojahedeen and represent the most radical elements of this class. Because of the admiration of the masses for their courage and bravery demonstrated through years of struggle with the fascist regime of the Shah, they have been able to penetrate the lowest strata of the masses and gather large mass support.

The contradictions which have developed between the national bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie on one hand, and the contradictions between the subsections of the petty-bourgeoisie on the other hand are responsible for many recent incidents in Iran and undoubtedly will affect the future political order of the country. The resignation of Dr. Sanjabi, the leader of the National Front, from the cabinet of Bazargan and his replace-

ment by Dr. Yazdi, one of the associates of Ayatollah Khomeini, was an indication of the national bourgeoisie's frustration at constantly losing ground to a parallel government set up by the upper section of the petty bourgeoisie. The arrest of members of the family of Ayatollah Taleghani by the "Khomeini committees" was also a direct attempt by the dominant petty bourgeoisie to force Taleghani to get out of the political scene and — at least temporarily — have a strong opposition group eliminated from the powerplay. The wave of arrests of members of progressive groups, and in particular that of Mojahedeen, is also indicative of the pressure that the upper petty bourgeoisie is exerting on other petty bourgeois factions that it regards as potentially dangerous.

The people's reaction to important issues such as the national minorities, women's rights, and the new proposed constitution, clearly indicates that the wide public support for the provisional government and the present leadership is very superficial and is not founded on firm bases. The masses are indeed watching the government carefully. So far this government has not been able to fulfill, even to a small degree, the people's expectations and thus is rapidly losing its popular support. Moreover, the year-long turmoil that finally resulted in the February revolt had a profound effect on all layers of the petty bourgeoisie. A radicalization current, originating in the lowest strata of the masses, deeply penetrated some layers of this class. The fact that this upward current is now confronted by opposing currents of intimidation and even oppression from above has introduced a further destabilizing force in the already shaky ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. In addition, the national bourgeoisie, which is now reexamining its position, sooner or later will start an

all out offensive against the upper petty bourgeoisie to recapture some of its lost ground. The role of the middle section of the petty bourgeoisie in this conflict and, in general, in the future redistribution of power is very important. If it supports the national bourgeoisie against the well-off petty bourgeoisie, the latter would not be able to resist and would lose power to the national bourgeoisie. On the other hand, if it joins forces with the well-off petty bourgeoisie, it would increase the polarization between the masses and the ruling class and in the long run it could very well lead to another explosion. If it joins the lower-class of the petty bourgeoisie it would facilitate the evolution of the February revolt into a full democratic revolution with the leadership of progressive forces.

At present the role of revolutionary and progressive forces is highly critical. The national bourgeoisie, in its conflict with the upper petty bourgeoisie, could very well approach certain factions of the comprador bourgeoisie, big land-owners, the military, or even imperialists for reconciliation. The result of such an unholy alliance would eventually be a military government, such as those in Brazil or Chile. If the progressive and revolutionary forces in Iran do not unite as fast as possible the working class around themselves and do not mobilize the large masses of peasantry on their side, in the face of such conspiracies, there would be no firm and united front to stand up and fight back. It is no secret that in the absence of such a united front, no matter who loses or who wins the present power struggle in Iran, the main loser would be the working class. That is also why the struggle for unity among all progressive and revolutionary forces is at the top of the agenda and the front were the most important victories will be achieved.

## The national minorities are determined to fight for their rights

Iran is a vast land. The culture and language of different peoples living in this vast land is full of variety. The main languages used in Iran are Farsi, Azari, Kurdish, Balouchi, Lorie, and Arabic. The Farsi people who live in the center, north east, and south of Iran form about 55% of the population. The next largest population is formed by Azrbajjani people (about 20%) who live in the north-west of Iran. The Kurds and Lores, about 10% of the population, live in the west of Iran. The Balouchis, who also form about 10% of the population, live in the south east of the country. The Armenians, Turkomans, and Arab people, which form the remaining 5%, are the remnants of several major exodus of other nations into the plateau of Iran, following historical wars in the area and live in the north west, north east and south west of Iran, respectively. The Farsi, Kurdish, Lorie, and Balouchie languages are derivatives of the ancient persian language, the Dari language, but through time they have evolved in different directions and have come into contact with different languages. As a result, presently they are drastically different from each other and they have their own characteristics.

The Farsi-(persian) speaking people are the original settlers in Iran and have always formed the majority. The monarchs, ruling this country for centuries found it politically advantageous to attract the majority by promoting only the nationalistic sentiments of the Farsi-speaking people and as a result bolstered Farsi-chauvinism. The aspirations of the minority nationalities were neglected and to a large degree suppressed. The minority peoples in Iran have always suffered from the Unjust and chauvinistic treatment they received from Farsi-rulers. The culture and language of non-Farsi people had been always ridiculed, derided and belittled by influential reactionaries and ruling reactionary governments. With no exception the Farsi language has always been the court language in Iran and upheld has the official language of all Iranian peoples. This has been true even during the periods when the ruling cliques were from non-Farsi speaking peoples.

The Farsi language, which has



Like the Kurds and Turkomans (March-April 79) the Arab populations (here in Khouzestan) are now rising the demand the end to national oppression and discrimination, respect of their language and a form of national autonomy.

always been imposed by force on other minorities, has had the opportunity to involve and flourish extensively. Many writers and poets from the minority peoples have contributed to this evolution. The other main languages, on the other hand, have never had the chance to fully evolve. Indeed many Farsi-speaking rulers tried openly to suppress and annihilate the minority languages. But the non-Farsi speaking peoples have equally tried hard to preserve their culture and identity, through keeping their languages alive.

In the past century, there had been numerous movements by Farsi and non-Farsi speaking people, which in spite of their limited success or even failure, have kept the hope of freedom in the heart of Iranian peoples alive. These movements had been mostly mixed with nationalistic tendencies and their prime motive has been deliverance from the oppression and subjugation of reactionary Farsi-governments. Before the 20th century, when the feudal system was dominant in Iran, the nationalistic element was to a large extent absent in these movements. This is especially true in Azarbayhan where movements of large manitude and scope had erupted. These movements had a strong religious content and this very factor was responsible for curbing the nationalistic sentiments in these movements. In this century, under the excessive Farsi-chauvinism, nationalism has grown rapidly among different minority peoples. This very

often had negative effects on the overall movement aimed at liberation of all Iranian masses. During the past 30 years, for example, the Kurdish and Azarbayjan people have mounted huge movements which because of certain mistakes and weaknesses ended in defeat. One of the mistakes which diverted both these movements and provided the reaction with an effective weapon was adopting the short sighted view of pursuing only their own nationalistic aspirations and limiting the movements to their own region. Indeed this very mistake allowed the reaction to penetrate into the ranks of the movements and break them up from inside.

After Islam was imposed on Iranians in the 7th century, it did not take long for resistance to foreign domination to manifest itself in different forms. One of the facets of this resistance was adaptation of the Shieat sect as opposed to the original form of Islam, the orthodox Sonnah. The Shieat sect is essentially based on a rejectionist, anti-state school of thought and has always been a political religion. It is to a large extent confined to Iran and has very few followers elsewhere. The hostility and bitterness directed toward the foreign ruling power (all from Sonnah) thus found another aspect as outlet in the form of religious hatred and aminosity. This religious orientation was later on employed by the reactionnary rulers to

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opress those peoples who are Sunite. For example, the Kurds and Balouches, the majority of whom are Sunite, were generally regarded as aliens and they were treated harshly and deprived of their rights by the reactionary kings.

During the dark reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Iranian peoples were subject to cruel and barbarous acts of torture and exploitation. In this period, Farsi-chauvinism was again bolstered to the highest degree to "secure" the monarchist regime and its dominance. But contrary to the regime's expectations, its fascistic oppression was responsible for the formation of many underground organizations and movements which grouped both Farsi and non-Farsi speaking peoples. During this period, the most deceitful tactics and propaganda were used to destroy the culture and language of minority people and expand Farsi-chauvinism. This was done to create hostility and confrontation among Iranian peoples. In reaction to these efforts by the regime, the Iranian peoples took up arms and shoulder to shoulder confronted the regime.

One of the steps the regime took to destroy the language and culture of minority people took place during the reign of Reza Shah, the father of the deposed Shah. In non-Farsi speaking areas, the regime built special places to keep small children, who were separated by force from their mothers in early childhood, and raised in the Farsi language. Nobody was allowed to speak any language except Farsi in these places. Another tactic used to create hatred and prevent unity among different Iranian peoples, was to popularize jokes in different regions that insulted other peoples living in other areas. Radio, T.V., and even newspapers and magazines were overtly used to spread these jokes and at the same time make it possible for every region to know what kind of jokes were used in other regions against them. They were calling the Azarbayhani workers, who are the most industrious and able workers in Iran, "donkeys". Through the jokes they pictured the politically aware and bold people of the northern part of Iran, who in the past started many movements in that area, as a bunch of callous and mean people. During the reign of the deposed Shah, the negative propaganda and fascistic acts aimed at annihilation of the languages and cultures of minority peoples and denial of their democratic rights reached a new height and some of the Farsi-chauvinist writers and poets did not hesitate to collaborate with the regime in this respect.

During the reign of the deposed Shah, people seeking democracy were prosecuted and executed in large groups and national movements were harshly suppressed. In Kurdistan many of the Kurds merely because of their nationalist sentiments were put in front of firing squads, but this never quenched the fire of freedom living within the Kurds. They instigated many revolutionary organizations which later joined the main revolutionary organizations in the country and fought side by side with other Iranian peoples for putting an end to the despotic regime of the Shah.

During the dark reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Iranian peoples were kept illiterate and superstitions and Iran turned into a backward country. To the regime the educational institutes and especially the universities were the source of trouble and agitation. The regime naturally had no intention to expand or change the 60 year-old educational system, because that meant more educated and aware people which they could not tolerate. Most of the schools and universities were originally built by the people. Then the regime came and took over the establishments to prevent them from turning into anti-regime strong-holds and to introduce part of its brain-washing propaganda into the universities' atmosphere. In primary and high school all the texts were in Farsi and everybody was supposed to communicate in Farsi, no matter in which area of the country they were. Desobedience was supposed to lead to immediate expulsion from the school. Under such circumstances it is not hard to imagine how puzzled and confused a six year-old Azarbayjani child, whose mother tongue is Turkish, would be or how many children in non-Farsi-speaking areas were deprived of an education because of expulsion from school.

During the past 50 years, the working conditions and extent of exploitation were the same for all the workers and peasants in Iran. A Farsi worker was as much exploited as a Balouchi or Kurdish worker. The workers and peasants, if they were not working in their own area, were subject to further and harsher exploitation. Very often the local reactionary authorities provoked confrontation between the local and non-local workers and peasants to play the old game of divide and rule. In Kurdistan, for example, a big factory suddenly laid-off a large number of workers all of whom were Kurds and replaced them with Azarbayjani workers. The Kurd workers, when they



saw their jobs taken over by Azarbayjani workers, were enraged and started to attack Azarbayjani workers in the streets and even inside the factory. Then the factory's management started to rehire them under wages and working conditions lower than what their previous contracts allowed. This is the kind of policy that was endorsed and promoted by the Shah's regime.

This kind of policy not only allowed the local reactionary to exploit the workers and peasants ruthlessly, but it also served the regime in the sense that hatred between peoples was the best way to prevent their unity and their ability to fight back. These very workers and peasants, when they realized how the regime and reactionaries were manipulating them for further exploitation, waged an upheaval that wiped out both the regime and the reactionaries.

Iran has a very long border with the Soviet Union in the north. Thus the great October revolution in 1917 in Russia had a profound effect on awakening the Iranians. The Iranian workers, particularly the Azerbaijan workers, who used to cross the border and work in the industrial centers in the Azarbayjan province of the Soviet Union, brought back into Iran the revolutionary ideology which liberated the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Azerbaijan people saw that on the other side of the border, people with the same language and culture as theirs, had been able to free themselves from the exploitation and tyranny of the Tzar, and have their own autonomous province.

This renewed their long-standing desire for autonomy and deliverance from the Farsi chauvinists. After the second world war, when the central government was very weak, the Azarbayjani and Kurdish people sized the opportunity to form their autonomous governments. This partial independence, however, did not last long. Because of mistakes committed by

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leaders of the Azarbayjan Democratic Party, after eleven months the central government regained control over those areas. The fascist Shah, after the collapse of the Azarbayjan and Kurdistan autonomous governments, again massacred the Azarbayjani and Kurdish peoples: blood bath, flowed in the streets of Tabriz and Sannandaj, the capitals of those province.s

Today, the Iranian peoples, after 60 years of struggle with the Pahlavi regime and the sacrifice of thousands of the best youths of this country, have been able to oust the Shah and destroy the clique that kept him in power. The Iranian peoples are now demanding their democratic rights including the right to self-rule and autonomy. They want to join together to form a truly independent and democratic country which would allow the culture of all minority peoples to flourish and expand. The present provisional government in Iran seems to be unaware of the nationalistic aspirations of minority peoples and their legitimate democratic rights. The policy adopted by this government toward the Kurds and Turkomans is deplorable. It resulted in unjustified blood-shed of innocent people and in no way serves the interest of the Iranian peoples. The argument that the bourgeoisie and the rest of the liberals put forward on this issue is that

the Iranian peoples originally had a unique culture and language; thus Iranians are one nation with one language: colon Farsi. To back this, they give examples such as the existence of words in different Iranian languages with common roots or the celebration of the same feasts by different Iranian people. This is an absurd rational. To go by this logic would mean that most of the European countries, since their languages have common roots in Latin and they all celebrate Christmas, form a single nation and do not need independent governments.

Recently the Kurds rightly resisted the imposition of central government authority in their territory and forced the government to accept their right to self-rule. The Turkomans are also fighting to win the same concession from the government. What the present bourgeois government in Iran is now trying to sell to the people is that the autonomy should be strictly limited to language and culture in each region. But this is not what the minority peoples in Iran demand. They want full autonomy and that is their right.

This right should not be denied by the government; otherwise the situation will back-fire. The government argues that if full autonomy be given to each minority people, there will be separation and Iran will disintegrate. But it seems that either they do not have the right conception of autonomy or their class interests do not allow them to see

it from the proper perspective. If the Iranian people demand autonomy this does not mean they seek independence. There are numerous historical, economic and geopolitical factors which tie them together and keep them all part of a big family. The achievement of autonomy by minority peoples will resolve the inferiority complexes which presently exist. Being equals partners with equal rights would bring the Iranian people closer to each other and create the conditions for building a democratic progressive country. On the other hand the refusal of the government to recognize the legitimate rights of the minority peoples would lead to internal conflicts which either pave the way for the reaction to return to power or for Farsi-chauvinism to increase. This is not what the Iranian peoples have fought for. If there are no close resemblances among the cultures and languages in Iran, there are rather many common economic and political factors which bring them together, and allow them to form a solid, uniform common front against all imperialists and reactionary powers. They would join forces to defend their own rights as well as the rights of all oppressed people of the world.

Long live the solidarity of the peoples of the world!

Long live the solidarity between the Iranian people and the Canadian people!

## Develop support for the struggle of the Iranian people

The struggle to raise and develop support for the struggle of the Iranian people is well underway and is progressing positively. The committee has already received many financial contributions amassed on different occasions and at activities for the support of the struggle of the Iranian people. Canadian workers in Montreal, Quebec, Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto to name only the most important sources, have become interested in the struggle. They signed a resolution of support for the Iranian people, congratulating them on the Victory of February and declaring their pledge to fight imperialism. They had their donations to the Iranian people sent via the committee (we have already been able

to gather more than \$1000.00 U.S. to send to the Iranian people). Several individuals in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto etc..., sent personal donations ranging from \$5.00 to \$100.00. A journalist from a large Montreal daily took the welcome initiative of regularly sending us numerous and varied press clippings and photos of several western newspapers (Canada, France, Britain, USA, etc...). The first two issues of INFORMATION IRAN were received with enthusiasm and brought generous voluntary donations: more than 8,000 copies of the first issue and almost 10,000 of the second were distributed in French and more than 3,000 of each edition in English.

Friends, the committee rejoices at

these very encouraging results and appeals to have them enlarged even more. Let's recall the four targets of the committee as defined in the political platform of the committee:

- 1.- Support for the struggle of the working class and the Iranian masses for a real independence and a real democracy in Iran.
- 2.- Support for the struggle for the restoration of all democratic rights of the working class and of the people.
- 3.- Opposition to any intervention by American imperialism in Iran and to any other imperialism.
- 4.- Denounce Canada's role in Iran, al-

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departments. The government's inability to respond correctly to the economic and political demands of the bureaucrats deeply angered them.

Iranian workers in their struggle for their democratic and economic rights already see the tight collaboration between the government representatives and the Khomeyni committees and the capitalists. It's not surprising when you know that certain members of the new government are themselves capitalists or have close ties with them. Workers feel that despite their determining role in the recent partial victories, they are still deprived of fundamental rights. Sooner or later some of them will arrive at the conclusion that to assure the restoring of their democratic rights they will have to undertake an important struggle against the capitalists and the forces that support them.

The Iranian peasants, in their struggle to seize the land from the big landowners, still face hard reality: the government is not on their side, it is in the enemy camp.

The national minorities who have suffered for centuries in this country, are still under the oppression and economic and cultural domination of the central government. In their just struggle for autonomy, they must face massive hostile propaganda orchestrated by the government. Their persistent efforts to realize autonomy, without mentioning their authentic nationalist aspirations, have been either simply rejected or blamed on foreign powers. Frustration is naturally very high among the national minorities who have sincerely fought side by side with the Iranian masses in the hope that victorious revolution would lead to the satisfaction of their aspirations.

Students and intellectuals who feel as an obligation and part of their democratic duty to inform the people on social justice and democratic ideology, continually face the government and its propaganda machine. It would be irresponsible to ignore the role of the Iranian students in the revolution. Now this same group is the first to taste the iron fist of the new government and they will not take it sitting down.

The Iranian women who fully demonstrated their political consciousness now see the Iranian sky darkened by clouds of patriarchal culture and male chauvinism. In their just struggle to achieve liberation and total equality of rights with men, they face anti-democratic actions and policies of both the government and the "committees". This infuriates them.



Iranian women have completely demonstrated their political consciousness.

Finally, the Iranian people can still clearly see the presence and influence of imperialist forces in the economic, political, military, and cultural aspects of our society. The anti-imperialist feeling that developed among the Iranian people during this past year, is now so deeply rooted that the people will not easily tolerate either imperialist presence or influence. Thus Bazargan's intentional negligence in this matter is going to create storms of reaction from the masses. The dissatisfaction, deep and widespread, that exists now in almost all sectors of the Iranian people could easily pave the way for the completion of the revolution.

The Iranian masses are angered by the fact that they are still deprived of their rights and they will still have to fight hard to have them respected. To win they will also need all forces, in particular those of the Canadian people. Currently in Iran the weak link in the chain of imperialism is on the brink of breaking. To break this chain there is to weaken it everywhere in the world and even in Canada. It is both an urgent duty and of direct interest for the Canadian proletariat to actively support the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian people.

the peoples of the earth have a com-

mon enemy: imperialism, in all its forms. Proletarian internationalism is the weapon of our common victory.

Long live the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian people.

Long live the militant solidarity between the Iranian people and the Canadian people.

Financially support the struggle of the Iranian people.

Send your donations to:  
Iranian Support Fund  
Provincial Bank of Canada  
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