

Report from Kurdistan



- **March 8 — International Working Women's Day
Salute the communist women of Iran!**
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March 8 -- International Working Women's Day Salute the communist women of Iran!

On this International Working Women's Day we salute the women communists of the Communist Party of Iran, including the women peshmargas (armed fighters) of the CPI's Komala organization in Kurdistan. They have joined the front lines of struggle against the Khomeini dictatorship. They face a regime that has imposed the most appalling oppression of women. And their bold participation in the revolutionary struggle can only be an inspiration to the exploited and oppressed everywhere.

Below is a report from the MLP medical team which recently travelled to Kurdistan where it met with new women recruits at Komala's training center in the no-man's land on the Iran-Iraq frontier.

New Peshmargas

The scene is Kurdistan 1988, a tent high in the mountains at the training center for Komala's new peshmargas. Young women come in, hang up their automatic rifles and sit on the floor in a circle. Most are 16 to 18 years old.

There is a hushed intensity as each woman speaks:

"My father was going to trade me so he could get a wife. I joined Komala to escape this fate."

"The Islamic regime imprisoned and beat me because I refused to wear a veil. I told them I didn't recognize their laws."

"Khomeini's guards came to my house to question me about Komala. I said, 'I'm not going to tell you anything even if you chop me to pieces.'"

"I became a carpet weaver at the age of eight earning 25 cents a day. Now I grasp and put into the practice the theory of the emancipation of the working class. Now I am a peshmarga."



New women recruits for Komala's peshmargas gather at the Training Center.

Who are these young women who speak with such boldness and courage? How do they dare to go against centuries of backward feudal traditions? What stirs them to virtually spit in the face of Khomeini, the Imam of a brutal and ferociously anti-woman dictatorship?

These young women have taken a giant step out of the past. They are among the recruits who have joined Komala to struggle for the overthrow of the Khomeini regime and all capitalist and feudal relations in Iran. They are women who have grasped that their own liberation as women can only be won as part of the struggle for the emancipation of the entire working class.

Doubly Oppressed as Workers and Women

The majority of these women were workers. Most joined the work force before they were 10 years old. They

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have suffered years of harsh exploitation, working 10 and 12 hours a day as brickyard workers, as carpet weavers or agricultural laborers.

On top of this, these women have come out of an extremely backward and oppressive society. They have been completely without rights.

In the rural areas women can still be bought and sold like animals. They cannot choose their husband nor can they divorce. They work the fields, then keep the house, care for the children and tend the animals. A full day of toil often runs from four in the morning until midnight. Woman's situation is such that she gives birth and within a few hours is back at her duties cooking bread. These severe conditions for women break their health. A woman of 30 is already an old woman.

The situation is hardly better in the cities. The humiliation and degradation of women is a cardinal point of the religious codes of the Islamic regime. Women are forced under the veil and suffer an apartheid-like second-class status.

The CPI and Komala Stand Up for Women's Rights

Of all the political forces in Iran and Kurdistan, it's the Communist Party of Iran and Komala that wage a consistent struggle against the oppression of women. The bourgeois nationalist KDP and others bend before the pressures of the regime and religious and backward prejudices; but Komala is resolute on this question and passionately fights for

women's equality.

Komala's "Charter on the Rights of the Toiling Masses in Kurdistan" includes an important section on the rights of women. They have propagated this document widely. On their radio programs and in their publications they point out that all barriers to women's full participation in the mass movements and political life must be torn down. It is also well known in Kurdistan that within the ranks of Komala's peshmargas, the women are treated fully as equals and fight in the military units right alongside the men.

Struggle Brings Winds of Freedom

This stand of Komala-CPI has put its stamp on Kurdish society. In the first place, it has gained it the sympathy of the masses of women workers and toilers.

A section of these women overcome all the obstacles put up by the regime



Young woman takes aim during target practice.

and tradition to make their way into the ranks of Komala's peshmarga forces. Life of the woman peshmarga is harsh. But that is not what you see in their optimistic faces. Because it is participation in the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed that has made the difference between living as wretched slaves and standing up as full human beings.

The young women at the training camp talked about how the tide turned for them when they began listening to Komala's radio. Others had been inspired by Komala peshmargas who defied the Islamic Guard to hold meetings and organize in the villages. Some counted themselves as communists from the age of nine or 10 when they began propagating the Marxism that they had learned from Komala among their co-workers.

Komala's stand against the oppression of women also has a broader impact. In areas where its influence is strong, a woman warning "I'll tell Komala" can prevent a beating. Moreover, Komala encourages women to take their place in the mass struggles. Among other things, women are par-

ticularly bold in the fight against the regime's military conscription. They hide the young men being searched out by the regime, and have frequently liberated them after they have been captured.

The working people of Kurdistan are learning that the participation of women is essential for the success of their struggle. The backward attitudes and mistreatment of women among the masses breaks down in the class struggle. Men and women alike can see how the struggle against the capitalist owners and the fight against the regime is strengthened with the participation of women and the defense of their rights.

The fresh air that was blowing at the training center cannot just be attributed to the beautiful Kurdish mountains. The new recruits — the young men and women workers — bring vigor and promise to the struggle. The aim of their movement is the overthrow of the Khomeini tyranny and all forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression. As they achieve this they will also smash the chains of women's slavery that is weighing heavily on the working people of Kurdistan and Iran. □



Kurdistan— 9 years of revolutionary struggle

Report from Kurdistan

(In December and January a medical team of the MLP, USA travelled to Kurdistan at the invitation of Komala, the organization of the Communist Party of Iran in Kurdistan. In our February issue we carried the first installment of "Report from Kurdistan." In this issue we continue our coverage with a report on the medical work of Komala and of its struggle against the oppression of women. Below we carry an account of revolutionary developments in Kurdistan over the last nine years. It has been prepared by a member of the MLP team and is based on accounts from both Komala leaders and rank-and-file fighters who took part in these events.)

This February marked the ninth anniversary of the revolution in Iran. The struggle against the tyranny of the Shah was felt around the world. It was one of the truly mighty mass movements of recent times. The whole society was in upheaval. Millions and millions were in the street. The workers went on strike, crippling the oil industry and the economic lifelines. Troops mutinied and took the side of the people. The masses smashed the U.S.-backed monarchy to bits.

This revolution settled accounts with the hated Shah and shook one of the main props of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. And it threatened much more. It put into question the very existence of a capitalist regime in Iran. Unfortunately, however, the revolution was cut short: The Islamic clergy came out on top, which means that today the working people of Iran are once again groaning under a bloodstained capitalist tyranny — this time under the religious cloak of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The exploiters and oppressors everywhere sneer at the Iranian revolution. They tell us: "Sure, the people sacrificed and struggled to get rid of the brutal and corrupt Shah, and all they got for it was an even more brutal regime." But such sneers are self-serving rot. The revolution unleashed nine years ago was only the first assault; it was a struggle rich in lessons to guide the working class and revolutionaries in further assaults towards the triumph of the revolution and socialism.

The setback in Iran has taught the harsh lesson that within the general struggle against dictatorship, a struggle that grips diverse social strata and political trends, there must be ceaseless work to train the working class to safeguard its own independent interests and adhere to its own socialist perspective. Otherwise, the door is left open to the bourgeois and reformist forces which strive to put brakes on the revolutionary movement.

The formation of the Communist Party of Iran, which militantly struggles for the independent interests of the working class, is a sign that these lessons were not lost on the revolutionary workers. Moreover, in the region of Kurdistan, where the revolution went further and deeper than in other parts of the country, the independent movement of the workers and toilers — led by the CPI's Kurdish organization Komala — is a powerful force. This is a lasting and invaluable product of the revolution. Because, as we shall see in the following account of the struggle in Kurdistan, it was the revolution which polarized the different class and political forces, and which sharply posed the independent revolutionary path of the working class and toilers.

A Stronghold of the Left

Kurdistan is an impoverished and oppressed mountain region. Nonetheless, in the upheaval that led to the overthrow

of the Shah in February 1979, it was in Kurdistan more than elsewhere that democratic and left-wing slogans were stronger than the religious ones. There were a number of reasons for this. There was the religious factor, with the mainly Sunni Moslem Kurds being less vulnerable to the demagoguery of Khomeini and the other Shiite mullahs.

There was also the national question. The Kurds had been subject to every type of humiliation at the hands of the monarchy of the Shah and his father. They were denied the right to autonomy, the right to study in the Kurdish language, and even at times the right to wear Kurdish clothes. This generated deep resentment on the part of the Kurds who quite rightly suspected that Khomeini and the other religious chiefs would also refuse to grant them autonomy and their other national rights.

Moreover, within the Kurdish movement there were powerful nonreligious and left-wing trends. There was the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), the traditional bourgeois nationalist party, which had a mildly left image. There was also the strong presence of the communist organization Komala. And besides these two largest parties, a number of other left-wing groups had weight in Kurdistan (the Castroite Fedayeen, the Maoist Peykar, etc.).

Taken together, all this added up to a balance of political forces in Kurdistan favorable to the left. During the upheaval against the Shah, the religious figures tried to climb onto the back of the movement. However, unlike other parts of Iran where the left adopted a conciliatory or even downright laudatory attitude towards the religious leaders, the left didn't surrender the terrain to the mullahs. Therefore, it was the left, especially the communists of Komala, which came to the fore of the struggle.

Upheaval Against the Shah

In August of 1978 a Komala leader, Foad Mostafa Soltani, organized a 24-

day hunger strike of political prisoners in the Sanandaj prison. In solidarity with the prisoners, there was a sit-in at the justice building and a massive demonstration. This was the first huge mass action against the Shah in this major Kurdish city.

Months later, in December, there was a demonstration tens of thousands strong to greet the return to Sanandaj of Showeib Zakariaei, a Komala Central Committee member, after his release from one of the Shah's dungeons. The mullahs led by Ahmad Mofti-zadeh had tried unsuccessfully to convince the masses to boycott this demonstration. This turned the demonstration into the first major trial of political strength pitting the religious leaders against Komala and the left forces, with the latter coming out on top.

Komala was in the midst of the insurrection against the regime; its communist militants were at the head of the masses in the attacks on the police stations and other bulwarks of the regime.

On February 11 the insurrection triumphed in Tehran. As the revolution gained ground in Kurdistan, the political forces that had been forced underground by the terrorism of the Shah came into the open. On February 15 Komala was officially and publicly introduced to the people. The bourgeois nationalist KDP also attempted to reemerge into public life.

The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces promised that the revolution would bring about a harmonious unity. But the conflict between the religious and left-wing forces, and the beginning of the public struggle of political parties, promised something else: the revolution was bringing to the surface the open clash between classes and political trends that had been held underground by the jackboot of the Shah's tyranny.

Revolution Unleashed

The onslaught of the Kurdish workers and toilers smashed the old forces of

order. The police and army had been routed except for a few garrisons. The former bureaucracy was reduced to almost nothing apart from a few social service agencies.

In this vacuum of power there was a flowering of organization among the working people. Revolutionary committees, or councils, organized day-to-day life in cities and towns across Kurdistan. Organizations of construction workers, of the unemployed, and other workers' organizations sprang up. Peasant leagues were formed. The most famous of these was the Marivan peasant union with over 40,000 members, organized and armed by Komala. As well, with Komala's encouragement an array of other broad mass organizations — under names like Association to Defend Democratic Rights, or Society for the Defense of Freedom and the Revolution — were set up in all the cities and towns of Kurdistan.

This wave of organizing gave a free hand to the left. Komala became the predominant force in many of these organizations — organizations which were emerging as the new power across much of Kurdistan.

Kurdistan was quickly emerging as a strong point of the revolution of the Iranian workers and toilers. In other parts of the country, the religious forces were step by step consolidating power; the left-wing forces were retreating in disarray, dominated by either shameless supporters of the allegedly "anti-imperialist" Islamic Republic or by vacillating elements who could not steer an independent road of struggle. In Kurdistan, however, the independent organization of the masses went much further. The left wing had the initiative. And the masses of workers and peasants listened to the appeals of Komala to be vigilant against the Khomeini regime as a capitalist and anti-revolutionary force.

Growing Conflict With the Islamic Republic

From its first days, the new Islamic government in Tehran saw Kurdistan as a dangerous threat and launched repeated attacks to disorganize and dis-

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In the spring of 1981 a number of Komala peshmargas were freed in exchange for POW's of the Islamic Republic. The working people of the city of Bookan came out to greet them.

Kurdistan — 9 years of revolutionary struggle

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arm the revolution there. Only 40 days after the overthrow of the Shah, on the Iranian New Year, the first of a series of confrontations and bloody battles began. Mercenaries of the Islamic Republic attacked the mass organizations in Sanandaj. Komala and the left organized a counterattack which captured the city's garrison and the rest of the government buildings used by the Islamic regime.

On July 14 in the city of Marivan, Islamic guards gunned down three demonstrators. The people fought back and killed a number of guards. The government sent in a detachment of guards and troops to restore control. To protest this attack and the policies of the regime in Kurdistan, Komala issued a call for the people of Marivan to evacuate the city temporarily. On July 21, the entire population of the city marched out of Marivan with contingents marching from all over Kurdistan in solidarity. This "Marivan Decampment" was a symbol of the depths of isolation of the Islamic regime from the Kurdish toilers.

During these days the different political forces in Kurdistan took sharply different attitudes towards the central government. The bourgeois nationalist KDP, with the strength of tradition and its links with the exploiters behind them, tried to place themselves as the official arbiters of the fate of the Kurdish people. They adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the regime in the hopes of negotiating for themselves a degree of authority in Kurdistan.

The reformists and petty-bourgeois leftists also played an undermining role. The Fedayeen (Organization of Iranian Peoples Fedayee Guerrillas) actually tried to defend the Khomeini regime among the masses. It preached moderation and opposed deepening the struggle against the central government. After Komala the Fedayeen had been the second largest radical left organization. However, their prestige and support plummeted with their friendly attitude towards the Islamic Republic. (Later on the Fedayeen split, with the minority faction taking a more oppositional stand towards the regime. However, it floundered and vacillated under the acute class struggle.)

Meanwhile the communists of Komala organized and prepared the workers and toilers for an armed movement. They warned the masses about the intentions of the regime and rallied them to defend their revolutionary gains. Owing to this work, when the regime attacked in full force the working people were not caught by surprise.

Khomeini Launches War on Kurdistan

On August 19, the Islamic Republic launched an all-out attack on Kurdistan. Khomeini ordered this attack as a religious duty or "jihad." The suppression of the Kurds became an obsession for the regime in its drive to consolidate its power and turn back the revolution of the workers and toilers. In turn, the courageous resistance of the Kurdish masses drew the attention and sympathy of the workers and revolutionaries across Iran.

Komala issued a communique declaring that the Kurdish people are being tested and that Komala will organize them against this attack. It named Khomeini as a criminal and a defender of the capitalists. This was not a narrow appeal to Kurdish national sentiments; rather, it explained the necessity of defending Kurdistan as a bulwark of the general revolutionary movement of the working people of the country as a whole.

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For the first three months, the whole region was consumed in warfare. Troops of the regime seized the cities, closed down the press and the universities and clamped down on the rights of the masses. Against this outrage there were demonstrations in Tehran and many other Iranian cities.

The Kurdish toilers rose up in arms. There was mass struggle and insurrection in cities and towns throughout the region. Sanandaj and the other cities were taken over by the peshmargas



Celebrating the first anniversary of the formation of the CP of Iran in the liberated areas of Kurdistan, September 1984.

(armed fighters) as the forces of the regime were thrown back. The government bureaucracy of the Islamic Republic had to be dismantled and moved into military garrisons.

Forced to retreat, the Khomeini government asked for a cease-fire and negotiations. A Board of Delegates was formed to negotiate for the Kurdish side made up of Komala, the KDP, the Fedayeen, and Sheikh Ezzedin Husseini (a prominent religious figure with a democratic reputation, but whose role was being eclipsed by the emergence of the political parties).

A conflict broke out between Komala and the KDP over the negotiations. Komala demanded that the negotiations be open to the people. The KDP, on the other hand, wanted to strike a secret deal. The KDP withdrew from the Board of Delegates and entered into negotiations on its own, hoping to make itself more attractive by separating itself from the left. Nonetheless, the regime had no intention to make such a deal; it was only buying time to regroup for a fresh attack.

When the Islamic Republic began new military attacks, the KDP still held out hope. KDP forces even led the way for Khomeini's troops back into the city of Sanandaj. Meanwhile, Komala took the stand of no retreat without a fight. This helped the masses draw lines between the militant stand of the communists and the cringing policy of the bourgeois nationalists. It also helped prepare the workers and villagers for the most stubborn resistance war in the history of the Kurdish people.

The Workers' and Toilers' Resistance

During the whole month of January 1980, Sanandaj was gripped by a general strike. There was also a mass sit-in at the governor's mansion, as well as a hunger strike of 900 people that lasted several days. These concerted

protests succeeded in forcing the Islamic guards out of the city by January 29. However, by the next day the Khomeini regime began its second full-scale offensive against Kurdistan.

A new form of mass organizations arose to organize the resistance. These were called "benques (or councils) of the localities." They were elected by the workers and poor of the neighborhoods and districts, and the benques were brought together under the umbrella of the "council of coordination of the

benques of the localities." These councils managed all the affairs of the cities. They also played a decisive role in arming the masses and organizing their resistance. Where the benque organization was most complete — such as Sanandaj and Marivan — the resistance was strongest. However, the struggle was weakened where the benques were less formed. This was mainly due to the opposition of the KDP chieftains who felt threatened by the power of the workers and poor that the benques represented.

Troops of the Islamic regime laid siege to Sanandaj on April 20, 1980. The inhabitants, organized by their benques, put up a fierce defense. For 24 days they held out in the face of both ground and air attacks. Later that month the regime attacked Saje and Baneh, only to be met by a similarly stubborn resistance. It took the troops 34 days to finally seize Baneh.

For the next five years, Khomeini's forces were bogged down in a bitter struggle to capture the rest of the towns and villages of Kurdistan. Now the occupation is near complete. But the war continues. The days belong to Khomeini's Islamic guards; the nights belong to Komala's peshmargas who enjoy broad popular support.

What's more, the war has taken on a new quality with the organization of a truly mass workers' underground organized by the communists of Komala. This is part of the deep class polarization that has taken place within the Kurdish movement.

Class Polarization

From the first days of the revolution in Kurdistan, the workers and poor have known that their struggle was not simply for national rights and autonomy. The real motive force of their movement has been the social questions. They have sought relief from the

grinding poverty at the hands of the exploiters. (In the early stages there was a strong peasant struggle against the landlords, but the main conflict has been the struggle of the workers and laborers against the urban and rural capitalists.) They have demanded sanitation, health care and other urgent needs. And they have fought for democratic rights to allow more room to organize and struggle for a better life. This deep-going movement of the workers and toilers has put the political forces in Kurdistan to the test.

For its part, the KDP has always rejected the class struggle in favor of an above-class unity of all Kurds for their national rights. When the class struggle became acute, the bourgeois nature of this stand became more obvious. When the workers and toilers go into action for their own interests, they are either ignored by the KDP or, worse, the KDP sympathizes with the wealthy owners and traditional chiefs who provide the KDP with much support.

Along with this, the KDP has shed its leftist image. In June, 1980 it expelled the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party faction in its leadership. In part this was due to Tudeh leaders going further than the KDP was willing to go in their groveling before Khomeini. It was also connected to the KDP seeking to cast off any "communist" labels as it began looking for support from social democracy and other forces of western imperialism. The KDP also took up warfare against the leftists. As early as the winter of 1981 it attacked and killed leftist militants of the Peykar organization in Bookan.

In 1983-84 the KDP unleashed a bloody civil war against the communists of Komala. Both sides have suffered heavy losses in this conflict. The war has temporarily subsided over the last year because the Komala peshmargas have taught the KDP that to pursue the war will cost them dearly. Nonetheless, the KDP continues its cowardly attacks on the communists. A Komala organizer of the Bookan brick yard workers' strikes was recently assassinated by the KDP, showing just where the KDP stands in the class struggle.

The Rise of a Communist Workers' Movement

With the revolution, Komala also went through an evolution. At the time of the insurrection it was a communist organization closely tied to the struggles of the workers and the poor. When the working class came into struggle, the other left wing groups in Kurdistan were paralyzed and pushed to the side because of their reformist and class collaborationist standpoint. Komala, on the other hand, successfully took up the challenge and became the main organizer of the workers and poor.

To accomplish this Komala underwent a rectification to overcome non-proletarian influences. At its Second Congress, held in March 1981, Komala did self-criticism for what it called "populist economism." It laid stress on criticizing those ideological stands which denigrate the struggle for the class independence of the workers; which underestimate the revolutionary nature of the working class; or which slur over the socialist training of the workers. The formation of the Communist Party of Iran in September, 1983 through the efforts of Komala and revolutionary Marxists from other parts of Iran such as the Union of Communist Militants was a crowning point of this process of criticism and proletarianization.

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Medical work in the revolution

A medical team of the MLP, USA travelled to Kurdistan this winter at the invitation of Komala, the organization of the Communist Party of Iran in Iranian Kurdistan. The team visited a number of the medical facilities in Komala's camps strung along the mountains of the Iran-Iraq frontier.

Medical Miracles

The first stop on our agenda during our visit to the Komala camps was the Central Camp where the core of their medical facilities is located. Here we visited the hospital, including the patient wards and the pharmacy. We toured their surgery center and recovery room. And we sat in briefly during a class for medical aides being taught in their medical school.

The medical center is simple and the conditions under which the medical personnel work are extremely harsh. The doctors carry on with scarce supplies and only minimal equipment. There is a constant battle with the elements: coping with winter's mud and summer's dust, maintaining the water supply, ensuring electric current and so on. The school we visited was so tiny the 40 students could barely fit into the classroom.

Taking these difficulties into account, the achievements of this medicine for the revolution are astounding. Doctors perform over 300 surgeries a year with an infection rate lower than in many hospitals in the U.S. Komala paramedics are equipped with the knowledge and skills to do surgery right at the front and save the lives of gravely wounded peshmargas.

Battlefield Medicine

Medicine for Komala focuses on emergency and war medicine. And they have accomplished much on this front.

Every battalion of armed fighters, known as peshmargas, has in its ranks trained paramedics. They go through an intense medical schooling at the Central Camp, preparing them to treat wounded peshmargas under fire. Obviously, a wounded communist fighter is not rescued by helicopter medivac; nor can they easily check in to one of Khomeini's hospitals. They are often 10 or 20 days' march over rugged terrain from Komala's doctors and medical facilities. That's where the life-saving role of their battlefield medicine comes in.

This has been remarkably successful. The paramedics have saved countless lives through emergency treatment. They have been able to do sophisticated surgery in the field, using a flashlight to see, and a blanket to hide from enemy fire. We met a man who was rescued in this way after receiving a head wound so severe the brain was visible outside of the skull. However, their most famous case is the story of Jamil the Red.

Jamil is a young peshmarga wounded by a bullet through the abdomen. The bullet entered his body in such a way that it damaged his internal organs and his spinal cord. Without immediate surgery he would have died. The paramedics performed an intense two-hour operation in the midst of battle. They opened his abdomen and repaired the damaged organs. During the surgery they were connected by field radio to doctors at the Central Camp. They had only an IV anesthetic, and the simplest of instruments. Their radio signal could not be maintained consistently under conditions of battle. And still these paramedics gave Jamil back his life.

We met Jamil in the central hospital and again in the hospital in the camp in the village of Chenorah where he had been moved so he could be closer to his friends. He still suffers some damage to his autonomic nervous system but is now walking with only the help of a

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The life of Jamil the Red (right) was saved by Komala paramedics who performed abdominal surgery on him in the open and under fire. His comrade on the left was wounded in the shoulder in the same battle. At a Komala hospital.

cane.

His story is famous among Komala's peshmargas. Eventually a visitor hears the story of Jamil from the angle of each of the participants — the paramedics, Jamil himself, the radio group, the doctors. The episode is outstanding because it so vividly illustrates the collective dedication to the peshmargas at the front. And it shows Komala's devotion to sorting out the imperatives of wartime medicine.

Poverty and Backwardness

Komala's peshmargas struggle within a poverty-stricken society. Villagers live in low buildings made of mud with tiny lightless windows. There is no running water or sewers. They use kerosene or animal dung for heat and cooking which creates a stifling atmosphere with limited oxygen. The workers in the Kurdish cities are only slightly better off.

The Komala doctors told us that the health problems of the masses begin with malnutrition and are compounded by their lack of knowledge about hygiene. The masses suffer infections,

tuberculosis, loss of teeth, gastrointestinal problems of every description. The only types of diseases that do not plague them so heavily are those associated with aging; they simply do not live long enough.

The severity of these health conditions is visited upon the women with a vengeance. Eight percent of all women die in childbirth or with infections resulting from unhygienic conditions during childbirth. Nearly 20 out of every 100 babies do not live to see their second birthday.

Modern Medicine

The handful of European doctors who visit the Komala camps come with notions about the deplorable conditions in the camps in Afghanistan and other poor and war-torn countries. That's why they are so surprised to find in the Komala camps the high level they have achieved in sanitation, nutrition, and modern 20th-century medicine.

Even though often in a primitive form, there is electricity, potable running water, laundries, hot showers, and toilets. The medical group is respon-

sible for planning food consumption in the camps to insure nutritionally balanced meals.

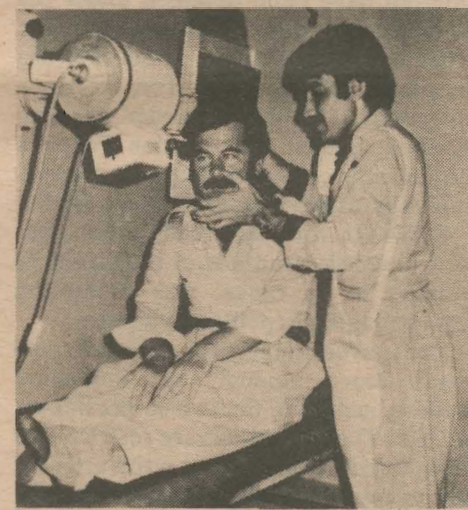
The backward and superstitious attitudes towards women and the anti-women laws of the Islamic Republic do not exist in the camps. In medical terms this means that improved hygiene, access to contraception (including tubal ligation and vasectomies) and abortion, and medically supervised pregnancy and childbirth are provided for the peshmargas.

New recruits are given a thorough medical examination and complete dental work is done. For many it is the first time they have received such care.

The medical staff also treats the peshmargas who come into the camps to rest and recuperate during the winter snows. Life is tough for these brave young men and women who spend from spring through fall deep in the interior on military operations against Khomeini's forces. They suffer from old wounds. They also have orthopedic problems as well as stomach and intestinal ailments connected with marching 12 hours at a time for weeks and months on end, often with little food or water.

Komala clinics also provide emergency and other services for the neighboring Kurdish villagers.

Komala's medical successes are not based solely on knowing modern techniques and keeping up with the latest research. Komala has developed 20th-century medicine in the midst of a backward society and while fighting a war because it approaches medicine as more than technique. Komala is creating a medicine that springs from a scientific and revolutionary perspective; a medicine that is part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed for a better life. □



Radiology at the Komala hospital.

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Today, the militant and rising workers' movement in Kurdistan is inseparable from the name of Komala-CPI. With massive sympathy and an extensive underground network, it has emerged as the dominant trend among the Kurdish workers. This in turn is being felt throughout Iran.

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also putting forward the demands of COSEP and its circles to the government. For example, COSEP's demands for a different tax policy and for the return of property are promoted. This is the reality of the opportunist manipulation by the right. They are trying to utilize the capacity and power of the workers' movement to protect their own minority interests. They are trying to mobilize the working class in favor of the defense of their managerial privileges as accumulators of profits. The fact is that the interests of the bourgeoisie and the workers' movement are not the same, no matter how much the

Last year there was a strike wave in the Kurdish brick yards and the workers' staged a massive May Day action in Sanandaj. Komala-CPI was at the heart of organizing both of these struggles which gripped the attention of the revolutionary workers across Iran. It is growing ever more obvious to the people of Iran that it's the independent revolutionary movement of the workers that holds the only hope for lifting them out

of their present torment. The Kurdish and Iranian workers are proving themselves as the only class with the initiative and stamina to confront the Khomeini dictatorship. In today's struggle the communists are laying the ground for the revolution of the workers and oppressed that will liberate Iran from its present capitalist torture of poverty, war and religious tyranny. □

right wing in an opportunist manner tries to manipulate the workers' demands, and no matter how much opportunism and local revisionism cooperate in this dirty work [the Nicaraguan pro-Soviet revisionist parties — the Socialist Party and the Communist Party — join coalitions with the right].

The workers' movement must show that it does not need friendship with the right wing in order to fight for its class demands. It must show that this fight is not just developed against the anti-worker policies of the government, the state, and its bureaucracy, but also and basically against the bosses, the bourgeoisie, the big entrepreneurs. [Develop the] independence and class struggle of the workers' movement in the face of

the [capitalist] management and the [Sandinista] government.

The workers must firmly insist on these demands. They must not only make COSEP, the capitalist associations, the bourgeoisie and the reaction in general bend before the revolutionary force of the working class, but also the Sandinista government itself. Taking the banners of struggle of the workers' movement into their own hands [is the workers'] best guarantee of success.

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