

Toufan

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Excerpt from the Report on the Enlarged Plenum of the Party of Labour of Iran (part 1)

The enlarged plenum of the PLI was held in February 2001 in a cordial and communist spirit, with the participation of many comrades from different countries and with a dense agenda.

With a moment of silence, the comrades honoured the memory of those who have lost their lives for the emancipation of the working class, and who have passed the banner of the struggle to us to be continued.

The plenum was held with a great number of participants and with full observance of the principle of underground work. The plenum had to respond to numerous hot

theoretical, practical, and political issues of the day.

At the beginning, the Central Committee gave report on the following issues:

the world situation, the policies and positions of the Party in the past year, analysis on the Iran's hot political issues of the day, the role of the Central Organ, the status of the organisation, the situation of the Party's propaganda and training and finances, work inside Iran, concrete work to strengthen the Leninist principle of democratic centralism, the publication of the Internal Bulletin for the comrades' exchange

of views and for the report on their work, setting a clear policy governing the publication of the IB, contacts with the revolutionary organisations and individuals who are for uniting the communist movement, contact with the fraternal Parties and Organisations and the importance of the internationalist cooperation, the importance of propagating Marxism-Leninism especially in the present situation, the analysis of Iran's political vicissitudes and the direction they move, the split in the Reformist camp and the suppression of a section of it, the new factions in

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the government, the stability and the continuation of the democratic movement of the people, the Organisation's difficulties and its success and failures, and the proposal to overcome them, etc.

After extensive discussion, the participants approved the political line and the activity of the Central Committee. The Comrades believed that the brave and sharp political stands of the Party on the exposure and the struggle against the dispersion generated by the revisionists, Trotskites, and Kautskites have had a great influence on the clarification of principles of Marxism-Leninism in the movement. The clear-cut increase in the number of the requested Central Organ, Toufan, indicates the willingness to take up the correct line of the Party. The Comrades stressed the importance of taking up organisational responsibilities. They all believed that the Party must act as a single body and should not transform itself into producers and consumers.

The struggle against all forms of oppression

As it is stated in the Program of the Party,

"We support every democratic demand that weakens the basis of the capitalist ruling autocracy in Iran. The communists desire ever-vast participation of masses in movement of their self-determination. The communists are for a genuine democracy and for the unconditional freedom of democratic activities of the people. In a democratic condition, it is easier for the communists to raise the workers' level of consciousness, to increase their readiness to fight, to strengthen the mass's political and occupational organizations, and to train the people for an open class war against the entire bourgeoisie and its autocratic rule. The communists are opposed to despotism and autocracy, and they will continue to fight against all forms of domination, oppression, lack of rights, violation of human rights, torture and execution, all of which are applied by the autocratic rulers".

Although our Party ideologically opposes the Reformists and fiercely struggles against their deviated line of cooling down the mass movement, we also fight against the suppression, imprisonment, and the torture of the Reformists by the violence of the Islamic Reaction. Our Party has assessed that the Reformists' activities are in the service of and for the preservation of the regime of the Islamic Republic. We know that the Reformists are opposed to the communist activities including their public gathering and use of their press.

In other words, we believe that the democracy of the Reformists is half hearted and is only for their friends. We condemn the banning of the Reformists' press, the press that played a role in the exposure of the conservative and dominant faction of the regime. We stand for the freedom of all press and assembly for all including the Reformists. This is a big difference between the communists as the persistent and sincere democrats and the Reformists and bourgeois liberals. The seminar confirmed this policy.

Split in the camp of the Reformists

As we have expressed in our Central Organ, the roots of the reformist movement lie in the struggle of the masses for democratic rights and for a better living condition. It is the struggle from below that forced the rulers at the top to react. This struggle has divided the regime into Conservative and Reformist factions. The Conservative faction is dominant in the regime. Naturally, when the fire of the struggle is burning, this struggle affects the class stand of some elements in the movement. This struggle also shifts some elements from one faction or class into another depending on the element's degree of class-consciousness and persistence in the struggle and his/her firm stand on what he/she believes. The ruling elite, whether the Conservative or the Reformist faction, has split up. Some section of the Conservative faction is now talking about reform. In doing this, the Conservative faction wants to gain leadership in the Reformist faction and thus to control and suppress the rebellious elements in there.

The pressure of the masses from below and their use of the existing contradictions at the top leadership generated an atmosphere that greatly affected the consciousness of the masses. The increased waves of struggle of the people and the mass's higher level of demands alarmed the entire ruling elite. The rulers have now temporarily reached unity until their next struggle for power. The contradiction within the regime of the Islamic Republic is in the nature of its establishment. It is the contradiction between republic and autocracy headed by a supreme leader. It is the contradiction between the will and the determination of the masses and that of the Supreme Leader. It is the contradiction between the goals of the great Iranian Revolution of 1979 and its petty achievement as a result of united attempts of the domestic and international reaction. It is at the same time the contradiction between the multi-

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centers of power of Shiite Islam that do not recognise a single authority in their feudalistic rule.

In the infighting of the regime, the Conservative faction has won over President Khatami and some of his followers, and it has suppressed the persistent elements of the Reformist faction that have raised issues such as referendum, change of the Constitution, and the abolishment of the supremacy of the Leader. This suppression has no limit and will not be confined to these individuals. The dominant faction will cut wherever their knives can go. This split at the top stems from the fear from the masses. This split is a sign of intensified class contradiction in the Iranian society. It is the sign of pressure from below and fear at the top that can no longer rule on the basis of Pure Mohammedan Islam as before.

The reformist movement has awakened the mass's dream for a better life. This dream cannot easily be controlled. The Reformists themselves are frightened by this rebellious "giant" and they prefer to cool it down. It was the fear of death that brought the Supreme Leader Khamenei to the scene to practically annul the Sixth Islamic Parliament. He is the man who cried and heard the "voice of the people's revolution" at the time when people came to the street in support of the students' uprising. In those days, he lied to the masses and waited for the next chance to attempt to suppress of the movement. Now, he got the chance by partially uniting Khatami with his faction. Our Party believes that the way out of this crisis is to take steps toward socialism.

Electing Khatami in the Past and the Upcoming Elections

Khatami was never more than what he is today. President Khatami announced on the first day after he was elected that he is a follower of the Islamic Republic, that he supports the Islamic Constitution which gives a key role to the Supreme Leader, and that it is in the nature of his reform platform to preserve the Islamic Republic. But the "fake opposition" abroad attributed revolutionary characters to the Khatami's activity.

Khatami was a member of the ruling apparatus who did not agree with the form of the Islamic dictatorship of the time in Iran. He could clearly see that lawlessness, despotism, political assassination, lack of safety and security, official bribery and scandals, prostitution,

crime, drug addiction, etc, have created a hell in Iran and that this situation cannot continue for ever. He raised these issues because he has pity for the regime. He raised these issues not because he wanted to substantially change the regime. His points of his criticism of the regime were the issues that the masses felt with their skins every day and night for years. Khatami had put a finger on the issues that were the general demands of the people. The difference was that the masses saw the Islamic Republic as the source of their misery, but Khatami attributed this to a limited number of reactionary and conservative elements. Electing Khatami as the president four years ago was more the result of the attacks of Conservatives on him than of the result of his own campaign. The Conservative faction supported Nateq Nouri, an extremely reactionary presidential candidate. The masses saw in Nateq Nouri a mirror image of the Islamic Republic of misery. The massive participation of the people in the election and 20 million votes for Khatami was the refutation of and a referendum against the Islamic Republic. By electing president Khatami, the masses clearly signaled to the regime that they would not tolerate the old status any more. The Conservative faction of the regime became disoriented after the ballot count was over. This giant mass action shocked the regime and prepared the ground for some political openness. The press exposed the executions, "chain political assassinations", the regime's astronomical scandals, the crimes committed in the war against Iraq, the mass execution of more than 10,000 political prisoners in the summer of 1988, the Mafia of power, Gentlemen in Red and Gray suits [refers to those who were directly or indirectly involved in the chain political assassinations], etc. These were the dialectical effects of actions on each other.

The process that started quietly with the presidential election four years ago reached its peak at the Sixth Parliamentary elections. The frictions increased and the conflicts intensified. The public said no to long term criminal Rafsanjani. The Conservative faction lost the parliamentary election. Now, the Supreme Leader unmask himself and orders the practical nullification of the Parliament. This order was a declaration of war on the Reformists and a threat to the masses. While the people were ready to resist and defend their achievements, the Reformist leaders had come to a dead end. They were more fearful of the mass movement

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than of the extreme reactionary faction. They could not rely on the masses to declare war on the Supreme Leader. With his order, the Supreme Leader Khamenei sought a fight to suppress the Reformists, and his dream came true by Khatami openly taking sides with him. The victims of this leadership maneuver are some radical reformist elements who had full confidence in President Khatami.

Khatami closed his eyes on the ban of the press by Conservatives. He kneeled to the pressure of Conservatives for resignation of one of his cabinet member. With a deal with the Leader, he appointed one of the authorities involved in the "chain political assassinations" as the Minister of Information. Khatami participated in the cover up of the investigation and the trial of the "chain political assassins". He did not lift a finger to free the jailed students who were involved in the student uprisings in Tehran and Tabriz. Khatami not only did not protest the imprisonment of his fellow reformists, but he accused them of being guilty of extremism and of preparing the ground to overthrow the regime. He did not protest the recent arrest of the Nationalist-Religious elements in the movement.

The Supreme Leader's suppression of the reform movement must be taken as the futility of reform from above and without reliance on the people. The Supreme Leader's order put an end to the game the Reformist played with the masses. This confirms once again the Marxist principle that reform is always a by-product of revolution. The movement for reform is effective as long as the revolutionary movement takes steps to reach its goals and to carry on more reforms.

In the previous elections, the masses considered their participation and their choice of Khatami as a slap in the face of the regime of the Islamic Republic. In the past, the Islamic Republic's stand was that it is the Supreme Leader's decision that counts, and that the peoples' votes are worth nothing. In the past, the Islamic Republic was fearful of mass participation in the elections. On the contrary, the masses wanted to show that they are not a herd and that they do not need a herdsman. The results of the elections were blows to the regime. In the past, Khatami differentiated himself from the dominant Conservative faction. His promotion by the people was a clear denunciation of the regime.

But today, the situation is completely different. Khatami, with his clear shift toward the Supreme Leader, with his confession that he is incapable of doing something positive, with his yielding to

Khamenei's order, with his silence on all essential issues of the past elections, by turning his back on the people's demands, has nothing to offer, and thus his time is past. Now, choosing Khatami is no longer a protest against the Islamic Republic. Now, electing Khatami no longer intensifies the regime's infighting. Khatami as the head of the Executive and Legislative branches of the government has a report card that has nothing except complaints about his fruitless and vain activities. Now, the participation in the elections is an allegiance to the Supreme Leader Khamenei. Now, the Conservative faction is calling upon the people to participate in the upcoming presidential elections. Now, the policy of not participating in the elections and stressing the fact that the only path to salvation is the road to overthrow the regime through a social revolution is a correct policy that should be followed. In our views, as a result of the past several years of their struggle, the masses have achieved a higher level of readiness and consciousness. Even without a strong revolutionary alternative, the tendency toward the lack of confidence in the reformist method of struggle has increased.

The policy to boycott the upcoming presidential elections is revolutionary. It moves the society toward a face to face clash with the capitalist regime. The reform from the top has come to a dead end, but the demand and the will and determination of the people for democratic freedom and a civilised democratic regime will never die. The masses will look for new methods of struggle.

A powerful working class party is needed to lead the struggles and to stop the revolution from being derailed again. Without a unified, tempered, experienced, determined, and revolutionary leadership, which manifests itself in the party of the working class, the next Iranian revolution will not be victorious. Our Party should use its utmost energy to gain this leadership.

to shape such a future. It is only with the establishment of socialism that we can overcome poverty, hunger, unemployment, prostitution, exploitation, class oppression, and all manifestations of the capitalist system.

Hail May 1st, the day of demonstration of the workers' unity!

Long lives socialism, the banner of human salvation!

The Party of Labour of Iran

May 1, 2001