

ARMED STRUGGLE in IRAN

The Road to Mobilization of the Masses

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INTRODUCTION

In May 1972 the U.S. President, Richard Nixon and his adviser, Kissinger, visited Tehran. Their visit was intended to confirm the confidence which the U.S.A. had in Iran, and in the Shah's policies of dominating the oil-producing Gulf. As we now know, that visit also coincided with a decision by Nixon to provide Iran with a military arsenal unparalleled in the world, including weapons not even provided to the U.S. armed forces themselves. Yet Nixon's visit was met with a series of bomb explosions detonated by Iranian guerrillas opposed to the Tehran-Washington alliance, and in protest at U.S. policy in Vietnam. Whereas in Peking and Moscow the butchers Nixon and Kissinger were welcomed with smiles and politeness from all, the opposite was the case in Tehran.

This provides a key to one of the reasons for the massive military build-up in Iran. One reason for the arming of the Shah is, of course, to crush threats outside Iran's boundaries: Iranian army units have since 1972 been active in Oman, Iraq and Pakistan. But the Iranian build-up has an internal function as well. It is aimed to counter the armed struggle which began in 1971 and which has come to pose a long-term threat to the Shah's regime and to the whole of U.S. policy in the region. As in South Africa, an identifiable part of the government's arms buying has involved the purchase of several hundred helicopters for use in future rural anti-guerrilla campaigns.

The following pamphlet is one of the basic explanatory documents of the Iranian guer-

rilla movement which was first published abroad by the "19 Bahman Group". It addresses itself to the main problems facing the movement: on the one hand, it stresses the need for armed struggle in a country where no other means of political expression is allowed; on the other hand, it emphasises the difficulties and necessary stages of such a struggle and discusses the fundamental problem of such an activity - how to link the actions of a small and necessarily secretive armed group with the broader everyday struggles of the working-class and the peasantry. At the same time, it relates the possibilities of armed struggle in the urban context to the continued possibilities of struggle in the countryside and in the mountains - the traditional locations of such struggles in Iran.

There can be no doubt that the Iranian revolutionaries face a protracted and arduous struggle. Many militants have already fallen in battle or have been murdered in prison. But however strong the Iranian regime is militarily at the moment, it is slowly falling into an economic abyss. Agricultural production is lagging further and further behind demand. There are escalating problems in the cities to which millions have flocked in the past two decades. Oil revenues have enabled the regime to buy off part of the middle-class and to build up means of terror and repression in order to contain all and any kind of protest. But in less than twenty years, the oil will be running out, and the very basis of the Pahlavi regime will then disappear. Popular discontent, taking different forms, depending on the social position of those involved, is bound to develop in the aftermath of these problems.

The Iranian revolutionary movement can look forward to a growth of the political conditions which will provide the context for the consolidation of an armed struggle linked to the revolutionary activities of the broader sections of the population. It is therefore as a document for the future, as well as an expression of the past five years of guerrilla struggle, that we are now issuing this edited version of "Armed Struggle in Iran". The original book was first published in Iran in the Autumn of 1973.

The Iran Committee. August 1976.

PREFACE

Two years have passed since the start of the armed struggle - the Siahkal events - and during this time the specific characteristics of the movement have become clear. Nevertheless, widely different interpretations of this movement seem to be offered by progressive circles as a whole, and even by those directly connected with the armed struggle. There is also a lack of unanimity amongst various factions inside the movement with regard to the tactics and strategy that should be adopted by the revolutionary movement now and in the future. The present pamphlet is an attempt to understand the armed revolutionary movement in Iran and to answer the most important problems facing it.

Brevity is the object of this pamphlet for two main reasons:-

(a) the limitations imposed by the subject matter itself;

(b) some of the problems facing the movement, such as the setting up of a Workers' Party, the leadership of the liberation movement, the relationship between the vanguard and the masses, and the problem of unity, have already been discussed in separate pamphlets.(*)

This series of articles contains an analysis of the armed revolutionary movement

(*)The articles relating to "The Workers' Party of Iran" and "Unity and the Strategic Role of the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee" are contained in the first number of the 19 Bahman theoretical series.

and its strategy. Needless to say, the suggestions and forecasts put forward by these articles should not be regarded as an immutable and dogmatic truth. To regard them in this way would make them into a stumbling block in the path of our revolutionary movement and this is contrary to the aim of these pamphlets.

Autumn 1973.

1

The Duties of the Vanguard in the Absence of the Mass Movement

One of the most important problems facing the fighters and the armed movement is the transition from the present limited armed struggle to a mass armed movement. Not only do we have to express our views regarding the role of the masses in the revolution; more importantly, we must also indicate the manner in which a general armed movement will come about. To find an answer to this problem is a primary duty of all groups who consider themselves part of the present armed struggle. There are elements and even possibly organisations who flatly deny the existence of such a problem. An absence of revolutionary theory and a lack of a clear understanding of the present armed struggle are the main factors contributing to such attitudes. These elements and organisations fail to grasp the role of the present armed struggle in the preparation for the revolution. In other words they suffer from a lack of strategic insight regarding the present

struggle. Faced with the problem, they merely declare that the movement is already a general one, and they thereby by-pass the question. They say that "We, who are in the heat of the struggle, are the material and moral reflection of the masses' involvement" or "the masses are fighting the enemy through us". Needless to say any Marxist, no matter how elementary his understanding, is able to make a distinction between a struggle waged merely by vanguard groups and that which comprises the whole of the masses. If these vanguard groups are the expression of a historical necessity and their actions are a reflection of the demands of the masses, and if they follow a correct strategy, then and only then will they enjoy the moral support of the masses. However, there is a wide gap between the moral support of the masses and their material support, i.e. their active participation in the struggle. Bridging this gap involves turning the armed struggle into a general mass movement.

The mood of the masses never remains constant, and movements themselves also pass through phases of high and low activities. What is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard in an atmosphere of political recession? What is to be done when the masses have lost the will to protest and/or take up an aggressive stand? It would be futile to try and answer these questions without attempting to understand the factors that cause the twin states of high and low activity, as well as the factors that help to shorten or prolong such states.

At a time when the mass movement is dormant, there exists a contradiction between the despondency and general inactivity of the masses on the one hand and the attitude of the vanguard on the other - an attitude which stems from a feeling of duty and responsibility. In such circumstances, the vanguard is duty-bound to shorten the period of political stagnation by employing the most suitable tactics. In other words it should overcome the general state of inactivity and despair by playing its trump card revolutionary practice. This entails unprecedented sacrifice, a revolutionary fervour and a deep understanding of revolutionary theories, which will at the same time ensure the continued existence and growth of the vanguard. Such a stand is plainly at variance with the defeatist slogan "Let us die so as not to get killed", which is the true meaning of those who advocate passive resistance. The latter have gone into their shells until, as they put it, "the day when the masses occupy the arena".

Let us see why it is that the masses fall into a state of depression and inactivity. The moods of the people and the quality and circumstances of the movement are affected by objective and subjective conditions. The objective conditions comprise the current system of production and all the factors that form the infrastructure of society. On the other hand, subjective conditions are influenced by objective realities which in turn have their effect on the people. In a revolutionary atmosphere the masses, influenced by these objective and subjective conditions, begin their aggressive moves against the prevailing system and the regime that represents it. However, if such a move fails to achieve results, either because objective factors

were not ripe enough, or because of an absence of subjective factors (e.g. the absence of a revolutionary vanguard), then the movement will be suppressed and the masses will be overcome by a sense of despair and fear of the enemy's power.

We have frequently witnessed this phenomenon in the contemporary history of Iran. The movements that took shape during the 1st World War, especially after the October Revolution and the collapse of Tzarist Russia, were blocked by the coup d'etat of 1921 and eventually suppressed between 1922 and 1926. This was followed by a period of political stagnation and general oppression which lasted until 1940. In the course of nearly twenty years, during which the society had undergone a gradual development, the strong grip of the counter-revolution, together with the absence of a vanguard (which had been annihilated by the regime), prevented the revival of a mass movement. Although the process that had begun with the occupation of Iran failed to have any immediate or decisive influence on the course of society, it nevertheless tipped the balance in favour of the movement. The struggles that grew and expanded, with varying degrees of success, between 1940 and 1953 were stifled by the coup d'etat of the latter year. The suppression of this movement was carried on until 1959 and succeeded in pushing the masses back into political inactivity and virtual despair. Although this time the working-classes were much more mature and the revolutionary forces far better prepared than thirty-two years previously (during the coup d'etat of 1921), the result was more or less the same.

Between 1959 and 1963 the movement found a short breathing space but this ended in a general massacre instigated by the regime. The noteworthy point in all these periodic fluctuations is that whenever, in the wake of each suppression, the ruling cliques succeeded in clearing the way for their perennial reforms - albeit in a direction contrary to its natural development - i.e. an attempt to strike a balance between the contradictions inherent in the system and those existing inside the ruling elements, the period of the movement's recession tended to drag on for a longer time; simultaneously, the task of the vanguard in mobilizing the masses became that much more difficult.

Such a development is a general characteristic of a society and is therefore not peculiar to our movement. Indeed the same process can be found in the history of other people's struggles. When we analyse the preceding developments we find that wherever the vanguard, albeit a vanguard in its preliminary stages of growth, manages to withstand a blow, it emerges stronger and better able to play its subsequent role. An instance of this would be the mini-coup d'etat of 1947 which the Tudeh Party, despite its various weaknesses, managed to survive with the result that the Party functioned between 1949 and 1953 with more preparedness. On the other hand, having been unable to sustain the blows against it during and immediately after the coup d'etat of 1953, the Tudeh Party failed to play any part even in the short break of 1959-63, because the movement was bereft of the factor necessary for a continued struggle. The most vital element that the movement lacked during this period was an experienced vanguard.

2

The Factors that Prolongs or Shorten the Movement's Period of Stagnation

In order to determine these factors, we can use the formula offered by Lenin in assessing a revolutionary situation. He says: "..... that the ruling class is unable to preserve its rule indefinitely. The fact that the deprived masses are unwilling to accept former standards is not in itself sufficient for the start of the revolution. It is also necessary that the ruling class is unable to govern in the former way. The toiling masses must be subjected to serious pressures, and the people's struggle must gain momentum at the same time. Having resigned themselves to a life of pacifism, the masses will, in the long run, be pushed towards an unprecedented historical action because of environmental factors and the pressure of the ruling class".

Lenin adds, "For a socialist revolution to be triumphant, as well as those factors that are the objective conditions of a revo-

lution, there must also exist the subjective conditions, i.e. the ability of revolutionary groups to fight with heroism and sacrifice and the existence of an experienced revolutionary party with a correct strategic and tactical programme".

In the light of this Leninist position, we can distinguish the following factors in the period of political recession:-

(a) The position of the masses in relation to the system of production and prevailing socio-economic conditions;

(b) The method of government employed by the ruling classes, and the power of the regime and its ability to exercize this power;

(c) The power, revolutionary experience and organisation of the vanguard;

(a) The position of the masses in relation to the system of production and prevailing socio-economic conditions:

The objective conditions of society are by far the most important and effective set of factors responsible for the recession or progression of revolutionary movements. When a system of production reaches its optimum level, is unable to find any answer for socio-economic ills, and hence faces annihilation, its inherent contradictions will cease to co-exist and will begin to clash. The decrepit system will directly influence the day-to-day existence of the masses and make it intolerable.

Our society was governed by a feudal system of production within which capitalism (in its comprador form) continued its growth. The conditions in the prevailing socio-economic system had created many problems: these were mainly the result of the contradictions between feudalism and dependent capitalism. These problems had affected the general situation in two respects: first, in regard to the lives of the masses and their opinion regarding the current system of relationship; and second, in regard to the power and ability of the ruling classes.

The land reform and other reformist actions of the last decade were designed to end these contradictions and revitalize the prevailing system. Feudalism, as a governing system, lost its hold and was replaced by a system of dependent capitalism. Thus the most important contradictions within the ruling classes were resolved while contradictions that flow from a system of dependent capitalism began to grow. Although these changes did not end the general deprivation and indeed imposed a more brutal regime on the masses, nevertheless they helped to speed up society's growth and created a new system of production. The recent changes gave the masses some hope and especially the land reform engendered hopes among the peasants; and similarly the urban proletariat's expectations were boosted.

The relatively high speed at which industrial production was increased managed to end or otherwise control, albeit temporarily, the general discontent of pre-reform times. For such dormant discontent to grow, a tran-

sitional period was required for the new system to reveal its true colours to the masses. The growth and development of the new system of production as reflected, for example, in foreign investment, the growth in the volume of raw material extraction and semi-finished goods, the rapid increase in income from abroad, which is a sign of an unprecedented exploitation of resources and of the labour force by world monopolies, and the employment of capitalist system of relationship in agriculture, these have all increased and exacerbated social contradictions. Unlike those who consider the present system to be an obstacle to the growth of a revolutionary movement, we have based our strategy on the developments in this system and on the contradictions stemming from it. We do not rely on those forces which are now disappearing and whose raison d'e-tre was the previous system. We rely rather on forces whose qualitative and quantitative growth depends on the development of the present system. The fact that we are deeply aware of the fundamental effect of objective realities on the movement and their effect on the consciousness of the masses does not lead us to take a one-sided view of the situation. The cultural and intellectual background of the people, the rapport that exists between the masses and the vanguard and their knowledge of the latter, and the effect of past struggles on them are all factors which help to augment their feeling of deprivation and discontent.

The urban proletariat, with their considerable history of struggle, have favourable memories about the Tudeh Party and the National Front who played a major role in the liberation and working-class movements.

The defeatism displayed by a number of the movements' leading cadres and the inability of these political organisations to guide the masses, who had risen up in revolt, made the general public sceptical about all progressive forces. To overcome these doubts, scepticism and lack of faith by the public is a great burden which has to be borne by the armed movement.

(b) <u>The method of government employed by the ruling classes, and the power of the regime and its ability to exercise this power</u>:

The ruling class is merely one side of a coin. It, together with its ally and protector, namely the imperialists, is trying to stifle the movement.

The ruling class is not always faced with the same set of possibilities. Counter-revolution, as much as revolution, is exposed to objective conditions and subject to socio-economic factors which can slow down or misdirect society's development. Moreover, the ruling class has basically two sides to it: at first, when it overcomes its internal contradictions, it paves the way for military and administrative renovation, thereby concentrating its power; then, as a result of its inherent contradictions and its anachronistic system of government, it disintegrates and its rule becomes difficult. The position of the foreign allies of the ruling classes, and also their relationship with one another, tend to influence the government.

In this connection we can analyse the position of the ruling class in terms of

three distinctive phases:-

(1) The years between 1940 and 1953: In this period the style of government and the way in which power was concentrated and exerted showed signs of weakness on the part of the regime. There was a manifestation of a high degree of contradictions both inside and abroad, and the regime was unable to suppress the movement.

(2) The years between 1953 and 1963: Although the regime and its foreign imperialist allies managed to suppress the mass movement, the contradictions within the ruling class, i.e. the clash between feudalism and comprador capitalism, and foreign contradictions, i.e. the clash of interests between the Americans and the British, prevented the regime from stabilising itself. The decrepit system of feudalism had kept the administrative and military set-ups backward. The Shah was not as yet the sole determinant of internal and external policies. Political personalities and military leaders, with their contradictory allegiance to different imperialistic powers, began to split into factions. The regime's financial position was bad, while the general economic situation was deplorable and at times critical. This, together with political oppression, did cause open and popular expressions of discontent, despite the existence of a police state. This state of affairs ultimately necessitated the resolving of some contradictions and the adjustment of some other (e.g. the resolving of contradictions between feudalism and comprador capitalism, and the adjustment of contradictions between the Americans and the British, and so on).

(3) From 1960 onwards, and more especially from 1963, the Court in general and the Shah in particular occupied an unprecedented position in the Government. The main features of this phase has been the concentration of power by the regime; the relative unity between different elements of the regime after resolving the contradictions within the ruling cliques and the adjustment and co-existence of foreign contradictions; the revitalisation of the administrative and military apparatuses, which has made possible unprecedented control by the police and army; and the extraordinary role played by the Court and the Shah, as the deciding factor in shaping administrative and military policies. The regime has found it possible to use the latest experiences gathered by counter-revolutionaries around the world and to be vigilant in checking spontaneous movements. The Shah's brand of absolute rule has made him a link between internal factions and elements and their foreign counterparts, so much so that even the dissatisfied elements amongst the imperialists are not prepared to do away with him or to change the system, for fear of what might happen. In other words, they consider the present system to be the best available. In such a situation the regime, with the Shah at its head, has acquired an insatiable desire to exert power and the militaristic tendencies of the ruling clique have reached their zenith. The recent economic boom has enabled the comprador bourgeoisie to grow and has given the regime the chance to expand the administrative and military apparatuses. Nevertheless, the boom and the extraordinary appetite for power together with military aggression inside the country and in the region are the precursors of economic, political and possibly military

crises. Today, the regime is strong due to objective factors and the absence of a mass revolutionary movement. This is a reality, but if we are able to analyse and understand our own position clearly and follow a correct strategy, we will be able to corner the ruling clique and defeat it.

(c) Power, revolutionary experience and the organisation of the vanguard

The third factor, which cannot remain uninfluenced by the preceding factors, is the vanguard of the people and the revolutionary class. The ability, organisation and experience of the vanguard together with its strategy and tactics can prolong or shorten the period of recession. The position and characteristics of the vanguard are determined by objective factors and circumstances. However, as soon as vanguard groups are formed their conscious activites will affect conditions. It is not essential for vanguard groups to reach full development, i.e. to become the vanguard of the working-class or vanguard of the people, and then influence society. From the very start, these groups will shoulder the responsibilities of the vanguard proportionate to their ability. The present unsuitable conditions do not allow the vanguard to amalgamate the three factors. There is confusion and disarray in the ranks of those who are connected with the working-class movement. There is still a long way to go to the creation of a unitary vanguard of the working-class, despite the relatively suitable opportunities that present themselves to those groups and organisations who believe in armed struggle. A great deal of effort put in by those who believe in working-class ideology has been

squandered because of incorrect policies. And this has been directly to the benefit of the counter-revolutionary forces.

The organisations connected with the national bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie are weak and are also in disarray. The more advanced elements of these, who have a petit-bourgeois revolutionary character, have not as yet absorbed all the forces sympathetic to them, and have a long way to go before assuming the leadership of the revolutionary movement. This is yet another factor weakening the popular front. This situation merely confirms what Lenin has said; we ourselves can merely repeat that we regret the weakness of the forces and groups connected with the national and petit-bourgeoisie more than we regret their power.

In conclusion, we can say that the amalgamation of these three factors is in the interests of the revolution and will rapidly move the masses towards the struggle. To combine the factors in a manner which is harmful to the revolution will prolong the period of recession and make the mobilization of the masses both slow and difficult. All world revolutionary movements have passed through phases of up or downward trends. Combined in a positive manner the factors produced the Russian Revolution of 1905-07: although it failed, the subsequent period of recession did not last more than five years; combined in a negative manner it produced the defeat of 1953 which brought in its wake a recession and oppression lasting 20 years (with a break of 3 years between 1960-63).

Ignorance of these factors, a one-sided view of important elements in the movement

involving the denial of objective conditions, is tantamount to under-estimating the counter-revolutionary forces. To assume that a mass movement can be brought about merely by the movement of a few vanguard groups will lead the armed movement to the erroneous conclusion that a sacrificial and decisive move by the vanguard (even ignoring the position of the vanguard) is sufficient to tip the balance in favour of revolution; and that the masses, having witnessed the fervour of a group or groups of vanguard, will then explode and annihilate the counter-revolutionaries. This type of thinking is not based on any revolutionary theory, least of all a Marxist-Leninist one, and stems from a petit-bourgeois desire for adventure. The armed movement is only one phase of the liberation movement of our people. The tactics employed by the armed movement together with other tactics (with an emphasis on the principle role played by the armed movement) are designed to mobilize the masses. This is a long struggle which must be pushed forward determinedly and with proletarian patience.

3

Organization and Tactics of Armed Struggle in the Initial Stages

There are three stages to the strategy of the Iranian revolutionary movement. The first is aimed at establishing the armed struggle. In the second stage the masses will begin a struggle against the enemy and will give the movement material and moral support. In the third, the masses will themselves take part in the armed struggle; the movement will thereby be transformed into a mass movement, with a democratic character, and this will establish the people's leadership.

In the first phase the movement tries to achieve two aims:-

(a) to establish a revolutionary vanguard of the revolutionary class and to create conditions for the hegemony of the working-class in the revolution;

(b) to introduce the armed struggle to the masses and to create a political atmosphere in the society, which will be the forerunner of mass mobilisation;

The establishment of a revolutionary vanguard is only possible through struggle, since the vanguard is the result of a period of revolutionary struggle and does not precede it. At the present time those groups and organisations who base their programme on a working-class ideology, can perform a limited vanguard role. But this must not be taken to mean that the vanguard of the working-class should, here and now, assume the form of a fully developed political party. In the revolutionary process, the vanguard of the working-class will not necessarily crystalize in the form of a working-class party. Nevertheless, this vanguard should, on the whole, possess the capacity and manpower to lead the masses. If and when those conditions come about which help the development of the vanguard towards becoming a party, then the working-class party will also come about.

To create a revolutionary vanguard from those Marxist-Leninist organisations who have accepted the armed struggle (a clear instance in this connection would be the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee) these groups must initially try to guide other groups and organisations towards a revolutionary strategy. Based on this practice, the second important step is ideological struggle as a means of channelling all progressive forces towards a single revolutionary strategy. Ideological struggle must be unfailingly pursued within the working-class revolutionary movement and in the whole of the liberation movement. This struggle will assist us to achieve ideological, strategic and tactical unity. Therefore, parallel with the struggle against the enemy, we believe in an ideological struggle. We are therefore unable to submit to the baseless pacifism of some or other "peace-

seekers".

To establish working-class hegemony in the revolution it is necessary to reach the vanguard of this class in order to end the present disarray. It is the revolutionary practice of the working-class vanguard that will ensure the leadership of the working-class in the liberation movement and ultimately in the democratic revolution. Continuation of the disarray in the working-class revolutionary movement will make the development and victory of the liberation struggle impossible.

Despite its natural desire to lead the movement, the revolutionary petit-bourgeoisie is unaware of the fact that the absence of a working-class revolutionary vanguard is detrimental to the whole of the movement, and that all progressive forces, including the revolutionary petit-bourgeoisie, will suffer from such a vacuum.

We now embark on an analysis of organisational features and the forms that the forces of the revolutionary movement may take:-

(I) THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES OF AN ORGANISATION AND THE FORMS ASSUMED BY THE FORCES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN PRESENT CONDITIONS

The organisation of the movement's forces in the present conditions is decided by the tasks facing them. On the other hand, the forms assumed by organisations inside the movement are determined by the contents of such organisations: a change or improvement in tactics will necessitate a change or development in organisational forms.

In the present conditions, politico-military groups represent the most advanced forms of organisation. These groups, more than any other, possess the features necessary to fulfil the role of a vanguard and are in practice leading the movement. The vanguard of the working-class will emerge from those sections of these groups who have either based their organisations on a working-class ideology or are in the process of doing so.

Apart from politico-military groups, there is another kind of grouping which play a part in developing the movement and mobilising the masses. These we call politico-economic groups. Depending on their duties, these groups assume forms that are peculiar to themselves. Their basic task is to organise protests and guide general movements inside various trades. The number of these groups and their total number at this stage are greater than those of the politico-military groups; so are the number of potential forces within their direct organising sphere. If, for the sake of argument, we assume that the politico-military groups, with Marxist-Leninist ideology, can play the role of a working-class party in the present conditions, then the role of the politico-economic groups is that of a trade union vis-a-vis the party.

As well as the above sets of groups, the revolutionary movement has need of other organised grouping. Any type of formation has some specific duties and can play a significant part in the preparation for the revolution and the mobilisation of the masses. Of special importance is the role of behind-the-line committees, such as publishing units.

POLITICO-MILITARY GROUPS

A few pamphlets and essays have so far been published dealing with the duties of these groups. Here we shall attempt to deal only with the most important aspects of these groups. An analysis of the politico-military groups who are recognised to-date show that they have emerged from the process of struggle. The aim behind the formation of these groups was to fight the people's enemy, and not to further the political knowledge of their members. If some of them were initially set-up for the purpose of studying and analysing society, they acquired revolutionary characteristics only when they practiced what they preached and were consequently transformed into fighting units: the majority of their founding members matured in the process of struggle and most of their cadres joined the armed struggle after having passed through a phase of political or trade activities, albeit elementary. To possess such a fighting background was, for these groups, tantamount to feeling a sense of solidarity with the people, to having a tangible knowledge of the environment and the conditions of struggle, and to being familiar with their own possibilities and resources and the power of the enemy. Furthermore, such a background greatly helped these groups to benefit from the experiences of past struggle, and this is a feature which goes to show that they have their roots amongst the people: this amply demonstrates the undeniable superiority of practice over theory, since a revolutionary theory emanates from direct practice and will in turn influence and perfect it.

In organising politico-military groups the following points must be taken into account:-

(a) Guerrilla groups should completely rid themselves of methods employed by old political groups as regards organisation, individual contacts, discipline, etc. The politico-military groups have so far sustained many blows as a direct result of failing to take heed of such reminders. However, the guerrilla movement, in its initial stages, will lose some of its best cadres in the process of struggle. But taking heed of the reminders will stop unnecessary sacrifice. It must be frankly admitted that the transfer of theoretical experiences to a newly-established group will not bring about the necessary results. When we see that experienced groups and organisations frequently disregard the principles of covert activities (let alone the principles of guerrilla activities), how can one expect, in a theoretical form, to transfer to the newly-established groups, those experiences which have been acquired at the cost of tens of lives and hope to keep the police at bay? This shortcoming must be tackled at its basis. We believe that the best way of transfering experience, and employing recognised and established principles, is the supervision of inexperienced groups by experienced cadres, and co-operation between the two. Furthermore, attention to organisational work, training of individuals in the process of operations from the very start, and concern for the quality rather than the quantity of work, can help to overcome this shortcoming.

(b) Each politico-military group must have a limited membership. Whenever such a group grows in number or achieves complete unity with other groups, thus forming a guerrilla organisation, it should set up independent units and avoid forming a single unitary cell.

Such units will operate under their own specific titles but follow a unified ideology and tactics. As well as providing the necessary form for the spread of the movement, this method of organisation will ensure the continuing existence of experienced groupings and ensure their continued strategical role, something which is so vital to the growth and development of the revolutionary movement. It will at the same time deny the enemy the opportunity of destroying numerous guerrillas in a series of continuous and sustained attacks. Contacts between units and uniformity amongst them is best maintained by behind-the-lines committees, although this does not mean that there should be no contacts, etc., in the absence of such committees.

(c) Politico-military groups should pay due attention to revolutionary theory. For those groups who represent the working-class revolutionary movement, ideological study and the ideological training of their members is a continuous task. Since these groups have the important duty of leading the movement at the present time, they therefore have the added task of satisfying the theoretical requirements of the revolutionary movement. Armed strategy must not only be demonstrated to be effective in practice, but it must also be explained in theory, thereby confronting opportunistic groups and organisations with a responsible attitude. Let us not forget that opportunism is lying in wait for the movement to show the slightest discord; for the guerrilla actions to die down temporarily in order that it may increase its ideological attack against the movement. The struggle against opportunism in practice and in ideological terms is an attempt to lead all potential forces in the movement towards a revolutionary strategy, towards the unity of the work-

ing-class movement and towards the unity of all progressive forces. To employ the creative principle of criticism and self-criticism, to correct the tactics and to carefully analyse all operations at each and every stage, will enable the groups, who have largely shouldered the responsibilities of a vanguard, to grow and eventually become eligible as the vanguard of the whole movement. The Marxist-Leninist groups who have accepted armed strategy in theory as well as in practice, will have to get closer together and provide the unity of the working-class revolutionary movement. This is the necessary condition for the hegemony of the working-class. Disregard for ideological unity and theoretical work inside Marxist-Leninist groups will not only work against the unity of the liberation movement, it will also be detrimental to all popular forces in the future.

(d) Politico-military groups should look upon political and economic struggles as the most important fields in which armed struggle will take shape. They should therefore try to expand such general struggles and set up politico-trade groups and cells. The qualitative growth and the membership of politico-military groups are primarily provided for from amongst politico-economic groups. It is impossible for politico-military groups to train people with no political awareness, nor any interest in the struggle and hope to pull them by their boot-straps to the level of guerrilla sympathisers. The general political and economic movement is the best ground for conscription into guerrilla organisations.

(e) If at all possible, the present guerrilla groups and organisations should attempt to

station guerrilla units outside towns and, by employing a smaller force, engage enemy troops in woods and mountainous rural areas. The tactical defeat of the Siahkal Unit must not dissuade these organisations from taking the next step. Compared with other engagements, Siahkal represented a tremendous victory, even from a tactical viewpoint, and despite the martyrdom of nine guerrillas - this quite apart from the strategic importance of the Siahkal resurgence. Moreover, the armed struggle ought to acquire some tangible experience by engaging the enemy in the countryside, and carefully analyse the results. The martyrdom of the Siahkal comrades has robbed the movement of such an opportunity. However, to have the possibility of embarking on such an operation means, in effect, choosing the correct region for action, thorough familiarity with it, and through having a force trained for an eventual engagement, or else true results will not be achieved. On the other hand, if in some region or other such popular military struggle is either in the wings or actually in progress, guerrilla organisations in general must carefully analyse it and exploit the opportunity of expanding the armed struggle. Such developments can drastically affect the course of the movement and present an unprecedented opportunity for the mobilisation of various forces.

Attention to various forms of organising armed struggle, attempts to find suitable forms for setting up cells and groups in provincial towns and the deployment of various tactics which were instrumental for the success of some operations, will prevent politico-military groups from veering towards dogmatism as regards the form and content of the struggle.

POLITICO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

In the present conditions, politico-military groups are unable to form politico-economic groups on their sides. Their present position and the fact that they are continuously fighting the enemy, prevent politico-military groups from tackling this problem. Nevertheless, because of the importance of politico-economic groups to politico-military groups, the latter must allocate some of their cadres to organising the former. Having a clear understanding of the revolutionary armed movement, these cadres are well able to channel political and economic unrest towards revolutionary movement. Contacts between these two sets of groups cannot be confined to a single predetermined form. It rather depends on the particular circumstances of each group and its possibilities. In setting up politico-economic groups, the following points should be taken into account:-

(a) They should be put in charge of organising protest demonstrations, this should be their basic raison de-etre. The membership of such groups is drawn from amongst those politically-aware persons who are engaged in a particular trade, and/or from any place where there is a concentration of workers. Universities, schools, factories, bank employees, unions, teachers' union, various trades, shopkeepers and tradesmen - all provide suitable fields for the setting-up of politico-economic groups. Once again, the deciding factors in a group or cell are a careful understanding of responsibilities, the employment of suitable forms, the successful conclusion of assigned tactics, and not the volume of membership.

(b) These groups must consciously try to avoid becoming the old prototype of secret "political" cells, whose ineffectiveness has been amply proven by experience. They must equally avoid being drawn into military or semi-military activities. This is not to say that they should be denied the opportunity of joining the armed struggle. On the contrary, they represent a suitable venue for the growth of armed units. It is rather that these politico-economic groups or cells should fulfil the duties which their form of organisation dictates and should not succumb to the temptation of carrying out military activities and trying to combine these with economic activities.

c) The principles governing the groups' secret activities and their fight against the police must not be a carbon-copy of those of politico-military cells, thus losing the possibilities of widespread contact with the mass of their respective trades. Although politico-economic groups are formed secretly and away from the scrutiny of the police, it should not be forgotten that their primary task is to establish close contact with the masses. Therefore, they should accept the possibility of a clash with the police and of being betrayed. The members and executive committee of these groups must, in the event of detention, accept the possibility of some sort of punishment. Although such punishments are nothing compared with the treatment of the guerrillas by the enemy, the groups must nevertheless be prepared for any sacrifice. The organisational hierarchy of a group is kept to a bare minimum, consisting of a small executive body and lines of communication throughout a particular trade. Here there will be no such things as a "unit" or a "safe

house"; there will also be an absence of guerrilla jargon. Any formalities that might increase the group's burden of responsibilities must be avoided.

(d) In politico-economic groups, due attention must be paid to revolutionary theories, and also the movement's publications, as well as classical works. In Marxist-Leninist groups ideological studies and training of individuals must form part of their activities as a whole. The organisers of such groups must be deeply conscious of the course of the revolutionary movement and must pay attention to the recommendations and guidance of guerrilla organisations, and exploit every opportunity to bring their actions into harmony with those of guerrilla organisations.

(e) In order to give direction to popular discontents, these groups should use all available legal channels, such as the phoney trade unions set up by the regime, negotiating machineries and so on. However, expression of support for the regime, no matter how vague, over-optimism about legal possibilities and playing into the hands of government representatives, must be avoided. To mobilise the members of a trade, or to express solidarity with members of other trades, a group may publish pamphlets or hand-outs. In such a case the group must shoulder all responsibilities and in case of a possible betrayal, avoid involving other groups. The driving force behind these groups is the economic demands and sectional activities of a particular trade.

BEHIND-THE-LINES COMMITTEES

Today there is a tangible need for such committees. These should be set up in the most suitable places abroad and, as far as possible, within the shortest distance of the home-front. In forming these committees we emphasise the following points:-

(a) The leadership and organisation of the committees should, as far as possible, be undertaken by cadres dispatched from inside the country. Some of the most experienced cadres of guerrilla organisations must be allocated to head such committees and, after a period of time, be replaced by those cadres who have been dispatched abroad specifically for the task. This will have the dual purpose of ensuring that correct methods are employed by behind-the-line units, and will, at the same time, keep the experienced cadres relatively safe from enemy blows - since these cadres are unable to engage in open struggle even outside the country due to possible enemy surveillance. Furtnermore, the change-over has the added advantage of stopping possible corruption amongst the cadres. However, the great bulk of membership of these committees will be provided by Iranians living abroad.

(b) These committees can provide centres for Iranian guerrilla organisations in suitable places abroad to carry out propaganda. The propaganda facilities of organisations and groups abroad can also provide facilities for military training of cadres and the provision of arms for use in Iran.

(c) The committees will perform the vital task of maintaining lines of communication

between units of an organisation inside Iran and of ensuring the continuation of solidarity between various groups and organisations. The cadres sent abroad by guerrilla organisations will also act as couriers.

(d) It is also the duty of these committees to maintain contact between various organisations abroad and the revolutionary movement inside the country.

PUBLISHING CELLS

We suggest that this type of cell should be a special and very compact form of organisation. Such a cell will have two or three members who are well-versed in struggle, and will probably have a one-way contact with politico-military groups. The specific task of such a cell is to multiply the publications of guerrilla organisations, and possibly publish classical works directly relevant to the armed movement. Such publications will then be circulated amongst politico-economic groups. A one-way contact between politico-economic groups and a publishing cell will ensure a longer period of activity for the latter. The setting up of publishing cells will greatly lighten the burden of work on guerrilla organisations and save them the risk involved in distributing published materials; it will further help politico-economic groups by strengthening their position vis-a-vis the police. The cells will undertake the provision of all publishing facilities themselves. The members of these cells must also accept the fact that they may have to face a few years' jail. Politico-military groups can take direct steps for the setting up of such cells and establish a one-way contact with them.

(II) REVOLUTIONARY ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE CONDITIONS THAT HAVE BROUGHT IT ABOUT

The revolutionary armed movement is only one phase of the Iranian people's liberation movement. In its struggle against imperialism and its internal allies in the past few decades, the liberation movement has passed through phases of success and failure. This movement began with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Between the start of the Great War and the coup d'etat of 1921/, a few revolutionary movements sprang up in various parts of Iran, but these were eventually suppressed during Reza Khan's dictatorship. The most important phase of the movement was between 1940 and 1953, during which time oil was nationalized. The coup d'etat of 1953* succeeded in smashing the movement. Fresh attempts to revive the movement during the period 1960-63 were fruitless and the regime created a bloodbath on 5th June 1963, which drowned the movement. It was revived once more at Siahkal in a synthesis of all the previous clashes, which began the new phase of revolutionary struggle. This has been so named for two reasons - firstly, because the movement employs as its main tactic, armed struggle against imperialism and its internal allies; and secondly, because it paves the way for the emergence of a leadership to guide all progressive forces towards revolution.

Since its inception, the working-class movement in Iran has either struggled along-

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/A reference to Reza Khan's coup d'etat stage-managed by the British. (T)

*Directed by the CIA. (T)

side the whole of the liberation movement or inside it. Historically, however, the latter precedes the former. The working-class movement in Iran can perform its historical task only in conjunction with the whole of the liberation movement and be certain of achieving its ultimate aims. Therefore, all Marxist-Leninist organisations within the working-class movement who are struggling in the revolutionary armed movement for the rule of the working-class, regard it as their foremost task to play the fullest part in the liberation movement. These organisations will channel the inevitable class struggle through the struggle against imperialism and its internal allies. This is a prime feature of the revolutionary armed movement from the viewpoint of those Marxist-Leninist organisations who are committed to armed struggle during this phase of the liberation movement (i.e. the phase of revolutionary armed struggle) the historical shortcomings of the working-class movement in Iran and its relation with anti-imperialist struggle must be overcome. We firmly believe that the victory of the revolutionary working-class movement is contingent upon its historical role in the liberation movement of the peoples of Iran. In order to understand the tactics employed by the armed revolutionary movement, we have to study the prevailing conditions that brought about the movement.

The seeds of the movement were sown after the failures of 1960-63 struggle and the subsequent general massacre of June 1963. During the unprecedented oppressive conditions of 1963-69, a few groups that were preparing for armed struggle were betrayed and smashed. The groups were studying various forms of armed

struggle, ranging from tribal guerrilla warfare to urban guerrilla war. Some politico-military groups sustained heavy blows from the regime, but grew in strength and by the end of 1969 were in open conflict with it. The political and socio-economic conditions of our society at this juncture were as follows:-

1. Socio-economic Conditions and the Position of the Masses

As a result of the reforms effected during the last decade the feudal-comprador system in which feudalism had the upper hand has been replaced by a system of dependent capitalism. In comparison with such classical systems as feudalism, capitalism and socialism, dependent capitalism - the end result of the unprecedented growth of the comprador bourgeoisie - is an inherently imperfect system since it is dependent on the development of world imperialism on the one hand, and on the expansion of advanced neo-colonialism, on the other.

The rule of the comprador-bourgeoisie - being the dominant element amongst the Iranian bourgeoisie - and the establishment of dependent capitalism as the main method of production have led to economic growth. This system, which is condemned to a permanent dependence on imperialistic monopolies has, despite this historical shortcoming, brought about economic prosperity since it is a more advanced system in relation to the previous one. The new system of economic relations was meant to provide a more suitable answer to the country's socio-economic needs. Nevertheless, because of its permanent dependence on world monopolies, the system suffers

from major and undeniable shortcomings. The new order, quite apart from failing to tackle the contradictions between feudalism and the bourgeoisie, has utterly failed to solve the fundamental contradictions that beset our society. Hence the new order's economic honeymoon is over and the contradiction within the system, which is already apparent together with the main contradiction between the people on the one hand and imperialism and comprador bourgeoisie - the latter being the most important ally of imperialism - on the other, will be accentuated.

Notwithstanding this it must not be overlooked that during the golden years of this system, its inherent contradictions are relatively subdued. Those processes that are the direct result of the above-mentioned factors and are therefore apt to influence the revolutionary movement must be analysed and studied. The most important of these processes are:-

(a) As a result of the establishment of dependent capitalism, the working-class undergoes an unprecedented growth. Although this quantitative growth can be regarded as an objective condition for the revolutionary movement, it will not be transformed into an actual revolutionary force without a corresponding qualitative growth. The qualitative growth of the working-class will come about as a result of a process of class struggle through organised revolutionary structures. The rapid qualitative growth of the working-class at the same time is indicative of the inexperience and unawareness of a vast section of this class. In the absence of a proletarian culture, without class consciousness and without the experience of struggle, the definition of "proletariat", as the most revolutionary class

of our society, is inadequate and incomplete. The lack of such characteristics denotes the continuation of peasant and petit-bourgeois culture in the working-class. The great majority of the Iranian working-class - particularly those who, due to their age, should play the most active part - lack a minimal political and class consciousness.

The establishment of the new system and the relative co-existence of the system's inherent contradictions has left its mark on the "new" class of workers in different ways. There is a kind of vague hope about the future, an individualistic struggle for a better life, a sense of resignation and forbearance in the face of exploitation and tyranny, and a lack of a spirit of protest and collective struggle.

A tiny minority of workers who have had some experience in the past struggles have failed to have any appreciable effect on the revolutionary capacity of the working-class. This has been due to the long retreat of the working-class movement, an absence of leadership and organisation, and to the age difference between the politically experienced workers and the new workers.

Nevertheless, a dialectical understanding of the socio-economic processes makes it necessary to carefully study the political recession and inactivity of today, for it also bears on the movement of tomorrow. The rapid growth of the bourgeoisie in the last quarter of nineteenth century in Russia led to the huge working-class movement at the beginning of this century. In Iran, dependent capitalism, with its disproportionate growth, will end its "honeymoon" in a decade

and will exacerbate the contradictions now dormant in the system. This is the objective ground for the expansion of a mass movement. Nonetheless, the revolutionary armed movement will not in the beginning enjoy the support of spontaneous working-class activities and will therefore fail to avail itself of the forces within this class.

(b) The end of feudalism has pushed the peasants out of their previously well-defined class structure. Therefore, various strata of the peasantry, who are open to polorization, have been exposed to the exploitation of the comprador bourgeoisie. Capitalist relations have been established in rural areas and capitalism is rapidly expanding in agriculture. As a result of the reforms, feudalists have left the scene but the peasants are deprived and hungry as before. For the peasants to get to know their enemy, i.e. the bourgeoisie and its regime, certain processes have to develop. On the one hand, there has to occur a polorization of petit-landlords (creatures of the land reform) as a direct result of big internal and foreign investment in the agricultural sectors; on the other hand, the rural proletariat ought to become more aware and join the struggle against the regime, influenced by wide urban political movements and by the military action of vanguard groups. These are not changes that can develop overnight.

(c) In present conditions, the urban petit-bourgeoisie is divided into two broad categories: those sections which disappear with the establishment of capitalist system; and those sections that tend to grow with the growth of this system.

Shopkeepers, small businessmen and the clergy are the sections who are in danger of losing their economic and social standing. They are not prepared to leave the scene and be polarized without putting up a fight against the capitalist oligarchy. Therefore, while the nationalist bourgeoisie - after its final stand in the years 1960-63 - has given up, it would not be surprising if these petit-bourgeois sections begin a life and death struggle. Although their time is at an end, these sections form part of the forces struggling against the ruling class. However, because of a lack of revolutionary characteristics, and despite their numerical superiority, they will not play an important role in the armed movement.

The developing sections of the petit-bourgeoisie are: Government employees, employees of private firms, army personnel, professional self-employed people (e.g. doctors, engineers, solicitors, barristers, artists, etc.), undergraduate students and secondary school pupils. Out of these, the university students, the graduates of colleges and high schools and other sections of youth, form the most ready-made actual force of the movement. During the past decade, these forces have shown a consistent spirit of struggle and have provided the vanguard at the start of the armed movement.

In present conditions, the sections of petit-bourgeoisie are well able to register their political protests against the regime. Organisations that sprang up from amongst them are of two distinct ideological characters: one wing accepts the working-class ideology and struggles for it, and another wing, who are the inheritors of the ideology

of the nationalist bourgeoisie, has chosen petit-bourgeois revolutionary ideology. As mentioned before, both of these wings will take part in the national liberation movement.

The ultimate effect of this process is that at the start of the armed revolutionary movement, the bulk of the masses do not assume an offensive posture against the regime; there is an absence of political and economic protests; and the actual force of the movement will mainly consist of intellectuals and other conscious petit-bourgeois elements.

2. The State of the Ruling Class on the Eve of the Revolutionary Armed Struggle

With the reforms of the last decade, the ruling class has, to a great extent, managed to solve its main internal contradictions. The contradictions within the imperialist camp, which had in the previous decade accentuated internal contradictions and had therefore increased the regime's weaknesses, thereby mobilising the opposition, have been greatly reduced and have tended to co-exist.

The regime's relationship with the Soviet Union and Eastern European states, in contrast to the pre-reform period, has rapidly improved. Although the liberation movement did not benefit from the pre-reform differences between the Soviet Union and the regime, the improved relationship between the two in the form of economic co-operation and and implicit Soviet (occasionally explicit) approval of the regime, has worked to the disadvantage of the movement.

The establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and the expansion of economic co-operation will result in a similar trend and its effects are already apparent.

Under the new system the ruling class has been able to renovate its administrative and military apparatuses. The end result of these developments is that the regime today enjoys an unprecedented concentration of power, various police methods coupled with counter-revolutionary experiences put at the disposal of the regime by the imperialists, which have imposed military and police rule over society. The main aim of this order has been the nipping of any and every opposition movement in the bud and the prevention of any protest move by the people.

The militaristic growth and development, which is dependent upon the country's economic growth, has imposed duties on the regime outside its own borders: these are aimed at the region as a whole and are in the interests of world imperialism. In pursuing an aggressive regional policy, the ruling class has been guaranteed the support of imperialism.

In the present phase, the Shah and his cronies enjoy an unprecedented position and the Shah's absolute power is the ultimate factor in determining the policy of the regime. This extraordinary concentration of power has turned the Shah into a knot of connections between the ruling elements and various wings of the ruling classes, whose interests he upholds. This role ensures that there occurs no heated clash between various elements of imperialism and the internal wings of the ruling classes.

The cumulative effect of all these factors has been the concentration of power by the regime in the last few years compared with previous decades. To take the ruling class and its allies - who are one side of the main contradiction of our society - lightly, will not be in the best interest of the revolutionary movement.

3. The State of the Progressive Forces on the Eve of the Armed Movement

The third factor which affects the condition of struggle is the position of progressive forces in our society. On the eve of the armed movement both wings of these forces (left and right) were beset with major shortcomings.

When the armed struggle was in the process of coming out into the open, the National Front* had long been silent and was utterly unable to confront the ruling class. The movement of the clerics had also lost its unity of action and had veered towards disintegration after the wholesale massacre of 1963 and the banishment to Turkey of its leader, Ayattollah Khomaini; the working-class movement and its affiliated organisations were seriously disorganised. The Tudeh Party/ had a cell inside the country which was in pract-

*An assortment of nationalist parties and loose groupings who supported Dr. Mussadegh in his fight for oil nationalisation during 1950-53.

/The Iranian Communist Party set up after the 1st World War and highly active and organised during 1950-53. After the coup d'etat of 1953 the leadership of this party betrayed the people and took up residence in East European countries. According to their own admissions, they have no organisation inside Iran.(T)

ice a branch of SAVAK (the Iranian secret police); "political" groups and circles with Marxist-Leninist leanings buried their heads in the sands and continued with their endless book-learnings, the effect of which would not have been felt in the present century.

Outside the country there were various groups affiliated to the National Front who had no clear programme of action and were dependent on news from inside. Apart from pressures the regime brought to bear on politico-military groups who were engaged in preparing for action, there was absolutely nothing to prompt Iranians abroad into action.

The Tudeh Party and its pro-Chinese rivals were engaged in a fruitless rivalry abroad. The Party controlled a group of political refugees in Eastern European countries and had a dwindling influence on students in the West. The Revolutionary Organisation (of the Tudeh Party), regarded as the most active Marxist body in Western Europe, went first to Havana and then to Peking in search of revolutionary strategy.

On the eve of the start of the armed movement the "Favourite Stars" of the Revolutionary Organisation in Europe were appearing on Iranian television screens!* Apart from the armed movement, the above-mentioned hotch-potch was all we had. The fact is that

*A reference to some members of this Organisation who publicly recanted their beliefs and sided with the Shah and his cronies. Some of these lepers have since received handsome remuneration from the Shah's SAVAK for services rendered. (T)

the great bulk of the progressive forces were in the worst possible disarray. The people at large had lost all faith in political organisations. However, the vanguard of the movement had the most difficult task ahead.

(III) THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESENT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

In a condition of extensive and systematic oppression, in the absence of spontaneous general struggle, and at a time when armed struggle is the mainspring of liberation movements around the world and through which other forms of struggle may crystalise, groups of revolutionary vanguards in our country adopted armed struggle as their central tactic in order to break the absolute oppression imposed by the regime; to break the deadlock facing the liberation movement; and to pave the way for a general mass movement. Armed struggle gave the vanguard the chance to withstand the most bestial treatment mete out by the "monarcho-fascist" regime of the Shah and stand up and fight against it.

Here we deal with those features of armed struggle that have been overlooked by individuals and organisations outside the armed movement and to which not enough attention has been paid by elements inside it. These features are:-

(1) The form of armed struggle employed by the vanguard makes it possible to fight a bigger enemy force with a much smaller and compact force.

(2) In the absence of a general mass movement, the main tasks of these revolutionary

forces are: (a) to inform and to rouse the masses; and (b) to mobilise and to organise them. In such a struggle every military blow is designed, not to annihilate a part of the enemy's forces, but to show the enemy that he is vulnerable and thereby to dispel the sense of helplessness and despair which have been the lot of our people for so long.

(3) Armed struggle is a long and continuous process which aims to mobilise the masses. It is not designed to strike occasional disconnected blows against the regime (and especially its head and its leading personalities). The armed movement does not intend to transfer power to the people by annihilating members of the regime individually. It is not an individual struggle in which a "hero" is able to change the course of history and free the people. The armed struggle is merely the start of a general mass-movement. The revolutionary armed movement has unconditionally accepted the Leninist principle that "without the workers, all the explosives in the world are manifestly powerless". For this reason the armed movement has no other aim from its military actions than to mobilise the masses. The ultimate value of the armed struggle lies in its ability to support the masses in their fight against the ruling class.

There is a definite and well-defined demarcation line between terrorism and armed struggle. Armed struggle is a tactic employed by vanguard revolutionary organisations against ruling classes and their foreign allies. Military tactics are aimed at various targets and the selection of targets is based on a scientific knowledge of the enemy. These blows

constitute a special channel through which the movement informs the people, but it is not the only channel and the movement does not confine itself to it.

If, in the process, some of the regime's hated personalities are killed, this is not meant to destroy part of the regime's power. A total war waged by the masses will nibble away at the power of the regime and will ultimately destroy it in a final confrontation. And the power that replaces it will take shape through a lengthy process. It is thus that armed struggle is able to transfer the power to the masses. Otherwise it is obvious that the position of one hated person in the regime will be filled by more elements; or, taking it a step further, a ruthless gang will be replaced by a more ruthless lot. This is precisely the reason why people will never be able to achieve power through terrorism.

Those elements in the regime who are directly involved in oppressing the people are suitable targets, whose liquidation proves the regime's vulnerability. If the regime displays anger at such times, it is not because a pawn has been lost. In present conditions the regime enjoys relatively limitless possibilities and can easily replace a pawn or a number of pawns. Rather, its anger stems from the fact that the blows against it by the movement - be they against a pawn, a military base or any other target guarded by the regime - will reveal its (the regime's) weakness before a fighting force whose revolutionary nature is there for everyone to see, and who is engaged in disclosing the true nature of the regime and inciting the people to rise against it. The regime is also angry because the continua-

tion of guerrilla activities will have an informative effect on the masses and draw them into the struggle.

Here lies the strategic importance of a continuing armed struggle for the growth of the movement and for achieving the aim of the first stage, i.e. the mobilisation of the masses. The continuing existence of a guerrilla struggle is the necessary condition for the development of the movement and for winning the confidence of the people in a struggle whose standard bearer the guerrillas are. Hence the regime's eagerness to announce the decisive annihilation of the guerrillas.

(4) Armed struggle cannot turn into a mass movement in the first strategic stage. The workers and other urban proletarians are unable to join armed struggle during this stage. The fact that the more progressive elements of this class take part in armed struggle is no indication that the struggle has become a mass movement.

Armed struggle in rural areas is initially dependent on urban forces. The composition of a rural guerrilla unit has the same features as those of an urban unit. The aims of a rural unit is also the same as an urban one: winning the confidence of rural people and mobilising them. Hence the continuing existence of the guerrillas as well as their durability in the face of the regime's military force, are the necessary conditions for winning the confidence of the rural masses.

Even during the second stage when urban and rural guerrilla forces are on the increase,

armed struggle may not be considered to have become a mass movement. The increase is merely an indication of a fully developed vanguard and its success in assuming the leadership of the masses. In this stage urban populations engage in anti-regime protest movements; political and economic struggles begin to appear; but armed struggle is still employed exclusively by the vanguard. It is also during this stage that a political atmosphere pervades all urban areas; waves of guerrilla operations in the countryside as well as in towns begin to rock the rural areas. Yet the masses still do not take up arms to destroy their enemy. That is why the armed movement attaches so much importance to those tactics that will have a direct bearing on the mass movement.

Therefore, the armed movement while believing in armed struggle as an important means of guaranteeing the continued existence of the vanguard, and through which it confronts the enemy, also paves the way for a mass movement during the two preliminary stages, with special reference to military tactics. The mass movement will be channelled through economic and political struggles, and the armed movement will try to assume the leadership of these struggles with a view to their development.

To remain content with military tactics, especially through the first two stages, without considering the ever-extending channels that could contain the increased force of the masses is tantamount to creating an unbridgable gap between the vanguard and the people. If we just accept that the bulk of the workers and other urban masses are unable to partake

in guerrilla struggle, as is done by progressive elements, and that their role is limited to expressions of sympathy and admiration for the guerrillas or, help that will not have a decisive effect on the mass expansion of armed struggle, this in effect means that armed actions managed to create sentiments and emotions that were not taken advantage of in the fight against the enemy. In this case public emotion is condemned to a perpetual embryonic existence and the movement will lose its revolutionary characteristics. The necessity to adopt tactics that are capable of absorbing the mobilised support of the masses - tactics that can achieve material popular support - follows from this.

(5) The armed movement introduced itself to the people through a process of struggle, and the correctness of armed strategy was propagated in the whole of the liberation movement through practice. However, inside and in the environs of groups preparing for armed strategy, revolutionary theory played an important role in paving the way for the struggle. In the preparatory stage, politico-military groups discussed their strategy within the groups and immediately outside them. In the present changed situation, however, it is the duty of these groups to use every opportunity to talk with the people. Not only should the people understand the armed movement and the nature of the guerrilla struggle, they should also learn to know their own tasks in the struggle.

The movement must avoid giving exaggerated and distorted account of itself to the people, since this creates unjustified expectations. The people must be made to realise that the movement is merely a standard-bearer

that can overcome the enemy only with the active support and help of the masses. They should know that the guerrilla is not a "champion of liberation" who will achieve victory over the "ogre" in the forefront of the people. They must know that should they remain a mere witness during the processs of struggle, the "champion" will be put to rout.

If the movement fails to employ means through which the people's passive sympathy can be transformed into active co-operation, if it fails to assume the leadership of the masses in a revolutionary struggle, then it will also fail to fulfil its revolutionary tasks.

If the guerrillas promise victory over the regime without active participation on the part of the people, if not in theory, then at least in practice, they fail to grasp the historical role of the masses and fail to guide them in an extensive struggle against the regime; then not only will the movement fail to enlist their active support, but the masses will lose faith in methods of struggle that are feasible and will not turn to armed struggle. This in effect ensures their exclusion from struggle and their relegation to the status of spectators.

If the movement is unable to follow a line that will lead to the eventual mobilisation of the masses, then despite important tactical success, despite an increase in mass sentiments and despite the guerrillas' spectacular sacrifices, it will fail.

(6) The armed movement has undoubtedly put forward various new forms of struggle. These

reflect the present conditions and the failure of past methods of struggles. There are, however, some organisations who reach conservatively to these new forms. In the working-class movement there are some dogmatists who will only settle for methods established in the past, and are therefore condemned to a permanent nostalgic view of the present situation. They flip through the classical works of Marxism to discover anything that might be written against the new methods of struggle. These dogmatists somehow manage to transform a revolutionary theory into a counter-revolutionary one. On the other hand these groups shut their eyes to the events of the past two decades and deny the achievements of armed struggle and the obvious transformations that have taken place. They wish to achieve overnight what the liberation movement failed to achieve in successive periods. They are wondering why the masses have not already taken up arms and why the regime is still powerful and has stayed put. This kind of approach to the problem not only lacks fundamental rules, it is also blatently spiteful.

Armed struggle does not possess the magic power to achieve overnight, against all social odds, what might rightly be expected to take a hundred years; neither can it rectify a negative equilibrium in favour of revolution with a few "clever" military moves. The new methods of struggle have got to be adapted to historical conditions and the position of the society <u>in practice</u>. The old methods of struggle, i.e. those which people, through experience, found to be effective against the regime, cannot be rejected en-masse and put aside. There has got to be a dialectic relationship between the new and

old methods. Armed struggle should fall into its natural mould in our society and old methods of struggle should be used alongside it. If we decide to import tactics, whose effectiveness have been proved in other societies, with no regard to the conditions of struggle in our country and the special features of our society, then we must prepare ourselves for many defeats. The defeats will continue until we produce a creative method of struggle.

(IV) GROUNDS FOR THE APPEARANCE OF ADVENTURISM IN THE ARMED REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The main threat from within the revolutionary armed movement is, at the present time, a tendency to adventurism. To ignore this phenomenon and to fail to attack it will make the movement vulnerable and lead it to defeat. Here we shall try to analyse, in brief, the different facets of this deviation.

(A) The Origins of Adventurism in the Movement

(1) The conservatism and collusion of some traditional movements - specifically the Tudeh Party and the National Front - are liable to cause a violent and misguided counter-reaction within our movement. The absence of comprehensive knowledge together with a lack of deep understanding about past struggles produces a superficial evaluation of these two movements. Some groups, because of their persistent rightist policy, have been pushed into a position of blatent liberalism, theory-peddling and fabrication of

political groups. Their incorrect stand and their sporadic outbursts against armed struggle are further causes for reaction. Both these sets of reactions provide fertile grounds for adventurism in our movement.

(2) There is, at the present time, no experienced revolutionary working-class vanguard which could undertake to spread the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, as well as propagate the revolutionary path amongst the working classes. In this context, disjointed group activities,help to create deviationary alternatives. Thus the absence of a unified and experienced working-class vanguard on the one hand and the prevalence of various disconnected forms of struggle on the other, is another ground for the growth of adventurist tendencies in our movement.

(3) When there is an absence of the sort of movement that embraces the whole population and the total burden of fighting the enemy of the people falls upon groups of vanguards, there is a danger that these groups may fall prey to sectarianism and be deflected from the principles of the struggle. This will in turn create conditions in which people are apt to attach little importance to the masses and help create an atmosphere of avant-guardism. The present vacuum created by the absence of an extensive mass movement, therefore, provides suitable grounds for the growth of adventurism.

(4) At the present time, groups of vanguards are mainly composed of intellectuals and relatively conscious petit-bourgeois individuals. The relative ignorance and historical backwardness of the working-class in our exploited society has effectively reduced their numbers amongst the vanguards and in the revolutionary

armed movement as a whole. This objective state of affairs can help the growth of adventurism, deviationary ideas and petit-bourgeois tendencies.

(5) In the world as a whole, a number of petit-bourgeois ideologies have appeared during the past decade that believe Marxism to be outdated. Deviation from creative Marxist-Leninism, which at the present time has developed as revisionism and dogmatism inside the world working-class movement, has paved the way for the growth of petit-bourgeois tendencies. Thus, those forces who should logically be expected to enter revolutionary struggle under the banner of Marxism-Leninism are being pushed towards these petit-bourgeois ideologies.

The "New Left" and thinkers like Marcuse and Sartre, who became prominent in May 1968 in France, Trotskyism which is still regarded as an important ideological trend, despite its defeats in Latin America, and, in our own region, the confounded ideologies of the radical petit-bourgeoisies of various Arab liberation movements, are all part of the same petit-bourgeois tendencies. Here too (in Iran) some people speak of "neo-Marxism", and reject the fundamental teaching of Marxism-Leninism as inadequate. Considering the present weakness of the working-class vanguards, the above-mentioned deviations can provide the impetus for the growth of adventuristic tendencies in our movement.

(B) <u>The Main Form of Adventurism in the Armed Movement</u>

(1) To ignore the objective conditions which are relevant to the growth of the revolutionary

movement; to consider the role of the vanguard out of its context; and to peddle the notion that the sensational sacrifice of some elements of the vanguard will immediately (or in a short time) attract the support of the masses, or even encourage their active participation in the struggle, is adventuristic. Such conceptions about armed struggle should be replaced by a Marxist understanding of the dynamics of society and of the revolutionary movement in general. Today, we live in conditions where all factors are combined against the revolution. To believe that all these factors are amenable to change by one single factor, namely, the role of the vanguard - a vanguard in its most elementary form, for that matter - is an unscientific approach to society and to the movement. To persist in such a theory is to deny the role of the masses in the movement. To deny the masses their role in the movement - although those guilty might vehemently deny this - is the main form of adventurism.

(2) Paying scant attention to revolutionary theory, concentrating only on "practical" and delimited actions, and attention to tactical matters while ignoring strategic questions are all forms of adventurism.

When we fail to recognise that a guerrilla is an informed individual who performs a military assignment armed primarily with revolutionary theory; when we pay little or no attention to political studies and hurriedly try to exploit the excitement caused by a revolutionary action and wish immediately to transform whosoever may join the movement into an exemplary practicioner; and when we imagine that revolutionary theory is merely about tactical questions and sensational liter-

ature, then we are only revealing our adventuristic tendencies, and this can be reflected in the revolutionary movement as a whole.

(3) An absolute insistence on armed tactics of a particular nature in urban guerrilla struggle; making dogmas out of these tactics and underestimating the value of other tactics besides armed tactics, is only a form of adventurism. To put too much value on sensational tactics, and to pay no attention to tactics that can excite the physical support of the masses for the movement, can alienate the former from the latter and ultimately defeat the movement.

Too much emphasis on the role of the "Fedaee" ; resorting to constant invocations of "martyrdom" to offset the absence of a mass movement, and the belief that the sacrifice of blood is sufficient for the start of the revolution, are aspects of adventurism.

(4) An incorrect knowledge of the potential forces; seeing the struggle merely within the limits of available forces; employing tactics that can only satisfy the latter; disregarding genuine revolutionary forces merely because these will turn to struggle at a later date, are deviationary phenomena. Marxist-Leninist organisations are liable to succumb to the temptation of putting aside the special features of their ideology in order to get hold of the available forces offered by certain sections of the petit-bourgeoisie. Such acts can effectively cut the organisations off from the proletariat. This, in effect, means that they will have to make do with a limited force and ignore the potential force in whose hands the revolution will triumph; this is another form of adventurism.

(5) Expressions of weariness about the struggle, demonstrations of impatience when the struggle drags on, and complaints about the masses which can turn into pessimism about them, is an aspect of adventurism. To employ vengeful tactics in order to offset the absence of a mass movement and to make continuous demands on the members for more and more sacrifices to fill such a vacuum, is a natural consequence of the same thing. To merely examine small tactical matters in an attempt to find the causes of defeat; to explain away the fundamental shortcomings of the movement by looking only at one part of the whole picture; and to blame oneself for the movement's inadequacies, is also adventurism.

(6) Underestimating the enemy, indulging in self-satisfied expressions because of some victories, exaggerating one's power and ignoring the power of other forces who face the ruling cliques and imperialism, is a further form of adventuristic tendency which will prevent us from making a continuous effort in looking for new tactics, correcting the old ones and recognising our shortcomings.

(7) Adventurist tendencies can also appear in various other aspects of our work, e.g. in understanding and evaluating the real potentials of different individuals and their political as well as ideological training; in our moral discipline, and in our personal and collective conduct.

The petit-bourgeois deviationary tendency, which manifests itself in the form of leftist and pseudo-revolutionary attitudes, is liable to keep us apart from those more straightforward individuals who come to the

movement. It can also drive us towards hypocrisy and false humility and prevent us from carrying out fundamental ideological training.

These are the main forms of adventuristic tendencies in groups and organisations attached to the armed movement. The less experienced an organisation the more exposed it is to the dangers of these tendencies. Some forms of leftism have a great attraction for inexperienced Marxist individuals, and it is quite true that "leftism" is "an infantile disorder" within the revolutionary working-class movement. Left to itself the disease can spread throughout the whole movement. Those comrades who prescribe the fatal medicine of leftism in order to cure an allegedly "rightist attitude", those comrades who in any way "criticise" a "leftist stand", which in practice is nothing short of an encouragement of this disease, are in effect the most dangerous protagonists of adventurism.

A determined fight against opportunism, in whatever position, the recognition of what are deviationary tendencies and a timely war against them, and a sober defence of revolutionary policy and ideology constitutes the central task facing all elements and groups who are attached to the working-classes. Failure to do this is tantamount to leaving the fate of the movement to unforeseen future events.

4

The Revolutionary Armed Movement and the Mobilization of the Masses

A clear Marxist understanding of the relation between theory and practice compels us to avoid making dogmas out of forecasts. These forecasts must be corrected and developed in the course of practice, bearing in mind that the more distant future actions they describe, the more general they will inevitably have to be, thus becoming more subjective at the cost of objectivity. It is only by involvement in each stage of the struggle that our ideas will come face to face with the realities of a situation and thereby develop their objective and practical aspects.

Today, the armed movement ought to pave the way for the mobilisation of the masses, and we are in possession of concrete data that can reveal the features of the next stage of

the struggle. The better we are able to understand and analyse these facts, the more objective will be our forecasts.

In preceding chapters, sufficient emphasis has already been placed on the importance of a total mobilisation of the masses in an armed struggle. Here we merely touch upon a few important questions.

The tactics employed by the movement in the second strategic stage of the struggle are mainly of two kinds: military and political. Military tactics will continue to be the corner-stone of the struggle and will play the important part of expanding and developing the movement. Even if political tactics fail to achieve the desired expansion, military tactics and armed organisations will retain their pivotal importance and strategic role.

The pivotal role of the armed struggle is illustrated in the following ways:-

(a) Whereas political tactics can organise some forces in a struggle against the regime, the continuation of such a struggle and its employment for the final defeat of the ruling cliques will come about only through military tactics. The expansion and development of a mass struggle from the economic and political level to a military one, depends entirely on the continuing growth of armed struggle in Iran.

(b) Armed struggle is the determining factor in rousing the masses against the regime. Although at any specific stage the people cannot be said to be able to take part in armed

struggle, nevertheless, their pull towards a struggle against the ruling cliques is directly influenced by armed struggle. Thus, the armed movement plays the main role in drawing the masses into the struggle.

(c) The armed movement plays a fundamental role by standing up to the ruling groups, neutralising their preventive tactics and ultimately suppressing them. If the struggle discontinues, the regime can easily suppress all economic and political movements. This is done firstly through counter-revolutionary brute force; and secondly, by employing suitable tactics, the regime will conceal its true nature from the despondent and defeated mass of the population. Thus, stagnation and oppression will rule over political and economic movements.

The armed struggle will, on the one hand, neutralise counter-revolutionary force with revolutionary force; and on the other hand, reveal, in the best possible manner, to the people and the world in general, the true colour of the ruling groups. This will cause the masses to rise up after every blow, and at the same time stop the regime's oppressive rule over society. This is another aspect of the crucial role of armed struggle in the movement.

That is why political tactics are apt to develop and realise their true values in conjunction with military tactics. Hence a deep understanding of the revolutionary armed movement and its tactics is a must for all politico-economic groups.

The Spread of Political and Economic Protests by the People and the Growth and Development of Armed Struggle

Some individuals and groups attached to the armed movement are still under the impression that townspeople will join the urban guerrilla warfare in the near future, thus expanding the existing organisations and drawing the mass of the urban population into armed struggle. The consequences of such a belief are twofold: firstly, it attaches no importance to armed struggle in the rural areas; and secondly, it is heedless of any form of mass political struggle in the urban areas.

If we assume that urban workers, artisans and intellectuals will directly join armed groups and take part in urban guerrilla struggle, then what need is there of guiding these forces into an economic struggle? Taken one step further, such a belief could mean that the organisation and expansion of political and economic, or any other non-military, struggle is inconsistent with the revolutionary armed movement.

We believe this to be a false assumption. We further believe that armed struggle will not become a mass movement in the urban areas. The tactics employed by armed struggle have some special features which rule out the mass participation of urban population in it. This struggle will be limited to progressive and conscious elements, be they workers, intellectuals* or others, in urban areas. The participation of workers and other non-intellectuals in the movement at the present time is a clear ex-

*i.e. Professional classes. (T).

ample of this basic trend. The composition of guerrilla organisations is liable, at some future date, to be changed through an increase in the numbers of progressive, working-class elements. However, the presence of these conscious elements in the armed movement must never be taken as proof of a mass participation in the struggle.

Armed struggle is bound to grow, despite the inevitable ups and downs which are natural in the development of any movement. Urban guerrilla organisations will expand and armed struggle will assume bigger dimensions and more effective forms. Nevertheless, the following impediments prevent this form of struggle from becoming a mass movement:-

(a) Urban guerrilla tactics are, from a technical point of view, extraordinarily complicated. In such a struggle every guerrilla will have to be a highly experienced commando. A complete command of the technicalities of struggle against the police - technicalities that continually become more and more complicated - and an extraordinary mobility is an absolute must for every guerrilla. The workers and urban proletariat who have not had sufficient training are unable to use these tactics. The use of these tactics will also be fraught with danger for an ordinary intellectual.

In an urban guerrilla war it is not possible to accept volunteers from amongst the workers and hope that a few experienced comrades will be able to command them. A commander in such a situation has limited possibilities to guide his men who require leadership at all hours of the day in their various assignments. In such a struggle, every man plays a decisive

role in protecting himself and his comrades-in-arms. The great mass of people turn to a struggle in large numbers and suddenly. Hence the above-mentioned features effectively rule out their participation in an urban guerrilla war.

(b) Even the largest towns in our country have a limited capacity to accommodate guerrillas. A guerrilla force in Tehran, which is an exceptionally large town, cannot exceed an estimated number of a few hundred - between one to two thousand, if we include the auxiliary units. If we look at the way in which an urban guerrilla unit operates, we will realise that this figure represents an extraordinary force, and is the optimum capacity for military assignments in a town. If the capacity of a town for military actions and concealment is such that the actions of two or more groups overlap each other or cause problems for other groups, thus depriving them of important room for manouver in the face of possible enemy search and destroy operations, then the continuation of a guerilla existence in that town will become precarious. In such a case the expansion of a guerrilla force is a detrimental factor for us. Those who believe that townspeople will eventually join urban guerrilla organisations in their thousands, or tens of thousands, have, unfortunately, no clear picture of the masses; nor do they have a clear understanding of the characteristics of our struggles. These are the people who occasionally start to murmur about a liberated zone in urban areas.

Urban guerrilla groups and their reserve units (i.e. sympathisers) are formed from co-

nscious and progressive elements. The masses, despite their tremendous size and quality are unable to partake in urban armed struggle.

(c) The intellectuals are better prepared than workers and other proletariams to take part in this struggle. That is why the main force of the urban guerrilla struggle is composed of revolutionary intellectuals. This composition, with some increase in favour of the workers, will on the whole be maintained through the next stages of the struggle.

In contrast to these limitations and shortcomings, the armed struggle has the following possibilities in the mountains and rural areas.

In the countryside ordinary rural elements can turn to struggle and, after an initial training by experienced cadres, take part in direct actions. There is no impediment to accepting the rural masses into armed combat units, and the reason for dispatching urban guerrilla units to the rural areas is because of the military unpreparedness of the rural population. Not only farmers, but also workers and other urban elements can engage in rural armed struggle and develop their potentialities in such a struggle.

The limitations of armed struggle in the towns and its expansion outside does not contradict the primary role of the urban areas in the first stage. In this stage, towns have various advantages over rural areas. These advantages were noted and emphasised by the movement with considerable results. These limitations of urban guerrilla struggle and

the possibility of better opportunities in the rural areas, are being analysed in relation to the armed struggle becoming a mass movement. (Since armed struggle outside the towns is vital to the future of the movement and also because it is very important in the total mobilisation of the masses in an armed movement, we have devoted the last chapter of this book to the analysis of this problem.)

Thus the present realities of the situation manifest themselves in two essential ways.

The first is that, parallel to the growth of armed struggle, the urban masses will become active through participation in economic and political movements, the continuation of which will depend on the growth of armed struggle. The second one is that armed struggle will become a mass movement in the rural areas. With the expansion and development of armed struggle in the rural areas, the urban and rural masses will join the struggle. Therefore, we shall in the future - i.e. at the end of the first and throughout the second stages - witness the increase of political and economic protests by the urban population. The expansion of these protests is a result of the growth in social contradictions, and the effect that armed struggle will have on these contradictions in order to reactivate them.

The revolutionary movement should not leave these waves of protests to look after themselves. The movement must actively organise these waves towards the realisation of a general strategy.

At the same time, armed struggle in the urban areas will in the future enjoy a quantitative as well as a qualitative growth, and

armed struggle in the rural areas will begin to expand. This will enable the urban masses to resort to political and economic struggle under the guidance of progressive elements from the revolutionary armed movement, while armed struggle in the countryside continues its growth with the participation of the bulk of the progressive forces.

This is the main feature of the movement's second strategic stage, that of mass mobilisation. It is essential to complete this stage before the subsequent one which will see the beginning of total military engagements with the mass participation of all peoples of Iran.

The Formation of a Political Front Within the Revolutionary Armed Movement

If we accept that the urban masses will turn to political and economic struggle as a result of armed struggle; if we further accept that the revolutionary armed movement should, with an emphasis on armed struggle, also exploit other forms of struggle for mass mobilisation and for a total war in the future, then it follows that the seeds of political organisations attached to the revolutionary movement should be sown here and now. The organisation of these forms of civilian entities is neither simple nor secondary. The task of these organisations will be mass protests in towns and the creation of a political propaganda front against the regime.

Even now some moves are taking shape in this direction. Those groups who have undertaken the organisation of such activities are set on creating a political front which will

support the armed movement. Should these groups and organisations clearly understand the pivotal role of the armed movement and set up a fundamental relationship with it, and at the same time adapt their policies to the definitive strategy of the revolutionary armed movement, then they will be regarded as the political wing of the movement.

We have already talked about politico-economic groups; publishing and propaganda units; and organisations abroad and their special features. This type of organising is the main kind of formation, on the political front, which is taking shape in the present conditions. The most important tasks facing this front are:-

(a) the organisation of people's protest movements, which have economic connotations;

(b) the channelling of these movements along political lines;

(c) to introduce the revolutionary armed movement to the people;

(d) to reveal the nature of the regime and to inform people;

(e) international propaganda, in the interest of the revolutionary movement and against the regime;

To accomplish these tasks we have need of conscious and progressive elements and various forms of organisations. The main type of formation would be politico-economic groupings. We have already mentioned the feat-

ures of these groups and therefore here we merely deal with the kinds of tactics that must be employed by them.

These groups are so named because their members are conscious, politically-minded, and belong to a particular profession or branch of employment. And since all their activities are aimed at achieving political goals, the groups are as such regarded as political entities. Such a group may comprise up to thirty to forty members, depending on the size and extent of its area of operation. The most important factor in the formation of these groups is the clear understanding by their membership of the tasks undertaken by the groups. These tasks are specifically determined in relation to the revolutionary armed movement. <u>These groups are exposed to the danger of being transformed into intellectual, theoretical groupings or "political" associations which might regard themselves, in the present conditions, as a replacement for, and the forerunners of, a party</u>.

Although one cannot be dogmatic about the nature of membership, it is important to note that belonging to the same branch of employment will have a decisive effect on the way a group expands and fulfils its tasks.

These groups may be formed in any area where there is a minimum of economic activities and consequent demands. Nevertheless, it is obvious right now that professional and intellectual circles and manual trades provide the best contexts for the groups' activities.

Such activities will begin with the most elementary aspects of the struggle and spread

to include a general strike within a particular trade, comprising as such a deliberate political protest against the regime. It is essential to organise small actions in a trade in order to pave the way for more important actions and the subsequent assumption of leadership in that trade. Only when society is completely governed by a political consciousness, especially in the student sections, will political matters act as an impetus for spontaneous collective actions.

A politico-economic group may be formed amongst the workers of a particular factory. Workers in various urban trades (such as shoemaking, tailoring, printing, etc.) can form their own respective politico-economic groups. These cells and groups may use all available legal channels, such as the phoney trade unions that have been set up by the regime, as well as available negotiating machineries, in order to give shape to the demands of their respective trades and also to prepare their members for collective actions, providing no step is taken which might be construed as an approval of the regime and would thereby create a favourable impression amongst the simple-minded members of the trade towards the administrative set-up and specifically towards the regime as a whole.

Amongst the professions (teachers, writers, artists, students, and so on) the groups have various grounds for activity. Here too legal and semi-legal pretexts should be exploited to create a movement. Any problem concerning the trade, any small demand or extra-curricular and administrative topic should be exploited for trade solidarity to provide grounds for trade activities. If these matters and other seemingly small topics are used in

line with revolutionary tactics, they will realise their true values and cease to be under-estimated.

Student activities at the present time are susceptible to assuming political overtones and of being transformed into political protests. The fact that political and economic movements of one sort or another have not yet fully expanded and stabilised, should not be used as a pretext for abandoning trade activities inside the universities. In so far as a particular group of students does not have real economic demands, their sectional interests about cultural matters can easily assume political overtones.

Writers, poets and other responsible and well-informed artists can fulfil their roles in the liberation movement by openly protesting against the regime.

Having reached such a stage of development that enables politico-economic groups to establish workable relationships with one another, they can organise the total membership of a trade (for example, all the teachers in Tehran or throughout the country; university students and students in higher education generally) in a concerted action. Even in such a case the groups must avoid undertaking tasks which go beyond their well-defined political and organisational responsibilities. To overlook this principle will act against the interests of a mass movement and therefore against the revolutionary movement. In organising trade activities, an ideological monopoly is harmful. Any one group or person will play its part in these activities and co-operate with others. The important thing here is to have a

uniform and harmonious understanding about these activities and their ability to adapt in order to meet the requirements of the revolutionary movement. Ideological opposition is essential against all persons who, knowingly or out of ignorance, wish to divert political and economic activities from their main course, and push those informed elements, responsible for the organisation of these activities into a struggle the futility of which has been abundantly proved by experience. The groups who lack a revolutionary strategy are allowed to partake in the general decision making process commensurate with the amount of work they put into collective trade activities.

Another form of activity undertaken by the political wing of the movement is the setting up of propaganda and publishing cells in towns which have the task of multiplying revolutionary handouts and pamphlets published by the armed movement (i.e. by the guerrilla organisations). These should then be circulated within the movement including within politico-economic organisations, or distributed directly and at night to the public in general. This is the least costly way in which publishing can be undertaken in towns and on the level of the movement.

The members of these cells will be prepared to withstand any punishment meted out by the regime. The enthusiasm and sacrifice with which the guerrillas prepared elements of the political wing, including the members of these cells, to make sacrifice and accept punishment has had undeniable results. The punishment meted out to the members of these cells will be far more severe than those suffered by politico-economic activists.

Publishing cells will undertake to get hold of facilities themselves so that in case of betrayal, nobody else will be involved. These cells can have a one-way contact both with the guerrillas and politico-economic groups.

Propaganda cells are somewhat similar to publishing cells. They are very small and compact and, in exceptional circumstances, even one individual can engage in activities which can bring about effective results. Slogan writing and the distribution of tracts also form part of their activities.

Outside the country those political groups who believe in armed strategy will have to assume a more definite formation. These groups must set up tribunes and publishing facilities independent of the old organisations, bearing in mind that if and when these organisations are prepared to put their propaganda facilities at the disposal of the movement, such offers should be accepted.

The most important thing for political groups outside the country is to have solidarity with forces inside and to maintain direct contact with the revolutionary movement. They should assess their duties vis-a-vis the movement and accept the principle that <u>it is the inalienable right of the organisations and groups who are engaged in struggle inside the country to determine the policies of the movement</u>. Departure from this principle will lead to a subjective assessment of society and even more subjective solutions for the movement. Harm suffered by the movement through the propagation of such deviationary solutions can only be neutralised by expending a great deal of energy. But the action of persons and groups who cause this harm is hardly forgivable.

If and when the political groups abroad set up official centres, guerrilla organisations will get in touch with them outside the country and harmonise their activities with the group's programme of action.

The most important tasks of these groups at the present time are:-

(a) to introduce the revolutionary movement and its strategy to Iranians and progressive circles abroad. This task can be achieved with an emphasis on internal interests and the activities and publications of the revolutionary armed movement;

(b) the creation of a unified and strong pr opaganda front against the regime and in support of the internal struggle;

(c) to reproduce internal communiques, publications and revolutionary texts that reach them, and transfer them back to Iran on a large scale;

Political organisations within the revolutionary movement are bound to influence each other. Intellectual (professional) groups and organisations can help other sections of the movements in the population, including workers Such help cannot be extended merely by putting on a pair of working-class overalls. An attempt to draw sympathisers from amongst workers and hope to make "trained cadres" out of them is no help to the liberation movement or the working-class. To form politico-economic groups amongst the workers is the job of conscious elements of the working-class. Intellectual groups can go to the help of the workers

through concerted actions, general protest movements and expressions of sympathy and solidarity. Politico-military groups must guide the workers' economic movement along the general policy of the revolutionary movement.

In the event of a workers' strike, students can express their support and, if at all possible, engage in street demonstrations and head towards factory areas or working-class localities. This might involve a running battle with the police.

Propaganda and publishing cells can easily publicise the workers' struggle; so can political groups abroad, thereby putting the regime under propaganda pressure and helping economic and political movements.

However, one thing is still unclear and that is the role of politico-military organisations in such events. It is their duty to take the following steps:-

(a) they should determine the role of political groups and the forms of struggle that may be adopted, and actively propagate them in the movement;

(b) they should gather, not general and brief, but definite and exact information about the economic demands and sectional requirements of the masses. They should also watch all non-military activities in society, analyse them and take clear actions in approving, strengthening and developing such activities;

(c) they should allocate some of their experienced cadres, who have the necessary

requirements and positions to organise the political wing of the movement, to speed up the formation of political groups and to lead them;

(d) they should employ the multifarious facets of general struggle for the expansion and development of the movement. The radical leadership, and methodical use of this general struggle and the forces behind it, is also the urgent task of politico-military organisations;

It is thus that the seeds of a political front in the revolutionary armed movement will take root. The growth and development of this front, the creation of uniformity between various dispersed elements and groups in it, and the establishment of a full relationship between the front and armed organisations in the future, will be achieved inside the liberation movement of Iran.

At the present time, the first steps have been taken for the formation of a political front. But the achievement of full unity amongst all revolutionary forces will depend on the growth and development of the revolutionary movement. It is only in the process of struggle that the true content of this front and the forces within it can be assessed and the nature of its leadership determined.

The people's liberation front of Iran, or any form of union that satisfied the same requirements, will put an end to the leadership vacuum in society. The struggles of the political and military wings of the revolutionary forces will be unified.in this front and their combined energies and resources will be used to achieve the strategic goals of the movement.

To create such a front is one of the important aims of the revolutionary movement. The front will play a decisive role in organising popular forces and employing any and all forms of effective struggle; it will be able to issue orders to all sections of the community. The front will give leadership to the most conservative actions of a civil servant as it does to the most revolutionary struggles waged by the army of liberation.

However, at the present time, guerrilla organisations must shoulder the duties of such a front according to their abilities.

So far, military tactics have chiefly been used to achieve political aims; they have been tactics against the regime and against the imperialists. These tactics were designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of armed struggle and the necessity to carry it out; to disclose the dictatorial nature of the regime; to break the official silence and to smash the prevailing oppression; and to awaken the masses to the necessity of struggle. The tactics, which revealed the characteristics of the armed movement and have established armed struggle in society, will be unfailingly pursued in future in a more developed form. In no time must the regime, imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie (the last one being part of the ruling bloc, reflecting the exploitation of imperialistic monopolies) be ignored by the movement. Therefore, while armed struggle will pursue a general aim, it will, in its development process, engage in those activities which have a direct bearing on the people's day-to-day existence.

Guerrilla Support for the Urban Masses

Now we discuss the tactics employed by guerrilla organisations within the limits of an urban armed struggle in order to mobilise the masses.

A preliminary stage of development is essential before military tactics can be effective in people's political and economic movements, for two reasons:-

(1) The capacity of a guerrilla at the present time does not allow him to undertake a multitude of tasks;

(2) Because of the people's unpreparedness and their conservatism at the start of a series of protest movements, military tactics may push them away from struggle. If, in present conditions, guerrillas resort to arms and bombs in a strike, the working masses who, after a long period of silence and inactivity, are only just beginning to take part in the struggle, will be overcome by fear of the regime and its vengeful tactics. This will, in effect, represent a retreat by the people and is thus against the interest of mass mobilisation;

Therefore, the armed movement must, to begin with, engage in those activities which are designed to give moral support to the struggle waged by workers, intellectuals (professional classes) and other people. This support can assume the following forms:-

(a) Attempts must be made to introduce the armed movement to the people; to make known the prevailing political and economic conditions, and to reveal the dictatorial nature of the regime.

(b) Established guerrilla organisations should take a direct part in the political life of society and publish their own thinking about various problems. The fact that during the preparatory phase, these organisations refrained, out of necessity, from using various forms of political propaganda, is no reason to remain silent today. It is by no means sufficient to be content with explanations given to the people in the form of communiques after military operations. While in some parts of our country such as Baluchestan, Sistan and Khuzestan, people, for any reason, come face to face with the regime; when people resort to the most elementary reactions to relieve the unbearable pressures of life they are under, when the regime throws in the most expensive phoney celebrations and spends thousands of millions of dollars on arms and proudly boasts about its role as the gendarme of the region, and when the regime engages in adventurism in an imperialistic front against the peoples of the region, then it is time for the guerrilla organisations to open a dialogue with the people; they must not remain silent.

No doubt it is also necessary for the guerrillas to explain their actions to the people and to familiarise them with their tactics. They must not, however, be content with the incorrect and simple analysis of the general public regarding their actions - as has been the case in some recent instances. Attempts must be made to inform people, to correct their previously-held notions, and to lead the masses along a revolutionary path.

(c) Attention to people's needs and their day-to-day problems: The general strategic

aim of the armed movement is a people's democracy. This system will be able to provide adequate answers to people's social and economic problems. Nevertheless, it is incorrect to by-pass people's present-day needs merely because we hold such progressive ideas. In the interests of the people, the movement must provide suitable and practical slogans for current problems. We cannot defer people's present-day needs to the promised land. We must try to understand their problems and talk them over with every section, branch of employment and class in society - not merely in an outline and general sense, but in a detailed and exact manner. It is imperative that we propose feasible solutions for today's problems so that they provide people with the necessary impetus to move. For instance, when parents of children both in public and private schools are under severe financial pressure because of school fees, the guerrillas should start a campaign explaining the consequences of such an anti-popular system of education and the effects it will have on the future of their children; extend the campaign against turning state schools into private ones; demand the end of fees in state schools; and put forward a practical programme to raise the standard of education in these schools. Such a campaign does not prove that we recognise the regime. On the contrary, it demonstrates the irresponsibility of the government and reveals its anti-popular characteristics. When the cost of living shoots up in a relatively short time, it presents an opportunity to a guerrilla to demonstrate to the people the working of a capitalist system in practice; he can isolate the real perpetrator of this system in our society and pinpoint its true beneficiaries and those sections who have suffered as a

direct result of a rise in the cost of living.

(d) An important task of guerrilla organisations is the expression of solidarity and sympathy with spontaneous popular actions when the workers of a trade or a factory, students or other section of the community, come face to face with the ruling bloc in pursuance of their economic and political demands.

The Effectiveness of Military Tactics in People's Economic and Political Struggle

Having prepared the people to accept military operations, the guerrilla will begin to gather the required force for effective military tactics, and thus armed, will enter the economic and political life of society:-

(a) Armed exhanges with the regime and the ruling class: When the regime employs its armed mercenaries against unarmed and defenceless people; when striking workers, protesting students, or any other section or group of unarmed people receive bullets as an answer to their political and economic demands, then the guerrillas, whose position in the struggle has been clearly defined, will resort to retaliatory actions. These tactics will be aimed at those elements, organisations and cadres of the regime who either took part in the suppression or had a vested interest in it. The guerrillas' slogan will be: The killing of defenceless workers will be followed by the execution of greedy factory owners and the regime's murderers; the factory owners will have to pay the price for the regime's brutality and their own greed with their properties, their lives and those

of their families. The guerrillas will force the factory owners to stop the regime's military intervention in the event of a strike by workers for economic demands. This in itself is a form of guarantee for the right to strike.

In cases where a hated element in the regime resorts to an act against the people - more especially against a particular trade or a certain section of people - the guerrillas will rise in defence of them or even in defence of a particular individual.

(b) Fulfilling the economic needs of the people: The guerrillas are involved in the day-to-day life of the people, both through the political wing of the revolutionary movement and, directly, through their units of sympathisers. Wherever there is sufficient ground for a spontaneous popular action or whenever such an action has already begun, the guerrillas will have the opportunity to employ effective military tactics to help fulfil the people's demands. Kidnapping home and foreign industrialists and big capitalists and consulting workers about their fate is a symbolic instance of a relationship between the guerrillas, workers and other proletariat. To bring pressure to bear on home and foreign factory owners in order to give in to the economic demands of the workers is an instance employed to test military effectiveness of a tactic.

In a strike the guerrillas can enter the scene to help the strikers. For instance, when the drivers of the Tehran Transport Company went on strike, the regime used army drivers to break the strike. In a case like this the guerrillas will announce that any

bus driven by army men will be attacked. Obviously, this announcement will reverberate throughout the town in no time. To back the announcement the guerrillas will explode a bomb or two, which will put an end to the regime's anti-popular tactic.

The guerrillas need not always wait for the people to take actions before they employ tactics to back social and economic demands put forward by the proletariat. For example, the guerrillas can kidnap some or other reactionary individuals, who have invested money in the educational system and through which they pocket millions of tomans/ at the start of the school year. The acceptance of working-class children in their schools or factories should be demanded as a condition for their release. This operation can be combined with extensive explanatory literature dealing with the anti-popular system of education.

There are tens of other alternatives for the effective use of military tactics. Progressive organisations can choose the most suitable alternatives in order to involve themselves in the lives of ordinary people.

The result of these series of operations is the creation of a kind of revolutionary rule under the domination and within the sphere of enemy rule. At this stage the guerrillas have various fields to effect their rule. As is the case in rural areas where the guerrillas effect their rule even before liberating a region, so also is it possible to foresee such a situation with special features in an urban area. Such a double rule will exist only in circumstances where urban guerrillas

/A Persian unit of currency equal to about 4p.

are approaching the height of their power and waves of protests have enveloped a town. This will be the beginning of a mass armed movement.

When the country is a conglomeration of guerrillas, ruling cliques, home and foreign capitalists, political and military representatives of imperialist powers and is being continuously attacked by all these forces; furthermore, when armed struggle plays an effective role in determining the people's day to day existence, the conditions under which movements by masses of people appear and develop for political and economic demands, ther the second strategic stage of the revolutionary armed struggle is at an end, and the struggle that has already begun in the countryside will be reinforced by urban as well as rural people, thus leading to the start of a mass armed movement.

The extent of mass protest movements will vary with changes in the factors that determine the conditions of struggle. However, the policy of the regime and its foreign allies regarding the revolutionary movement and people's activities will be a vital factor.

The experience of most revolutionary movements shows that when a country is dominated by a military atmosphere, forces within it will engage in military combat. In these circumstances the great bulk of the forces will probably be directed towards mass military operations, and political and economic movements will have a secondary role.

What is absolutely clear is this, that mass protest movements have already begun to appear, and that armed struggle has proved its ability to rouse the masses against the

regime. Therefore, the important thing for the armed revolutionary movement is to fully appreciate the necessity of organising these protest movements and consider it as part of its preparation for the revolution.

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The Start of Armed Struggle and its Consequences

The armed struggle had been prepared under the most difficult conditions and began with the assault on the gendarmerie post in Siahkal* in February 1971. The guerrilla group involved was commanded by Ali-Akbar Safai-Farahani. The assault heralded the start of the armed struggle, and because of its importance, it is essential to know the details of this event.

Prior to the Siahkal event, some armed actions had occurred in different parts of Iran, and these led to the discovery and arrest of a few politico-military groups; there had been armed clashes with the regime's security forces; an armed uprising by some southern tribes led by Bahman Ghashghai; and military actions in Iranian Kurdistan in 1968 organised by Sharif-Zadeh, Moini and their

*A small town along the Caspian Sea coast.

comrades. These actions had some affect, albeit temporary, on Iranian society.

A year before the Siahkal attack, certain events took place that were directly connected with it - the expropriation of some banks, the hyjacking of a civil aircraft and an attempt to kidnap the U.S. Ambassador to Iran. Obviously, the regime was alarmed by these events. But although they were accompanied by a lot of publicity (especially in the case of the hyjacking of an aircraft to Baghdad, where the hyjackers demanded the release of political prisoners) these events had no appreciable affect on the three main factors of struggle: the people, the regime and the progressive movement.

People could, however, sense the start of a new movement. Guerrilla movements in various parts of the world had given a vague picture of what a "guerrilla" is, but the people had not as yet taken the movement too seriously. The frequency with which the regime's security forces were hammering underground political groups brought home to politico-military cells the urgency of ending the long years of preparation and starting the armed struggle. Other groups in the opposition were clearly confused about the struggle. The regime, having sensed the danger, tried to nip the movement in the bud. Clear examples of this policy were stage-managed television interviews with some ideological lepers - ex-oppositionists; the assassination of General Bakhtiar* in Iraq by agents of

*Bakhtiar was a participant in the coup-d'etat of 1953. A friend of the Shah, he was first appointed to be military governor of Tehran --

SAVAK; the SAVAK's disclosure of the treacherous role played by Abbas Shahriari - "the man with a thousand faces"/ - and by the Tehran Organisation of the Tudeh Party; the exhibiting of arms and ammunitions purported to be from Iraq; the ridiculing of military tendencies in political groups; and, most important of all, the keeping under constant surveillance of those groups who were suspected of preparing for armed struggle.

It is true to say that before the resurgence symbolised by Siahkal, the people in general and the opposition groups in particular, were highly impressed by the regime's show of power. It was in such conditions that Siahkal pointed the way forward. The special features of the Siahkal event were as follows:-

(a) In a state of absolute oppression and outward calm, with the people at the lowest

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and subsequently put in charge of the newly formed secret political police, the SAVAK - a post which he held until 1960. Later on, due to his differences with the Shah, Bakhtiar tried to organise a coup against him. Having failed in his bid, he left the country and settled in Iraq whence he tried to organise military groups and dispatch them to Iran. He was assassinated by the Shah's agents in 1969. (T).

/A member of the Tudeh Party, Shahriari turned traitor and came into the employment of SAVAK. He set up the Tehran Organisation of the Tudeh Party and was instrumental in betraying a great number of patriots to the SAVAK. He has recently (March 1975) been executed by the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee. (T).

ebb of despair, when the regime was at the height of its power, the guerrillas of Siahkal engaged the regime's mercenaries.

(b) The armed struggle started in a part of Iran(Ghilan) where there had never been traditionally a non-political use of military tactics against the regime, i.e. no tribal warfare, armed smuggling, armed robbery, etc. The assault on the gendarmerie post of Siahkal could have only one meaning: a struggle against the regime by a revolutionary movement.

(c) The form of the clash with the regime, namely, an assault against one of its most oppressive organs by a group of mountain-based guerrillas, was compatible with the picture the people had of a "guerrilla". The guerrilla struggle initiated by Mirza Kuchek Khan* in the North has remained in the popular memory. This helped to give a clearer picture of the Siahkal assault.

(d) The guerrilla force and its military actions received considerable publicity in the country. The state of siege in the North helped to give the impression of a much bigger guerrilla force and greater importance

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*During the 1st World War, Mirza Kuchek Khan organised a large and highly efficient guerrilla force and used it against the British occupying forces in the North of Iran. His aim was to unify the whole country in a republic. Hence his subsequent fight against the British protege, Reza Khan (the present Shah's father).

to their actions than was the case.

(e) The guerrilla success in disarming the gendarmes and their subsequent military confrontations with units of the army were hailed in Tehran and the provincial towns as a victory. Even after the guerrillas fell into enemy hands, the people never believed those captured to be the total guerrilla force in the North. The continuation of urban guerrilla warfare was, in the opinion of the people, a logical sequence of the war in the countryside.

The attack on the Siahkal gendarmerie post and the subsequent operations affected two principle sections of society. The people in general showed favourable sentiments towards the events, but this did not mean an outright recognition of, and confidence in, the armed movement. Rather, the events awakened them to the realities of the situation. The execution of the guerrillas by the regime in March 1971 and the operations which followed, shocked the people.

In political, student and intellectual circles, the events of Siahkal had a catalystic effect. These circles spread favourable rumours about the events and tried to give ve the movement whatever practical support they could.

However, the effect of Siahkal was entirely different in the Northern province. It could only be regarded as the beginning of a guerrilla movement in the North. The continuing existence of the guerrillas and their hit and run battles with the regime could, in the long run, draw the support of

the peasants and the people of the neighbouring towns. Unfortunately, the Siahkal unit failed to carry out all their operations according to plan and this deprived the movement of an important experience.

The regime tried to end the "incident" quickly. Seven of the mountain guerrillas and six of their urban comrades were summarily executed. This massacre revived in people the memory of that other wholesale execution in 1954 of officers and N.C.O's belonging to the Military Organisation*. The massacre was designed to cow the people and frighten the movement. But it had the opposite effect. It became obvious that the regime had taken the danger very seriously indeed.

The people were deeply shocked, and political and intellectual circles held their breaths waiting for the movement's reply. Had the executions ended everything? Was that the end of the guerrilla and armed struggle?

In their communique of March 1971, the regime declared that the guerrilla "incident" had ended. On the other hand the guerrillas, by attacking Gholhak Police Station (north of Tehran) and executing General Farsio (the army prosecutor and a favourite of the Shah) revealed the true situation. A struggle that was prepared in secret had begun to gather

*A left-wing revolutionary organisation, many tens of whose members were summarily executed at the instigation of the C.I.A.; many more were tortured and still more are languishing in the Shah's jails. (T).

momentum and was seen to be a decisive factor in guiding the country towards ultimate victory. This transformation constituted the birth of the revolutionary armed movement, and demonstrated the importance of Siahkal.

It was only after these events that the movement began a dialogue with the people for the first time. In a series of explanatory communiques the guerrillas introduced themselves to the people and the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee, the first guerrilla organisation to declare its existence.

Then by publishing the names and photographs of nine wanted guerrillas, the regime admitted its weakness. From then on the revolutionary armed movement became the number one challenger of the regime. These are the special features of Siahkal. It was a turning point in the history of our people's struggle. It put a stop to twenty years of retreat by the liberation movement.

The Continuation of the Armed Movement

Towards the end of March 1971 the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee (G.O.-P.F.) came into being; this was as a result of an agreement between two separate guerrilla groups. During 1971 the new organisation tried to build its programme of action on a sound organisational base. They attempted to dispatch another guerrilla unit to the countryside. New urban guerrilla units were formed which went into action in Tehran (for example, they expropriated Bank Melli, Eisenhower Branch) and set off a series of successful explosions

in the northern cities.

Other groups were planning to strike against the regime during the 2500th anniversary "celebrations"* in October. The regime's police organs mobilised all their resources a month or two before the "celebrations" and managed to strike heavy blows against the movement. Lack of sufficient experience, organisational difficulties - the continuation of old structures unsuited to the new conditions of struggle - police experience in anticipating underground organisations, and a tendency in some groups to do only "spectacular operations" were the main reasons for the enemy's successes. The G.O.P.F. lost a lot of people in one police swoop. Tens of guerrillas, including some of the most experienced cadres were detained. Nevertheless, four "identified" guerrillas and a number of unidentified ones were able to continue the struggle.

The Organisation of the Mujahedin-i-Khalg (O.M.K.) with about one hundred members and fairly extensive military possibilities had been formed in 1965. Unfortunately, before it was able to use these resources, the O.M.K. was discovered by the police and, except for a handful of its members, the rest were detained. The Setareh Sorkh (Red Star) Guerrilla Organisation which was in the process of formation was also discovered at this time and tens of its members were detained. Quite a number of other small groups and cells, that were in the process of formation, were also discovered by the police. Despite all these blows, the struggle continued, principally through the G.O.P.F. and the O.M.K.

*To mark 2500 years of the Persian "Empire" in 1971. (T)

Armed operations continued as did the execution of patriots. On the eve of the "celebrations" the comrades of the Armané-Khalgh* group were shot; nineteen guerrillas of G.O.P.F. and nine guerrillas of O.M.K. died on the gallows in April and May 1972; and a number of guerrillas died in action. From then on armed struggle, death in action, the execution of patriots and wholesale detentions increased. Police brutality reached new heights and torture assumed unimaginable dimensions: burning, smashing of limbs, whipping, sexual assaults on men and women alike and a variety of other tortures became an everyday occurrence. A number of people died under torture and ninety people were executed in the course of one year.

The Effect of Armed Struggle on the Whole of the Progressive Movement

Until the inception of armed struggle, those groups and organisations who believed in the strategy of such a struggle, formed only a small part of the whole progressive movement (i.e. the liberation movement and the working-class movement). The National Front organisations abroad and inside the country, the Tudeh Party, the Revolutionary Organisation, and the clergy were playing the main role in the movement. Inside the country, those groups, who believed in armed strategy, grew in strength alongside the traditional organisations, after having first gone through a process of ideological struggle and having fought against the regime. The attitude of most political organisations towards the events in Siahkal was confused and

*A guerrilla group. (T)

uncertain.

After the execution of thirteen guerrillas, the Tudeh Party, while sympathising with the relatives of the martyrs and condemning the dictatorial regime, declared the guerrillas' actions to be fruitless and a sad episode. At this juncture "Payke Iran"* like the regime, believed that the "incident" was over. The ideological stand of Siahkal guerrillas was well-known to the Tudeh Party. Hence the "Party's" understandable fear about its standing in the working-class movement. Whereas such actions (as that in Siahkal) by forces outside the working-class would not have aroused its objection, in this case the "Party" embarked on an ideological mud-slinging against the movement; particularly after the "Islami"/ and the Tehran Organisation scandals, this self-appointed "working-class party of Iran" felt ever more threatened.

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*A radio station situated in Eastern Europe broadcasting on behalf of the remnants of the runaway leadership of the defunct (inside and outside Iran) Tudeh Party. (T)

/After the C.I.A. directed coup d'etat of 1953, Islami-Shahriari, a long-standing member of the Tudeh Party, was appointed by the Party to set up the Tehran Organisation. As it turned out some time later, Islami was co-operating with the SAVAK (Iranian secret political police) and the Tehran Organisation had thus become the most effective organ of the SAVAK. With the active help of this member of the Tudeh Party, many patriots were sent to their deaths and many more imprisoned. However, the Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee tried the traitor, Islami, in a people's court and condemned him to death. The sentence was carried out immediately after the traitor was tracked down. (T).

The National Front organisations inside the country and abroad, despite their lack of faith in armed struggle, felt obliged to support the guerrillas' action and attack the regime. Other Marxist organisations, which claimed to be the vanguards of the working-classes and had, for many years, engaged in political and organisational work, had to clarify their position now that the armed movement began to gain momentum. While the movement was in bloody confrontation with the regime, and in conditions where the bulk of their (Marxist organisations') membership was sympathetic towards guerrilla struggle and had clearly indicated their considerable support, it would obviously have been political suicide for opportunistic groups to attack the movement. However, after the initial shock, and as soon as the movement started a normal pace of growth and development, opportunism began an all-round attack against it.

Such attacks against the movement are, and have been, mainly conducted by organisations abroad. The driving force behind this attack is the ambition of political emigrants, factionalism, sectarianism and selfishness, which are in turn caused by a subjective view of struggle and its conditions in Iran. When opportunism is unable to deny the important effects of the armed movement in the conditions of the struggle, it begins a desperate search for compromise. Hence, armed struggle is accepted as one form of struggle, providing the protagonists of "political strategy" are allowed to perpetuate their mistakes by misguiding the elements who are suitable for the fight against the regime, thus wasting part of the available progressive force.

Marxist-Leninist organisations within the revolutionary movement will not compromise on the basis of the formula put forward by opportunists. Inside the country nobody could remain an impartial witness to the movement. There occurred a deep division between the mass membership of political organisations and their decrepit leadership regarding the movement. The sincere and fighting elements chose revolution and the conservative ones were channelled towards opportunism.

At the moment a great number of cells which have been formed, or are in the process of formation, whose leadership and guidance along the strategic aims of the revolutionary armed movement is the duty of progressive groups inside the movement. During this period the armed movement managed to enlist the support of tens of existing cadres and hundreds of potential ones. The new cadres are trained with invaluable revolutionary criteria and develop in an uncontaminated revolutionary process. As a direct result of the armed movement, tens of groups, cells, circles have got together and pooled their efforts. This is a phenomenon which is truly a turning point in the appearance and growth of a true revolutionary generation.

The Effect of Armed Struggle on the People

From the start, the people showed an interest in the guerrillas. Although they had no clear understanding of what a "guerrilla" was, they were thoroughly familiar with the regime. This was the result of a

long process of struggle over some generations. The nature of the regime and especially its head, the Shah, was perfectly clear to the masses, not in the form of a political awareness, but instinctively. The regime and the Shah's determination to remain in power for such a long time, helped this understanding. Therefore, the people's initial reaction to the movement was based on the simple mechanism of "the enemy of the regime is a friend of the people". This mechanism does not always hold good as it can and has been, used by demagogues and the pawns of imperialism to deceive the masses.

Thus even before the nature and characteristics of the "guerrillas" were clear, people displayed favourable sentiments towards them. These were expressed in the form of the various rumours in favour of the guerrillas, although the rumours tended to create a larger-than-life impression about their qualities and numbers. After Siahkal, it was rumoured that the Northern woods were bristling with guerrillas and the regime's expeditionary force to the North was therefore thought to be on a massive scale. There was, therefore, an exaggerated idea of the enemy's casualties and about the guerrillas' bravery. The news of the guerrillas' defeat was received with incredulity.

It might be said that "rumours" are on a par with lies and fabrication. However, a scientific analysis of "rumours" yields a different picture. In order for rumour to spread quickly and to grow, it needs a suitable social background. The area in which a rumour tends to spread has got to have political,

economic and cultural affinity with it. Otherwise not only rumour but even straightforward facts will fail to penetrate the people of that area. Within two days of General Farsio's* execution, it was rumoured all over the country that he had died immediately (this was in fact the case), whereas the regime was desperately trying to show that he was alive. After this incident, if any of the regime's military political personalities failed to appear in public for a few days, rumour would have it that they had been executed by the guerrillas.

After the death of the guerrilla theoretician, Pouyan, there were persistent rumours that he was alive and it was even said that he had broadcast from a French radio station. There were facetious anti-regime jokes about fugitive guerrillas with prices on their heads.

A well-known guerrilla would have carried out tens of heroic clashes with the enemy in the minds of the people before any actual engagement had taken place. Faced with these rumours and such persistent and active dissent, the regime began making threatening noises about "rumour-mongers".

For the movement, these favourable sentiments were merely an indication of a suitable background which had to be developed. People had to be informed, their knowledge of the guerrillas increased and they had, above all, to be made to understand their duties towards the movement. The movement has taken steps to meet this requirement by opening a dialogue with the people and correcting their pre-conceived ideas about "guerrillas". The Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Fedaee (G.O.P.F.) has issued numerous communiques.

*An infamous military prosecutor and a "pet" of the Shah of whom the latter was extremely "fond", Farsio refused many guerrillas the right of defence. He was executed by the movement

As guerrilla actions have continued, so too have the people's explanations about these actions. A complicated phenomenon that was incomprehensible to them (the people), may be explained through a simplifying device. The aim behind this was to absolve the guerrillas of any wrongdoing and approve their actions. An example of this is the explanation offered by the people for the death of Nashiadi, the Manager of the Safavia Branch (Tehran) of the Bank Melli. When he was killed, the regime, in order to provoke popular revulsion against the guerrillas, shed crocodile tears. However, people did not wait for the guerrillas' analysis of the situation and it was rumoured that Nashiadi was a SAVAK agent acting against the guerrillas. People would therefore argue that popular hatred of SAVAK was a justification for the death of Nashiadi. However, the G.O.P.F. refused to accept this spontaneous explanation. They felt it necessary to explain the reason behind the death of Nashiadi, so that people might understand the rule governing urban guerrilla warfare. They explained to the people that Nashiadi was not the manager of an exceptional (SAVAK orientated) bank. Rather, any bank manager or any other person who gets over-zealous and, for the sake of serving the regime, goes beyond the realm of their normal sphere of responsibilities, is liable to be liquidated by the guerrillas. Instead of being content with their own simple explanation of events, they should be taught and informed.

In other cases, such as the blowing up of a taxi in Ferdousi Avenue, and the multiple explosions in Toop-Khaneh Square (Tehran), the people, on the basis of their elementary

forms of explanations, defended the guerrillas and condemned the regime. This is yet another aspect of the people's moral support for the guerrillas. With the continuation of the movement, there occurred a polarisation of opinions about the armed struggle.

The position of the bourgeoisie was clear from the word go. This comprador class has always been an ally of the ruling clique and imperialism, and has as such been an enemy of the movement. In the subsequent stage, when armed struggle became relatively stabilised, the better off sections of the petit-bourgeoisie gradually began to feel the danger of the movement. The movement could easily spoil their carefree and comfortable lives. In such a struggle, social forces are bound to undergo a re-organisation, during which the comfortable petit-bourgeoisie will not acquire another penny. Hence, they see the "guerrillas" as a nuisance and a "dangerous lot".

Parallel to these events the middle and deprived sections of the petit-bourgeoisie, together with the urban proletariat, will grasp the aims and nature of the guerrillas. They will increasingly feel that some factors in society are working to their advantage. From amongst all these sections the conscious (intellectual) elements display a greater good-will towards the movement, and therefore more progressive and revolutionary individuals from this section will join the movement. In a series of bloody encounters with the enemy, in individual and collective martyrdom, in uncompromising and determined defence of the people's rights and ideals, the guerrillas have succeeded in overcoming the distrust and pess-

imism that the people, particularly the toiling masses, felt towards any and all political organisations. This pessimism had its roots in the failures of earlier organisations and their leaderships. It was by no means an easy task to dispel such a built-in pessimism which had created an almost unbridgable gap between the people and the vanguard. Yet the armed movement has succeeded in bridging this gap. The regime's arbitrary exercize of power, the people's numerous defeats in fighting the tyranny and above all the prevailing inequality of strength between the two opposing forces had left their undesirable effects on the masses. The regime's power and superiority seemed to be a permanent feature of our society. The opposition groups were simply unable to stand up and fight. In such conditions an ordinary member of our society, such as a worker, a shopkeeper or an intellectual, had no reserve of self-confidence to draw on. On the other hand, the regime was busy sowing the seeds of distrust amongst the people, thereby stopping any spontaneous actions and protests.

The guerrillas entered the scene and smashed the myth of the regime's invincibility, demonstrating to the people that despite all the means at its disposal, the regime was vulnerable. When guerrillas can strike blows against the tyranny, and the regime, with all its might, is unable to suppress the movement then the masses, who are under great political and economic pressures, feel able to rise in protest against the regime. Thus, the appearance of the guerrillas on the scene, with their sacrifice, their steadfastness and their military operations, revived the people's sagging morale and gave them a fresh self-confid-

ence. The people no longer look upon one another as "police" and "agents"; they feel able to trust one another, and as every day they hear the rattle of machine guns and the thunder of explosions shaking towns and cities, they feel free to talk and sympathise and ultimately to co-operate with one another. What is taking place in our society today is unprecedented and remarkable. Whereas tens of people are sent to the gallows each year; where the regime's tyranny has assumed new dimensions and hundreds of people are sent to torture chambers and stand unlawful trials; and while the regime is vastly expanding its army and police force; where the military are in a state of "extraordinary" alert, the people, instead of being in a state of absolute suppression, are ready to protest more readily than at any time during the decade before the start of armed struggle; numerous individuals come out of the society who are indifferent to threats of prison, dismissal and unemployment; people show great self-sacrifice; the kind of protests that were less common in recent years have increased; and even when such political and economic protests end up in a bloody clash with the arms of the regime, the people, instead of retreating, press forward. What is the cause of this unprecedented phenomenon? It stems from the fact that the force that has its roots in the people move in the forefront of the people in their struggle against the regime and fights with fervour and self-sacrifice; convinces the people that death is a mere common place; and calls people to arm against the enemy - a people who, in the recent past, lacked any experience of actual revolutionary experiences.

Whenever the regime employs anti-revolutionary means to cow the people, the guerrillas employ counter measures to neutralise the effect. Faced with this unexpected phenomenon, the regime first fell into confusion and then tried to remedy the situation: it pinpointed the factor that created this reaction in the people and decided that its best strategy lay in the destruction of the armed movement and the uprooting of the guerrillas. However, as long as the armed movement is growing, the complete suppression of the general struggle and spontaneous public protests is, even for a short time, impossible. At the same time it is not advisable (from the regime's point of view) to leave the protests on their own, as it were. This is precisely wher

the contradictory nature of the tactics employed by the ruling class, vis-a-vis the general protest actions will appear. The exertion of brutality and a bloody end to these protests will increase people's tendencies towards armed tactics. If in the past, in the wake of any protest, people veered towards

armed confrontation, this tendency had no way of taking concrete shape, since the regime was able to send the people back to their shell of despondency and despair by its high-handed and bloody tactics. This was an objective reality which we all witnessed time and again in the past. But today, any tendency towards brutality on the part of the regime is highly dangerous since the guerrilla organisations are there to take advantage of the situation by employing more forces against the enemy. On the other hand, failing to suppress people's protests will have chain reactions and will result in waves of strikes and protests gripping the country. Therefore, the regime will have to oscillate between two mutually exclusive tactics. The internal wings of the regime are in constant clash over

these solutions. The regime attempts to neutralise any strike before it takes shape whether by retreating or by resorting to police actions. Sometimes it deals severely with strikers and sentences them to relatively long prison terms; other times it ignores their action.

The armed movement has succeeded in rousing the masses to strike and protest. However, such strikes and protests ought not to be taken to mean the start of a general mass movement. The plain fact is that we have a long way to go before this point is reached. What the armed movement has achieved during such a relatively short period is remarkable; and yet very little compared with all that has to be done.

It is a mistake to appraise the effect of the armed movement on the people within the limits of its outward manifestations. The people's economic support and political sympathies for the movement are merely the actual effect of the armed struggle. To appraise the total effect of the armed struggle we must go beyond mere quantity.

The qualitative effect of the movement will be reflected in the form of a potential force which will eventually manifest itself in the rapid building up of mass movement. The superficial study of the process of various revolutionary movements takes into account that there are shock waves in the final stages which turn a movement into a mass movement. Whereas we believe that in our country these final shock waves are a turning point in an imperceptible process of struggle which began to grow a long time ago. Hence the cumulative effect of the whole force and the hidden and silent preparation for the revolution, must be

appraised dialectically.

It is a mistake to assume that what the movement has achieved so far indicates what it will achieve in the future. This type of calculation is tantamount to denying the transformation of a gradual movement into a sudden leap forward, i.e. a qualitative effect of numbers. This also fails to see the hidden contents of the social processes. What is taking place today as a result of conscious and revolutionary sacrifice of the vanguard will act as an impetus for the future volcanic eruption of Iranian society. Even today we can see signs of a potential hidden movement in the people's apparently vague behaviour pattern - in their moods, in their apparently insignificant action and so on. We can notice a certain harshness in people, in their dealings with the regime and possibly with one another; we see that in all matters, be they important or insignificant, the regime has bloody clashes with the people. These are all ingredients of a future volcanic eruption.

Nevertheless, the vanguard revolutionary organisations are well aware of the negative possibility that, should deviationary and adventuristic methods develop inside the armed movement, there is a serious danger of the masses becoming mere spectators. In the case of such an eventuality, the masses will be pushed towards a passive expectation and fail to play their historical role in the movement thus depriving it of its life-saving energy. For this reason the vanguard organisations must embark on an irreconcilable struggle against opportunism within the revolutionary armed movement.

The Effect of Armed Struggle on the Regime

After the coup d'etat of 1953 the regime used its military and police forces to suppress all movements. During the past decade the regime has, on the one hand, been engaged in suppressing the people and all progressive movements by force and on the other hand, has embarked on an extensive and well-orchestrated propaganda campaign to deceive world public opinion and to mislead the people. The Shah and his courtiers have claimed to be defenders of human rights and accordingly have managed to play host to a world conference on human rights. A blood-thirsty regime has thereby managed to hide its ugly face behind a facade of humanity, peace and progress.

The regime has fostered dreams about the golden years of future; the 2500th "celebrations" became a fairground for pseudo-politicians; the "fight" against the oil companies was designed to revive the memory of the oil nationalisation period in the early 1950s, only this time in favour of the Shah; the expansion of contacts with socialist countries and the setting up of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were all part of the attempt to disarm the opposition.

As a matter of fact, the opposition had already been almost completely disarmed by the regime's programme of land reform. Iran appeared to be a haven of stability and calm and nothing could apparently disturb the ruling cliques and their imperialist allies. Groups and organisations abroad withdrew into their shells, since all that was going on in-

side the country was detention and torture. Now and then the activities of an underground group or the disjointed and limited protest by student bodies provided an anti-regime forum. It was in such circumstances that armed struggle imposed itself on the regime.

Having completely and ruthlessly suppressed the people, the regime began to get a whiff of some activities tending in the direction of armed struggle, but it failed to take it too seriously. A year before the Siahkal confrontation, the regime gradually began to feel the danger but managed to keep its cool while trying to nip the movement in the bud.

When the events in Siahkal came to light the Shah began to brag about the work of his army cooks. After the execution of 13 guerillas in 1971, the regime declared the "incident" to be over. However, towards the end of 1971 (after the expropriation of the Safavi Branch of Bank Melli Iran by the guerrillas) the regime officially accepted that Siahkal was the forerunner of subsequent guerrilla actions.

The 2500th "celebrations" provided the occasion for anti-regime propaganda. A regime which, eight months prior to the "celebrations" had resorted to collective execution of the patriots, and had, time and again, proved to be the most blood-thirsty regime in the world, had found its propaganda to be ineffective. The "celebrations" became more like military and police expeditions. Hence the regime was forced to admit the reality of guerrilla presence all over the country.

For many years the regime's propaganda machine was deployed for one purpose only: to praise the Shah and the programme of his Government. Part of this machine was also used in the propaganda war against the Russians, the Iraqis and the Egyptians. However, the regime had not fought against an internal enemy for nearly two decades. It was only after the start of armed struggle that the regime felt obliged to re-assess its policy, and use all its propaganda resources against the movement. Dailies, weeklies, television programmes, radio-broadcasts, parliament and all other media, however unimportant, were employed in a concerted political fight against the revolutionary movement. The movement's actions and their propaganda released the vast propaganda possibilities which were at the disposal of the opposition in general. This was not a phenomenon that the regime could afford to ignore.

The regime attempted to defile the movement's image with slanderous accusations, but it plainly failed in its attempts. The movement and the forces behind it had no weak point to be exploited. In a very short time, armed struggle managed to rip apart the regime's mask and to reveal to the people inside the country and abroad, the nature of the most hateful fascist regime in the world.

In order to confront the movement politically, the regime's strategists were pushed into a state of confusion. They made the trials of 23 members of Setareh Sorkh* and Mujahedin* public and suffered so much as a result of the

*Two guerrilla groups fighting against the regime. (T)

ensuing publicity that they had to change their tactics. The regime was at a loss to understand the mechanism of armed propaganda and in order to isolate the movement it began itself to circulate news of guerrilla operations. A regime which was a master of disguise and deceit, managed to commit blatant acts of folly. Historical necessity was pushing it towards its unavoidable fate. The revolutionary movement grasped this necessity, chose the most suitable methods of accelerating the inevitable fate and deployed them.

The security organisations, the police apparatuses and other organs of oppression that were the pillars of the regime's rule, have turned out to be no more than "paper tigers". The SAVAK, which prided itself in its role of hunting the regime's enemies, even outside Iranian borders, and which claimed that it was impossible for anyone to get through its dragnet, a SAVAK that had frequently smashed opposition cells, was for the first time obliged to admit its failures. The combined force of the regime's police failed to destroy the guerrilla organisations. The SAVAK, which was adept at annihilating any underground group in broad daylight, organised sorties against the guerrilla organisations and, despite occasional local successes, failed in its attempts to rout out the guerrillas. The regime's favourites were executed by the guerrillas under the noses of the police and the military. All these represented a direct blow against the regime.

As a result, the regime has reorganised its organs of repression. The Joint Committee of the SAVAK and the police has employed thousands of new cadres. A regime that already

had thousands of experienced cadres has felt it necessary to employ thousands more, merely to face tens of guerrillas. Inevitably, many targets were left open and there then started a battle of life and death between the guerrillas and the police. This is all due to the special features of armed struggle in which a small and compact group of guerrillas is able to fight an infinitely larger enemy force.

However, the confrontation between the regime and the movement has not remained within the confines of various police stations. The imperialist fronts began to question the regime's strategy regarding future courses of action. What was involved here were not merely the interests of the regime, but also those of foreign monopolies and the strategic interests of the imperialists.

The regime's contradictions with the anti-imperialist movement in the region has also been accentuated as a result of the armed struggle inside the country. Feeling unsafe about the spread of guerrilla operations inside the country, the regime has been forced to enter into regional groupings with imperialist powers and to dispatch arms to suppress the revolutionary movement in Dhofar and the Palestinian revolution.

The regime has been pushed into a fight without being certain of its outcome. It cannot use its military force indefinitely for such sorties, since the force itself is open to influence by the revolutionary movement. Neither can the regime do away with internal and global contradictions as it did in the past by a policy of "positive balanc-

ing". Under the new conditions, the contradictory elements require concessions that operate against themselves and their allies.

These have been the direct effects of the revolutionary armed movement during its short existence. If we compare this with the effects of the struggle waged by various political parties and groups during the two decades prior to the armed movement, we shall see why armed struggle plays an important, indeed central, role in the whole of the revolutionary armed movement.

6

Armed Struggle in Rural Areas

Armed struggle in the countryside is of such strategic importance in the revolutionary movement that it deserves to be comprehensively and separately dealt with. It is also due to this importance that we feel it necessary to discuss the subject, albeit briefly, in the present work, most of all because it plays a vital role in transforming an armed struggle into a mass movement.

Armed struggle in the countryside does not necessarily mean the setting up of a guerrilla cell or centre in a strategic area. This is merely one form of such a struggle; others can be tribal uprisings, and armed movements initiated by oppressed minority nations within our country. We shall analyse each of three forms of armed struggle in turn.

The Formation of Guerrilla Cells in Strategic Areas

Armed struggle in the countryside passes

through various stages. They are:-

(a) The setting up of small armed groups which can engage the enemy in running battle in a dispersed area;

(b) the qualitative and quantitative growth of these groups, and their relative stabilisation in an area; and

(c) the formation of large units for the defence of a liberated area and for attacking areas under enemy control;

Parallel to the growth of the struggle in these three stages, the composition of military forces will change and armed struggle will extend from being limited to the most progressive elements to encompassing the masses. To overlook the particular features of each stage will lead to an incorrect understanding of the conditions of struggle and the requirements of that stage.

In the first stage, when the units are small and primarily consisting of progressive individuals from urban centres, the military position of the area is of prime importance and its social position is an important factor in the growth and development of the struggle. In this stage, man-power is provided for by urban areas and arms are brought in from towns and taken from the enemy.

In the second stage when conscription from amongst local people will enable the formation of bigger units, social factors and the degree of preparedness shown by the local people, assume the main role. Manpower in this stage is provided for by both town and rural areas; arms come from the towns and are

taken from the enemy.

In the third stage, large units are formed from the urban and rural proletariat leading to the creation of liberated or semi-liberated areas. In this stage the arms and economic requirements of the battle and the administration of liberated areas, necessitate the formation of a front behind the lines.

Armed struggle in the countryside need not start from the first stage. If such a struggle enjoys the support of the local people, the features of the second stage will appear. The support shown by local people will be enough to offset the weakness of strategic conditions. If we insist on the first stage, it is merely because of a possible absence of objective circumstances for a mass movement and a possible lack of local preparedness to accept the guerrillas. It is therefore wrong to put equal emphasis on all factors as if they were applicable in all circumstances. Frequently, one or two stages of a guerrilla struggle in the countryside might take shape in an area but fail to reach the final stage due to an absence of necessary factors. Whereas this same struggle might help extend armed struggles in other areas where, due to suitable conditions, the final stage is achieved.

In 1970 the forests in the mountains north of Tehran were chosen for the formation of a guerrilla cell because of two factors: the strategic position of the area; and the relative political maturity of the local people. This area still retains the same favourable conditions for the formation of a guerrilla cell.

The main features of a guerrilla cell have already been discussed in the preceding chapters. The hallmarks of a guerrilla cell are its smallness - between 10 to 20 members; its composition - progressive urban elements; its ability to wage evasive battles - 'more evasion, less battle'; and its capacity to accept the three principles insisted upon by Che Guevara, namely, constant mobility, absolute distrust of the local people, and constant vigilance. A great deal can be said about military and other provisions, communication with urban areas, and various other problems. However, the main features of a guerrilla cell are those already mentioned.

Here we do not intend to discuss the reasons that necessitate the formation of a guerrilla front in the countryside. In the preceding chapters we have sufficiently emphasised that armed struggle will transform itself into a mass movement only through a guerrilla struggle in the rural areas. The main aims of a guerrilla cell in the first stage are:-

(a) military operations against the enemy and the attraction of part of the enemy forces into the rural areas with the following results: relieving the enemy's pressure on urban areas; stabilising armed struggle in the towns and helping to guide progressive forces, thereby helping the revolutionary movement; it will also create social and economic problems in the battle area, as well as a military atmosphere in the locality concerned;

(b) it will weaken the regime's power in the region, and damage the apparently permanent nature of its rule in the rural areas;

(c) by employing armed struggle, the guerrillas will defend the rights and economic demands of the villagers;

The continuation of guerrilla struggle in an area, which is a sign of the guerrilla's invincibility in relation to his operations and aims, will eventually end the villagers' impartiality and, considering the activities that go on in towns and on the level of the whole society - i.e. the domination of a political atmosphere in towns and mass struggle by the urban proletariat - secures their support for the guerrillas. This is the ultimate aim in the first stage of rural guerrilla warfare.

The most important of the problems facing such a movement at its inception are:-

(a) A thorough reconnaissance of the designated areas is - after the Siahkal clash of 1971 - beset with serious difficulties. The enemy has become extremely vigilant and it is no longer possible to use legal or conventional pretexts to reconnoitre, as had been possible in the past. Lengthy reconnaissance programmes were in the past instrumental in preparing and generally raising the knowledge of individuals who undertook such tasks.

(b) In the northern forests and most other areas, climatical conditions are not suitable for a sustained and continuous struggle throughout the year. Considering that a guerrilla cell must necessarily spend a considerable time passing through the first stage of struggle and also because it is not feasible to secure local support during the relatively short period of either of the two consecutive seasons

(i.e. Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter), unfavourable seasons assume more importance for the purpose of reconnaissance and preparations.

In the north, unfavourable conditions are: the disappearance of foliage in the Autumn; a harsh snowy Winter in the woods and the impassibility of the southern mountains, which are of great military importance to the guerrillas. These conditions make concealment difficult, reduce mobility and limit the area of manœuvre for coping with possible enemy search-and-destroy operations and hot pursuit. The northern forest is between 20 and 60 kilometres wide (north-south) by a few hundred kilometres long (west-east). Difficulties arising from this relatively narrow width are offset by a small range of high mountains which start from the beginning of the forest and continue, with a width of between one and a few hundred kilometres, parallel to the width of the woods. In Winter the passes of this mountainous area are almost impenetrable, and in some cases mobility is reduced to one fifth or even less. The enemy, on the other hand, is able to overcome this difficulty by employing air power and has no need of concealment plus other advantages.

(c) A long period of time is needed before guerrilla cells are able to enjoy mass local support. Fearful of the regime, the peasants will, to begin with, even act against the guerrillas and help the enemy. It is only after a long and sustained period of struggle in an area, backed by extensive armed struggle in the towns and general mass movements in urban areas that the balance will be tipped in

favour of rural struggle, and the struggle will culminate in the support of the villagers for the guerrillas. Therefore, in a struggle of such magnitude it is essential to establish secure supply lines, to have forces in reserve, and to find suitable remedies that can offset the effects of unfavourable seasons. These are problems that must be faced and for which solutions must be found. We suggest the following answers to some of these problems:-

(1) Small cells (each with a membership of between 2 to 5) consisting of town elements resident in towns, parishes and villages of the designated area, can be formed for area reconnaissance as well as for social and economic study of the region. Such cells can perform their tasks within a legal framework. Teachers, soldiers, seasonal workers and local residents are all a natural source of recruitment for this kind of work.

To begin with only those individuals who are most suitable for the duties of a cell will be selected and the rest will engage in individual or group activities without any contact with the cells. The latter category will form the nucleus of future cells.

(2) Small military cells - each with a membership of between 2 to 5, and conscious of the principles of secret activities - will be formed to prepare the ground psychologically in the area. The cells will be dispersed in small and medium towns in rural districts and tribal areas, and attack small (proportionate to their size and power) targets in the close vicinity of towns, on outlying roads and rural districts. After each operation, a cell

will immediately disperse and resume its "normal" posture. In towns where there is an absence of safe-houses, members of a cell, having properly concealed their arms and implements, will return to their everyday work.

The cells will not engage in propaganda and publishing activities. Such activities will be undertaken by distinct publishing and propaganda cells who will increase the circulation of pamphlets, handouts and communiques issued by established guerrilla organisations. The latter cells will not engage in military activities and will have no contact with the former.

Small military cells can easily be formed in any part of the country.

(3) Having prepared the maps and operational plans for designated area of operations, and having overcome technical problems and other problems involved in preparing food and military supplies, a guerrilla cell* will embark on a final manoeuvre, which will take place with all military hardware and away from the eyes of local people. Such a manoeuvre will play an important role in preparing the members, correcting and developing the area reconnaissance data, and increasing the political and military knowledge of the fighters.

The cell will have taken form in town and is supported by bases, each having 2 to 3 members taken from reserve forces or sympathisers (the latter two having been organised in their own respective manner). These

*This will be a different entity from those mentioned in No. (2). (T).

bases (or small cells) together with the members of the cell will be the total force of a rural unit. Such a unit can be part of a guerrilla organisation, connected to it through a carefully established interimediary body. Tehran and a few other big towns are suitable for the creation of a unit of rural guerrillas.

This guerrilla cell can have betweeen 7 and 20 members. Having completed the manoeuvre, which might take anything up to a month, the cell will initiate the first engagement against the enemy in the first months of the favourable season, followed by a few months of running battle with the enemy. At the start of unfavourable season, the remnants of the cell will leave the area and set off for the town in small groups (depending on the size of a cell).

Small cells, which will have acquired safe-houses and secret hideouts, will be ready to shelter the members of the guerrilla cell. These small bases will have no contact with each other, and not all members of the guerrilla cell know the position of all these bases, nor the identity of those responsible for them. Great care must be exercised in respect of this and other principles of secret guerrilla activities in urban areas.

During the unfavourable season, the cell can keep the situation under surveillance by dispatching some individuals to the area, or by other means. This is especially important just before the cell heads for the area. The cell, having replaced the casualties by new men from its reserve forces, will set off for the area in small groups immediately before

the onset of favourable season.

During the unfavourable season, the cell will engage in recruiting sympathisers and developing the political knowledge of its members. To meet the units' requirements, the last batches can engage in urban operations, such as the expropriation of banks and other financial centres as well as operations to replenish their supply of arms. The unfavourable season can also be used for operational preparations, alterations, regroupings and various other works for the resumption of operation in the designated area.

Should the conditions be considered suitable for operations throughout the year, the guerrilla cell can keep some or all of its force in the area even during the unfavourable season. A time will eventually come when guerrilla cells are able to employ local resources and draw on local support for a sustained rural struggle.

Small military cells and guerrilla cells must pay attention to the social and economic demands of local people and choose their military targets accordingly. Such targets include agricultural banks; hated local elements such as notorious usurers; forestry commissions; military guards for rural and tribal affairs; and gendarmerie posts. In cases where joint stock agricultural companies are greatly disliked by poor villagers, such centres and their hated directors (frequently retired army officers) are suitable targets.

Police and military chiefs as well as important government personalities are also

targets which can weaken the general standing of the regime in the area.

Slogans demanding the repeal of land indemnities; the repeal of the water rate; the repeal of agricultural loans; the lifting of restrictions on grazing lands, forests and natural resources that were imposed without regard for tribal and village life and with the counter-revolutionary force employed by the regime - all these can be combined with military operations.

Only through the practical application of these suggestions, which should be adopted in the light of the specific characteristics of a situation, can we acquire the necessary experience of armed struggle in the rural areas. It is impossible to deny that the revolutionary armed movement suffers from a serious lack of experience in the field of rural armed struggle. To gain such an experience requires sacrifice and heroism.

The Foundations of Armed Struggle in Tribal Areas

Iran has a long tradition of tribal struggle. It is impossible to study its social and political structure without regard to the role of tribes in it. For centuries various tribes have had political and military roles to play in Iranian affairs.

Tribal uprisings led by various khans (tribal leaders) against central governments have until recently been a political factor in Iran. The last of these took place in 1963 in the south. This was obviously the last

breath of feudalism. Nevertheless, it was also a reflection of dissatisfaction and deprivation suffered by the mass of tribal people.

In so far as the tribes suffer national oppression, tribal uprisings assume a special political feature. However, in some cases the economic and social grounds for discontent amongst the tribes are exploited by the Khans for their own ends and the actual driving force is the latter's ambition and their conspiracies against one another. We shall deal with the position of the oppressed nationalities in Iran in a separate article.

There are undeniable grounds for socio-economic discontent amongst the Iranian tribes. Even the administrative and military organisations of the regime have paid attention to these factors and still do. They have learned through experience that should a tribe's deprivation increase because of a drought, rebellion will become the order of the day in that tribal area. If a drought persists the rebellion will turn into an all-out revolt. In the past, a Khan was able to lead a rebellious tribe into an uprising if he so wished.

The reforms of the last ten years have left the Khans with little or no power. A Khan is at the moment virtually devoid of any real standing or role; he plays a merely symbolic role. However, the reforms have not only failed to help the tribes in any way, they have actually deprived them of many of their previous rights. The most important of their

new (post-reform) problems are severe restrictions put on the use of pastures and the regime's strict control over their day-to-day affairs. The regime's military hold in tribal areas has given an element of permanency to the deprivations of the tribes.

Tribes engaged in livestock farming (nomadic tribes) - estimated to number between 600,000 and over 1,000,000 people - have been threatened with extinction during the last decade. In areas where the tribes did not have a record of rebellion or represented no military threat, the regime ruthlessly stopped their seasonal movements, restricted their use of pasture lands, forced them to give up livestock farming or transferred them to areas hundreds of miles away. The great majority of these tribes have given up livestock farming and are on the verge of extinction. Ordinarily, no more than 20% of them, in practice, accept to be transferred to other areas.

In Fars, where nomadic tribes are very important, the regime has tried to subdue the tribes and suppress the seeds of revolt amongst them. Economic plans designed to settle these tribes have not (except in very special cases such as those on the Moghan Plateau and amongst the Shahsavan tribe) had any appreciable effect in ending their deprivations. For instance, in Fars the regime has embarked on a scheme, costing a huge amount of money, but after a few years it has managed to settle only about 1,000 families.

Such schemes are not likely to bear fruit in the near future, considering the difficulties facing the tribes. Restrictions on tribal movements together with drought have

destroyed millions of animals in the past two years. Only a bloody suppression by the regime combined with the absence of leadership has prevented a revolt amongst small and large tribal groups alike.

Nomadic tribes are the most deprived section of the Iranian rural population. They lack all kinds of social amenities, such as medicine and education, and are in dire need of the basic necessities of existence. The ruling cliques do not have any speedy answers to tribal miseries. Whenever tribal deprivations are on the increase, the regime resorts to the ultimate weapon of military suppression and employs preventive tactics to nip the thought of revolt in the bud. Nevertheless, this deprived mass of the tribal population exhibits a very important feature: they are, in varying degrees, the only existing military force on the side of the mass of the Iranian people. Despite the regime's continual efforts to disarm them, nomadic tribes have kept their arms, and arms smuggling is rife in tribal areas. These non-governmental forces have always stood against the regime - a stand necessitated by the special feature of their life. Their methods of production and way of life, as well as tribal discipline and the historical traditions of nomadic tribes, have always run counter to a power being imposed from outside. Let us not forget the formidable tribal clashes with Reza Khan* and his newly-established modern army; their hatred of the army and of any government armed force; their need for a free and nomadic life; their unrestricted use of pasture lands and their forays into var-

*The present Shah's father - ruled 1921-41.(T)

ious villages. Political and military movements that used to undermine the regime and would culminate in interminable civil wars, are all factors that will set the tribes not against the Khans or against factory owners, but against the regime and its military might. This is a very special feature of our society to which the armed movement cannot remain indifferent.

What were the special features of tribal revolts?

(a) A revolt would begin with hundreds and sometimes a thousand men taking part in it. It would affect the whole life of one or more tribes, thus bringing into the open one or more rebellious tribes.

(b) With the start of a revolt, the regime's rule over the rebellious tribe would cease and would be replaced by that of a Khan, or a combination of Khans. The rebellious tribes would attack villages, parishes or even towns ruled by the regime and plunder them.

(c) The Central Government would dispatch military force to suppress the revolt. The force would initially try to clear the villages and towns of tribal elements and then push them back to mountainous tribal areas. In the distant past, government forces for such military sorties consisted wholly of those tribes who were faithful to Central Government. However, during the past fifty years, the army and the gendarmerie have been deployed for this purpose, although they have always comprised large elements of tribal forces faithful to the Central Government.

(d) The revolt would come to an end either by deceiving the Khan (by Central Government) or by colluding with him, thus smashing tribal rebellions in the area. In any case, the spilling of blood, the ensuing collective banishment of the culprits and the subsequent high-handedness of the regime, would heighten the feelings of hatred thus preparing the grounds for the next revolt.

The last tribal revolt took place in Fars in 1962 with a following of a few hundred men. The Booyer Ahmadi tribe was the main springboard of the revolt. To smash the revolt, the regime deployed the airforce, airborne units and special forces. Although this represented a fearsome military force, it did not play the main role in suppressing the revolt.

The older arm of the regime, namely, the gendarmerie, despite its limited military character, played the main role by using its long experience in such revolts and by employing its long-established tactics of deceit, treachery and the tactic of attrition. The hungry Baluchi tribes were a cheap source of strengthening government forces. The revolt failed to draw the support of other big tribes in the area, such as the Qashqai.

The main weaknesses of this revolt, like any other tribal revolts, were that the rebels conducted the war within a limited area, their general lack of awareness and an absence of effective leadership. The aim of the revolt, being confined to the interests of the feudal Khans, was not sufficient to arouse other tribal masses and peasants.

The age-old conflict between tribes and Takhteh Gapoo* villages is still a factor that helps to weaken tribal revolts. Considering the real possibilities for armed struggle amongst various tribes, tribal force will no doubt play a role in the long process of revolution. The lack of awareness of this force can, in some cases, turn them into a counter-revolutionary force, playing into the hands of the regime. The revolutionary movement cannot afford to remain indifferent to this problem. Nevertheless, a realistic assessment must be made as to how far it is possible for the movement to exploit this fertile ground. In this connection, the following facts seem to be noteworthy:-

(a) At the moment there is no real link between the underground movement and the different tribes; there is in fact a wide gap between the two. Although the tribal masses are pulling themselves more and more away from their reactionary leadership, the movement, being dependent on urban forces, has no real chance of filling this leadership vacuum.

(b) In tribal areas there is no real possibility of forming the sort of guerrilla cells we have already talked about. Any non-tribal group within a tribal area is doomed to failure. Armed struggle in tribal areas must necessarily enjoy the support of the people from the very beginning. Therefore, there exists no exceptional possibilities for the movement to prepare for direct armed struggle in tribal areas.

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*These tribes, unlike nomadic tribes, lead a settled life within a specified area. (T).

However, should there exist a chance for progressive elements, with tribal connections, to start armed struggle in a tribal area, the following points should be noted:-

(a) The undertaking must be begun on a small scale. A small unit, enjoying the support of the people of the area, has a considerable advantage over the enemy. The existence of a rebel group in an area will not lead to the wholesale destruction of villages and the people living in them, whereas in a classic tribal revolt the regime will make the area uninhabitable.

(b) Urban forces must co-operate with local forces and strengthen them. Guerrilla organisations must deploy all their resources to support such a movement politically and militarily.

(c) A tribal guerrilla unit must not remain confined within its own tribal area. Rather it should be familiar with surrounding areas so that in case of need it has a bigger area in which to manoeuvre.

(d) From the start, the unit should engage in propagating the cause of revolt amongst the tribal people.

Quite apart from this exceptional possibility, the continuation of an urban armed movement will certainly have its effect on the tribal population. Due to the importance attached to rural revolts by tribes, the beginning and subsequent expansion of armed struggle in the countryside is bound to have a considerable effect on pushing tribes towards revolt. They will reckon that if it is poss-

ible for a "load of urban dandies"* to challenge the might of the regime in the woods and mountains, then there is no reason why they, a people with a considerable history of revolt and a tradition of bravery, should not do the same and release their pent-up feelings of hatred.

If in present conditions it is not feasible for the movement to exploit the favourable grounds for struggle amongst the tribal population, it will undoubtedly do so in the future when a complete political atmosphere rules over the urban areas and the armed struggle in the rural areas begins to develop, thus engaging the main part of the enemy's military force. This will provide a suitable opportunity for military revolts by the tribes. In such an eventuality, the revolutionary movement will do its utmost to deploy this considerable force to smash their common enemy.

Armed Struggle Waged by the Oppressed Nationalities of Iran

Our country is composed of many different nationalities, some of whom, while suffering from the effects of imperialism as a whole, are also oppressed by government bodies imposed upon minority peoples by the ruling clique. Thus they suffer a dual oppression. Needless to say the oppressed masses of these nationalities are not in conflict with each other. The real contradiction that exists and occasionally flares up, is that between the mass of a minority people and the administrative bodies of the regime, who are in the main staffed by

*A traditional way in which tribes and other rural people have always assessed town-dwellers. (T).

members of the majority nationality.

Although the Turkish people of Iran are under Persian cultural oppression, they have always enjoyed some distinguishing features that greatly reduce their oppression and, like the Persians, they exhibit the characteristics of a ruling people. Hence, one can notice a distinction between the Turks and other oppressed minorities.

At the moment, the peoples suffering national oppression are: the Kurds, the Baluchis and the Arabs. In all these three cases there are grounds for armed struggle. The features of national oppression imposed on these people are:-

(a) Economic oppression: These nationalities are by and large in a state of relative economic and social backwardness, and their bourgeoisies have hardly developed at all. Local capital and investment belong mainly to the ruling nationality, and resources are exploited either by the regime or by non-local capitalists. Their standard of living compared to that of the ruling nationality is extremely low. Remnants of feudalism and livestock farming are common features amongst all minority nations, and the great majority of them are connected with settled or nomadic tribes.

(b) Political oppression: The regime does not consist of a proportionate number of people from amongst these nationalities and the higher echelons of military and administrative heirarchy are drawn disproportionately from the ruling nationalities. No attention is paid to their social and political leaders except for

ceremonial reasons. The most reactionary elements, devoid of any national feelings, have been employed by the regime, with whom they collude against their own people. There is hardly one army officer from an oppressed nationality, let alone any high-ranking army commanders.

(c) Cultural oppression: Their national languages are under increasing pressure from the ruling nationality. No writing or reading is allowed in the minority languages. This policy has had dire consequences for the oppressed peoples, including a rise in illiteracy, lack of specialist cadres, and a scarcity of educated people which leads to their exclusion from high office. On the other hand, social backwardness, a tendency towards hard manual labour and the setting up of working parties to perform simple work are more prevalent amongst the oppressed nationalities.

In the case of the Kurds and Baluchis, there is an added element, namely, religious oppression. These two minorities are both Sunni Muslims* and their main religious establishments are situated abroad. The regime, which suppresses Shia* religious leaders in order to perpetuate its dictatorial rule, practices religious bigotry towards minority people in order to deprive them of what is their one factor of unity, especially if that people lacks a strong outside support. The Kurds do enjoy such a support and the Baluchis do not; hence the regime's religious pressure on the latter.

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*Sunnism and Shiism are two sects in Islam, the second being the state religion in Iran. (T).

However, not all the factors that pave the way for opposition by minority nationalities are attributable to national oppression. The following factors are also decisive in developing a national liberation front amongst the oppressed nationalities:-

(1) The people amongst whom a national movement is growing are those who are divided by the existing borders. The Kurds, Arabs and the Baluchis, all have this distinctive feature. Their movements have a connection with those outside the borders of Iran.

(2) They all have a history of struggle and tribal revolt, and during the past decades they have risen against Central Governments.

The Kurds

At the time when various parts of Iran were ruled by local Khans, the Kurdish Khans had political and military control over their own areas, and the Khans' relations with the Persian Courts were in effect a means of exerting national oppression over the Kurdish people. The backwardness of the society as a whole, the lack of a powerful central army, cultural limitations, educationaal weaknesses and the non-existence of a powerful central administration, were all factors that prevented a truely thorough imposition of national oppression. But, with the start of the new era, elements of pressure began gradually to increase in the central regime's structure.

In all the rebellions that took place in Kurdistan, one can detect elements of a national struggle. Such as the revolt led by

Ismail Agha Shakak. However, the national movement in Kurdistan gained a distinctive importance in the last decade. After the formation of the Kurdish Democratic Party and the setting up of an autonomous government in Kurdistan in 1944-45, the Kurdish national movement assumed a progressive character and continued independent of Khan-inspired rebellions.

The Kurdish national movement in Iraq during the past few years has had a direct effect on that of the Iranian Kurds. The Kurdish leader, Mulla Mustapha Barzani, exploited the situation that had developed in Iraq in order to expand the movement and, despite the anti-imperialist struggle of the Iraqi Government and other Arab nations, demanded the restoration of Kurdish national rights. The Arab bourgeois and petit-bourgeois supporters of the regime displayed the usual nationalistic narrow-minded attitude in the face of Kurdish demands. The result has been nearly ten years of war which has been damaging to both sides.

One cannot condemn the Kurds in these wars since they have merely been demanding their national rights. The group of Talebani and his friends, who had stressed the anti-imperialist and contradictory nature of the war, broke away from Mulla Mustapha, but failed to secure the support of the mass of the Kurdish people. They merely managed to open the way for the reactionary elements in the Kurdish movement and lost their own control over events. Ultimately, Talebani and the others joined the ranks of the majority.

Iran's role in this divisive war has been to sow the seeds of mischief on behalf of the imperialists. Self-government for Iraqi Kurds was plainly damaging to the Iranian regime; and success for the Kurds would have meant the start of an Iranian Kurdish movement*. Diametrically opposed to the stand of the Iranian regime, the anti-imperialist movement in the region, together with the liberation movement in Iran, demanded a speedy end to this fratricidal war and the restoration of self-government to the Kurds.

The presence of reactionary Kurdish Khan coupled with an extreme nationalistic tendenc in the leadership of the movement has had a diversionary effect on Mulla Mustapha, who has rushed to exploit the conflict existing between the regimes of Iran and Iraq. It is impossible otherwise to explain the Mulla's action in handing over to the regime of Iran, comrades such as Soleiman Moini and other devoted comrades who were working to liberate the Kurds in Iran and who were subsequently killed. Such tactics have had a damaging effect on the Mulla's standing in the eyes of progressive Kurds.

A further factor in the Kurdish movement is the continuing influence of opportunism amongst Marxist-Leninist groups. The Kurdish Democratic Party (K.D.P.) of Iran has so far failed to shoulder its revolutionary duties vis-a-vis the Kurdish people. The reason has been the Party's long association with the Tudeh Party, and the effect of those factors which have pushed the latter along a deviationary line. Unlike the Tudeh Party, the K.D.P.

*This was written prior to the re-start of the war between the Kurds and the Iraqis in April 1974. (T).

enjoys considerable prestige amongst progressive Kurdish elements. This, therefore, imposes important duties on Kurdish revolutionary elements: the duty to undertake the fundamental reform of progressive groups and organisations; the duty to guide progressive forces along a revolutionary path; and the duty to isolate the incurably opportunistic elements in the movement.

The importance of national movements by oppressed nationalities, chiefly that of the Kurds, to the revolutionary movement as a whole, can be seen in the following points:-

(a) These movements face a regime which is dependent on world imperialism; therefore, they automatically adopt an anti-imperialist stand. The revolutionary movement can influence these movements and strengthen their progressive features, thus forming a united front with the oppressed masses of the minority peoples against the regime.

(b) From the very beginning these movements enjoy the mass support of oppressed nationalities, and are regarded as an indispensable force in the fight against the enemy.

(c) The movements have very strong backing behind the lines, in the form of mass support from all their people, which is almost impossible to suppress, especially as they enjoy the backing of other similar peoples just outside the Iranian borders. Regional and world contradictions will quickly affect the situation; they will expand the dimension of these conflicts and will draw in all the regime's forces.

(d) The unity of all the peoples of Iran, and an end to bourgeois and petit-bourgeois narrow-mindedness regarding the problems of nationality, is the cornerstone of solidarity and unity of all the peoples of Iran in a free and democratic society. It is the duty of the revolutionary movement to act for the realisation of this goal.

However, as was the case with the tribal movement, there are difficulties here that must be overcome. The revolutionary movement is not able to take direct action in this sphere. Elements connected with Kurdish and other nationalities should deploy most of their resources to set up liberation movements for their own respective peoples, thus pavin the way for the unity of the peoples' liberation movements of Iran. Relatively speaking, these elements are bound to get far more results by working amongst their own people than thóse that accrue to the movement from society as a whole.

As well as acting through elements connected with various nationalities, the revolutionary movement can, through established organisations, get in touch with the leaders of national movements and put some military force at their disposal, even if as a symbolic gesture.

The progressive backgrounds of the Kurds provides an important factor for a fundamental link between the revolutionary armed movement and the Kurdish national movement.

The revolutionary armed movement believes that the masses of various Iranian nationalities, who support their own respective national

armed movement, will play a decisive and undeniable role in shaping the future of our country. Every opportunity must be exploited to expand and unify these movements.

The Baluchis and the Khuzestani* Arabs

The Baluchis are the most deprived people of Iran. They too have a tradition of revolt and rebellion against Central Governments. The border drawn up by the British imperialists divides this people between Pakistan and Iran. Both regimes have frequently engaged in suppressing this people. The last bloody massacre of the Baluchis took place during the rule of Ayub Khan in Pakistan.

The Baluchis have always demanded their national rights within a unified Iran. The regime of Iran has always paid less attention to this people than other minority nationalities. However, the regime is beginning to feel the danger represented by the Baluchis.

Pakistan's defeat in the war with India in 1971 and the independence of Bangladesh has endangered the imperialist-orientated regime in Pakistan. The regime in Iran, being the closest ally of Pakistan, is apprehensive about the weakness of its eastern ally. The fear is bound to be transformed into a tangible reality by the Baluchi national movement.

The position of the Khuzestani Arabs also has similar features to those of the Kurds and the Baluchis. Here too life is on a

*Khuzestan is the oil-rich province in the south of Iran. (T).

tribal basis and the people are seriously deprived. They live in the richest part of Iran but are deprived of the basic necessities of life.

In the past, Khuzestani Sheikhs, headed by Sheikh Khazal, were able to preserve their self-Government by accepting British protection. However, the political position of the region, plus the role of the military regime of Iran, ensured a different fate for Sheikh Khazal from that which befell other Sheikhs.

The contradictions between the Arab minority on the one hand and the ruling nation and the regime, on the other, are dominated by the following factors:-

(a) the traditional conflicts between the Arab and the non-Arab Iranians;

(b) the huge and expensive oil resources of Khuzestan which have made the geographical separation of the area from Iran unacceptable even to other Iranian nationalities;

(c) Arab nationalism in the region has a great attraction for Khuzestani Arabs;

(d) the connection that exists between some Khuzestani Arab movements and the Iraqi regime as well as the Ba'ath Party;

(e) the treachery and collusion of the tribal Sheikhs with imperialism in the past;

These factors have caused the revolutionary movement to show reluctance in approaching the Khuzestani Arab organisations. Of course,

this is not a postive approach to the problem. In the present conditions, the separatist tendencies of some rightist nationalistic groups cannot even find grounds for development. Such tendencies will only act against the regime and no-one else.

The revolutionary movement cannot, on the basis of such tendencies and groups, write off all movements by Khuzestani Arabs. The revolutionary movement has a duty to help directly or indirectly, in the formation of a progressive movement amongst the Khuzestani Arabs.

In order to wage a total war with mass participation of the people against the enemy, the revolutionary armed movement attaches a special importance to the movements of the oppressed nationalities of Iran. The start of these movements will force the regime and its imperialist overseers into an extensive military engagement; will push it into regional crises; and will ultimately destroy its military and economic reserves. The power of the masses will be incorporated in these national movements. To achieve a mass movement, the revolutionary armed movement must also achieve solidarity and unity with the national movements.



BIZHAN JAZANI

Bizhan Jazani was born in Tehran in 1937. He became actively involved in politics from the age of 10, and at the age of 16 he was imprisoned for the first time immediately after the C.I.A. directed coud d'etat of 1953. From then on he was frequently in and out of prison during which he suffered all kinds of medieval and modern tortures meted out by the Shah's regime. In 1963 he formed an independent Marxist-Leninist group together with some other comrades who had risen against the treachery displayed by the leadership of the Tudeh (Communist) Party. This was the first group that had recognized the necessity of armed struggle in Iran and began the long preparation for it. The group was discovered and attacked by secret police in 1967 and Jazani together with a few members of the group were detained. The remaining members of the group carried on the preparation and started the armed struggle with the Siahkal Resurgence in 1971.

Jazani, who was condemned to 15 years' jail, never relaxed his efforts to enrich the theoretical and organizational aspects of the armed struggle. He wrote many valuable treatises in prison, of which the present book is one. He also found time to show his talent in modern revolutionary painting and has left some memorable works including "The prisoner" and "The Siahkal".

The regime, being fearful of revolutionaries even inside prisons, schemed the murder of Jazani and eight other comrades and announced that they were killed "while trying to escape". This blatent lie and act of cowardice was unequivacably condemned by world opinion.

Bizhan Jazani was a tireless Marxist-Leninist revolutionary practitioner; he was at the same time an accomplished theoritician, historian and artist.

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