Fedai Guerillas speak
on Armed Struggle in Iran

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An Introduction to "Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic"

Ashraf Dehghani

I am pleased to have an opportunity to write an introduction to a book from which some of the most revolutionary activities in Iran germinated under the guidance of revolutionary theory and teachings embedded in it. It was precisely due to the implementation of the teachings of this book that around the end of the 1960's throughout the 1970's (from 1969 until 1979) the Iranian dedicated communists, i.e., the Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas, shone as Fadaee communists and penetrated into the people's heart so much so that the name of communism was revived in Iran and found a great credibility among the oppressed masses. The reprint of the English translation of this book now, which was translated into a number of languages including English during the 1970's, reminds us once again of its importance.

The full title of this book is "An analysis of the conditions of Iranian Society, and Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic" which later on was known and referred to as "Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic". The author of the book is comrade Massoud Ahmad-Zadeh; a great Iranian

Marxist-Leninist theoretician who played an immense role in the organization of the first urban guerrilla brigade and who led a number of urban guerrilla combats in which he himself participated. Comrade Massoud was captured by SAVAK (the political police of the Shah's regime) in the first half of 1970 and was subject to some of the most barbaric acts of torture to which he demonstrated an incredible resistance. During his trial, he was so brave that he exposed the Shah's regime by exhibiting the burn marks on his tortured body in front of the foreign journalists there. Comrade Massoud who, as a courageous communist, had heroically accepted death, was executed by the henchmen of the Shah's regime on March 1st 1972.

Comrade Massoud Ahmad-Zadeh wrote this book when stagnancy and lethargy overshadowed the people's struggles in Iran, and despite poverty and all sorts of social and political afflictions, there were no signs of any mass spontaneous movement. In other words, there were no significant actions on the people's part. As comrade Massoud explains in this book, the unbridled dictatorship of the ruling regime casting a constant strangulation upon society, the failures of the past political struggles due to their bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leadership and subsequently the frailty and betrayal of those leaderships, accompanied with the regime's hellish

propaganda spreading the seeds of hopelessness and despair among the masses, and also the absence of a communist party - or any other revolutionary organization - that could expose the regime, that could establish a lasting connection between workers and other oppressed masses, and that could demonstrate in practice that it was possible to fight, etc., were the major factors creating the above conditions. It must especially be stressed that the enemy's propaganda against the background of the incompetence and ineffectiveness of past leaderships, including "The National Front" and especially "The Tudeh Party", had created an abysmal distrust among workers and other oppressed people towards intellectuals, which became a major barrier for the proletarian intellectuals to establish a relationship with their own class. In this situation, many of the intellectuals had hid in their own shells and, while declaring the fact that the people's struggles had reached a dead end, saw no way out.

In the early 1960's, however, the failure of legal and peaceful methods of struggle had gradually posed the necessity of armed struggle in confronting the ruling dictatorial regime. And the realization of such a necessity was being amplified as the result of successful revolutions and armed liberation movements around the globe to the extent that the necessity of armed

struggle was reflected in the literature of those days. And even some activists started working towards initiating armed struggle in Iran, of course, without having theorized their understanding of such a method. Under these circumstances, the question for comrade Massoud and his group members posed itself as:

"How can we crack the colossal barrier of suppressive power; a colossal barrier created by the constant repression, by the lagging of the people's leadership, by the inability of the vanguard to fulfill its role, and finally by the hellish propaganda waged by a regime that relies on the force of the bayonet; a barrier separating the people from their intellectuals, separating the masses from themselves and separating the necessity of mass struggle from the existence of mass struggle itself? How can we crack this barrier and mobilize the sonorous surge of people's struggle?" This was a fundamental question which the theory of armed struggle formulated by comrade Massoud Ahmad-Zadeh in this book was able to answer. It should be noted here that the ideas laid out in this book are in direct relation with a pamphlet titled "The necessity of armed struggle and the refutation of the theory of survival" written by comrade Amir-Parviez Pouyan (one of the leading founders of the IPFG) in which the necessity of revolutionary intellectuals

engaging in armed struggle was analyzed and explained for the first time. In fact, this book is the conclusion of that valuable pamphlet.

Emphasizing upon Lenin's famous statement that "without revolutionary theory there could be no revolutionary movement", one can realize the fact that if the necessity of armed struggle had not been theorized in these two works, the armed movement in Iran could not have played the great revolutionary role that it did in Iranian society. In fact, aside from the IPFG, other groups that engaged in armed movement after the initiation of armed struggle by the IPFG, would always explain their resorting to the tactic of armed struggle against the Shah's regime by reference to the views of both comrade Massoud Ahmad-Zadeh and Amir-Parviez Pouyan both of whom were among leaders of the IPFG. Even "The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran" which back then was a revolutionary but non-Marxist organization would do so. This reveals with ever more clarity the importance of this book and its astonishing and extensive influence.

Needless to say that a part of this book is devoted to explaining the conditions of Iranian society at the time of its publication, as well as providing theoretical analysis and necessary directives as to how to change

the existing situation during those days towards the mobilization of socio-political movements in society and the role that the revolutionary intellectuals could play in this regard. This must be taken into consideration and the invaluable lessons latent in it must be underscored when reading the book. In fact, the implementation of this part of the theoretical teachings of the book, while proving its validity, brought about a number of brilliant outcomes in advancing the people's struggles. (*)

(*) Unfortunately, from around the end of 1974, a series of non-proletarian views deviant from Marxism worked their way into the Organization of the Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas. As the result, while a vast number of people were drawn to it, when it had the necessary possibilities to expand armed struggle towards the strategic instructions recommended in "An Analysis of the Conditions of Iranian Society, and Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic", this organization fell behind and was unable to materialize that strategy and took a different direction. However, a few years later with the masses' revolution (the democratic, anti-imperialist revolution of the people in 1979 which was defeated), and the subsequent opening of the political atmosphere, it became obvious that people across the country had a striking readiness and revolutionary energy to engage in armed struggle and to support and strengthen its course. Among other things, the popular armed revolt in both Turkmen Sahra (a region in the northeast of Iran near the Caspian Sea) as well as in Kurdistan (a region in the northwest of Iran), i.e., two regions with major agrarian issues, revealed more than any theoretical justification that, had it not been for the deviance from the path proposed by the organization of Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas, there were completely favorable grounds for guerrilla armed struggle evolving into a popular armed movement and toward the establishment of a people's army.

However, from the strategic point of view of armed struggle, one must understand that a fundamental part the book is based upon an analysis of the economic and social substructure of Iranian society; a socio-economic system that has remained intact to this day. Therefore, its general analyses as well as its practical suggestions concerning the necessary path of struggle towards a successful revolution in Iran, are all still valid.

The first fundamental issue pointed out in "An analysis of the conditions of the Iranian Society, and Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic" is that Iran is under the domination of imperialism, therefore a neo-colonial society. Comrade Massoud has elaborated on this issue from different angles. Having a deep understanding of Marxism-Leninism and of the nature of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism which is the age of its decay, as well as having a broad knowledge of Iran's contemporary history, he states: "Reliance on force and anti-revolutionary violence has always been an integral part of imperialist domination. Imperialism initiated its invasion of the East relying on its political and military force, which stems from its worldwide economic power." And he adds in the West, the bourgeoisie in its fight against feudalism first had consolidated its economic power and then was able to seize political power, whereas

here, imperialism (imperialist bourgeoisie), on the contrary, began its conquest of the East through its political and military might and then imposed its economic domination. In the East, in order to maintain its domination, and to challenge the national bourgeoisie as well as other sectors within the people's camp, imperialism had to suppress the democratic and progressive layers of society. Therefore, the domination of imperialist bourgeoisie in the East has always been accompanied by anti-revolutionary violence while the rule of the same bourgeoisie in the West has been collocated with democratic freedoms.

Two main imperialist powers that played an important role in the defeat of Iran's bourgeois-democratic revolution (The Constitutional Revolution of Iran, 1905-1911) were the Russian and the British imperialists. After the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia when the Bolsheviks exposed the disgraceful agreements of Russian imperialism with other imperialist powers, as well as exposing and nullifying the imperialist infamous treaties of the Tsarist regime imposed on Iran, British imperialism, which now had become the unrivalled power, was able to consolidate its political rule in Iran and turn this country into a neo-colonial society by staging a coup and then handing the political power, in appearance only of course, to Reza Shah Pahlavi. This form of

dependency to imperialism, which was a new phenomenon, fooled even some of the progressive forces. However, Reza Shah's regime, though appearing to be independent, in reality was but a full fledged servant to British imperialism, and was brought to power in order to safeguard the interests of its master in Iran and to pave the road to further the expansion of imperialist capital in Iran. Since then, this form of dependency (maintaining imperialist rule through a native government) still continues in Iran, despite all the events and changes that have taken place, including the fall of Reza Shah and the installment of his son Mohammad Reza Shah, the rise of the rule of American imperialism in Iran and its partnership with the British, and later on, the installment of the Islamic Republic regime in Iran which was laid out by American, British, French and German imperialists during the 1979 Guadeloupe Conference in order to deceitfully suppress the people's revolution in the name of revolution, and to preserve imperialist interests.

Comrade Massoud believes that with the establishment of imperialist domination in Iran, all the internal contradictions of our society were overshadowed by the contradiction between the people (which in his view consisted of workers and the petty-bourgeoisie in both country and town) and

imperialism. Therefore, while emphasizing this point, he states that "The problem of imperialist domination must be regarded not as an extraneous factor that plays some role, but rather organically as the basis for any analysis and elucidation." This correct dictum results in the conclusion that workers and other oppressed masses of Iran could achieve their rights only through a revolution against the ruling political regime and the complete eradication of imperialist domination in Iran.

One of the most important chapters in this book is where comrade Massoud presents his analysis on the Shah's so-called land reform and other reforms referred to as "The White Revolution" by the Shah (an analysis which the passage of time has further proven its correctness and perceptivity). In this analysis which was based on actual studies and personal observations conducted by comrade Massoud himself and the members of his group from a Marxist point of view, unlike some intellectuals who perceived those reforms in the interest of peasants and workers and other sectors of people and concluded that the reforms had reduced the intensity of the existing contradiction in our society thus the objective conditions for revolution did not exist, comrade Massoud proved that the objective of those reforms was but "the expansion of imperialist infiltration into both country and

town", and categorically argued that with those reforms the main contradiction in our society which is the contradiction between the people and imperialism had, on the contrary, grown deeper and greater, thus the objective conditions for revolution indeed existed. Therefore, the question of a social revolution was always on the agenda for comrade Massoud and his group. And, in fact, they considered the preparation for a revolution as their main task in hand as communist intellectuals.

With deep conviction to the fact that it is the people who carry out a revolution, comrade Massoud argues that, nonetheless, revolutionary intellectuals have a number of responsibilities towards the people which they must fulfill. Accordingly, a section of the book is devoted to the task of communist intellectuals or in other words the revolutionary vanguard towards the people. Comrade Massoud poses this task as follows: "Is not the historical task of the revolutionary vanguard to make use of conscious revolutionary practice in order to establish links with the masses so as to tap into the historic power of the masses and to bring that power, which is the determining factor, onto the actual and decisive battlefield of the struggle? The more complicated the conditions, the more powerful the suppressive forces of the enemy, the more urgently the question of the revolution is posed,

and naturally the more difficult will be this "tapping." Bearing this in mind, and following Lenin's teachings in regards to the necessity of bringing socialist awareness to the working class, and the necessity of forming an organization made up of professional revolutionaries, as well as other essential considerations on the question of revolution made by Lenin in his works including "What Is To Be Done?", comrade Massoud emphasizes on the difference between the conditions of Russian society during Lenin's time and that of Iran. He then points out that in Iran where dictatorship and anti-revolutionary violence originating from imperialist rule has prevented workers to even form their own trade organizations, and as described in detail by comrade Pouyan in his pamphlet; where under a violent dictatorship, revolutionary intellectuals are not even able to retain their own association through peaceful means let alone establish links with the masses and bring them into the arena, therefore, the way to "tap into the historic power of the masses" via peaceful preparation for a revolution and then at a particular moment mobilizing a mass uprising- as was the case in Russia- cannot be the path of revolution in Iran. Of course, comrade Massoud forewent the fact that even though the October revolution of 1917 overthrew the old regime through a mass uprising organized by the Bolsheviks at a unique moment, however, as we know,

the Russian bourgeoisie with the aid of the British and other imperialist powers imposed a bloody civil war on the Russian workers and the oppressed masses that lasted several years, and indeed, it was after winning the civil war that the Russian proletariat under the leadership of the Bolsheviks was able to consolidate and maintain its political power. That was why, in "Lecture on the 1905 revolution", Lenin confirmed the view that:

"... the impending revolution_... will be less like a spontaneous uprising against the government and more like a protracted civil war."

While rejecting any attempt to copy the paths of previous revolutions- be it the Russian revolution or Chinese, Vietnamese or Cuban revolution- comrade Massoud demonstrates in this book how dynamically he approaches and draws lessons from the experiences produced in those revolutions. He writes: "... since revolution in all societies occurs under a series of general laws ... all the past revolutionary experiences provide lessons which should be learned...". He then emphasizes that, the revolutionaries in any given country, however, must find the path to the revolution in their country by discovering the specificity of the objective conditions of their society, and theorize it. That is why, while stressing the importance of

revolutionary theory (addressing Régis Debray and those who, with an incorrect take on the Cuban experience, undermine the importance of revolutionary theory), he argues: "... borrowed political theory cannot become the proper guideline for revolutionary action."

The ingenuity and the ability of comrade Massoud in presenting a creative application of Marxism-Leninism applicable to the conditions of Iranian society resulted in his theorizing and demonstrating the fact that the path of revolution in Iran is a popular armed struggle which is initiated by politico-military cells consisting of the most class conscious revolutionaries; workers and intellectuals alike. A political group that organizes these cells, as a guerrilla or partisan force begins its fight against the enemy by resorting to armed struggle as a tactic, its aim being to mobilize and organize the masses. As a result, a guerrilla movement develops, within its process, into a popular armed movement, and by the might of the masses succeeds in seizing political power. Of course, the essential point stressed in the theory presented by comrade Massoud is that revolution in Iran can be achieved only through the leadership of the working class (a class that is equipped with its own ideology, I.e., Marxism-Leninism), and that no other class is capable of carrying out such a task.

In this book, the reader can observe comrade Massoud's profound understanding of Marxist concepts on the question of seizing political power. By referring to Lenin's statements "The basic question of every revolution is that of state power" (The Dual Power, Lenin) or "let us not forget that the issue of power is the fundamental issue of every revolution", comrade Massoud, while stressing that political power in Iran is in the hands of imperialism ruling through its puppet regime, I.e., the Shah's regime (and nowadays, the Islamic Republic), emphasizes that the army and other armed forces are the most essential instruments for the survival of imperialist rule in Iran, and that only by the destruction of this army and its auxiliary forces can the working class smash the state apparatus and seize political power. This is a fact that every state, as the instrument of organization of this or that social class, is capable of ruling mainly by relying on its armed forces. That is why Lenin states: "What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command. (State And Revolution, Lenin). With this knowledge, comrade Massoud criticizes the view that merely focuses on seizing political power without determining as to with what form of action and organization as the principal form of action and organization it can be achieved. He writes: "In a situation where one must precisely determine what

form of action and organization ought to be selected, is not evading the definition of the principal form of action a type of reformism?" And he adds: "Seizure of political power is a definite goal and its necessity is a universal fact. The question is that in seizing political power, what is the decisive factor? Now, if instead of responding to this need and determining the concrete path of action and the main method of struggle, we come forth to say that the goal is the seizure of political power and not the destruction of the army, that one should comprehensively intervene on all levels, that one should use all forms of struggle, etc., then we will have uttered generalities behind which lie hidden our incapability, our lack of courage, and our political ignorance." (Underlines are mine)

In the theory of armed struggle formulated by comrade Massoud it is clearly stated: "To defeat Reaction, the reactionary army must be smashed. To smash the reactionary army, a people's army must exist." It is also delineated in this theory as to what path can lead to building a people's army, where we read: "The only way to smash the reactionary army and to build the people's army is prolonged guerrilla struggle ... ." From the view point of this theory, guerrilla warfare which begins its process by forming politico-military cells, does not engage solely in military operations but rather carries out both

political and military tasks simultaneously. In other word, they are intertwined. Therefore, it is emphasized that, "a guerrilla war is necessary not only in terms of military strategy for smashing the powerful army, but also in terms of political strategy for mobilizing the masses." And that, "... the people's army also becomes the "armed propaganda" force. Basically, bringing political awareness to the working class and other oppressed masses, mobilizing and organizing them, building a communist party as well as people's army are all achievable through this process. Therefore, we read: "The political and military factors are fused together in an inevitable and organic way. On the one hand, the mobilization of the masses is the condition for the victory of armed struggle both militarily and politically. Yet, on the other hand, mobilization of the masses is not possible without armed struggle".

There are several other theoretical issues posed in this book which illustrate the communists' tasks towards the working class and other oppressed masses. For example, there are profound and educational points made in response to those who consider the revolutionary intellectuals resorting to armed struggle before the masses themselves commit to it as a non-Marxist-Leninist approach. We read, for instance: "The necessity for the conscious role and active

practice of the revolutionary vanguard has not been weakened but rather strengthened precisely due to the increasing role of the counter-revolution in the equation." Or in regards to the conditions in Russia- where the form of struggle was merely political before the eruption of the mass uprising- while giving an elucidative explanation suggesting that the Iranian communists, too, must act upon all the tasks regarded by Lenin as the tasks of communist revolutionaries, comrade Massoud argues: "The truth is that if the struggle against despotism, at that time, was fundamentally political, now the struggle against despotism is basically political-military". Or in particular, regarding the way by which the organization of professional revolutionaries as suggested by Lenin can be created, he writes: "If in Russia the true vanguard came to the fore as a result of a series of economic, political and ideological struggles, now in Iran, solely a political-military struggle is able to create the true vanguard."

In general, the point stressed in this book is the fact that, "armed struggle is that form of struggle which constitutes the groundwork of an all encompassing struggle, and only on such a basis do other various forms of struggle become necessary and useful."

Also, while drawing lessons from the Chinese,

Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions in this book, the author deciphers both the similarities and the differences between the path of those revolutions and that of Iran.

And lastly I must say that a careful study of "An analysis of the conditions of Iranian Society, and Armed Struggle Both a Strategy and a Tactic", will without a doubt prove as to how coherent the theory presented in this book is because it is based on irrefutable facts. Moreover, it will prove that because of its solid constitution, opportunists, as they have shown up to now, are not able to respond without resorting to misrepresentation and distortion. Furthermore, no unbiased reader will hesitate, after reading this book, to profess to comrade Massoud's vast knowledge not only of Iran's contemporary history, the history of the French, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions as well as the polemics within the revolutionary movement in Latin America, but also of the classic works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao some of which are discussed in this book with a thorough examination. In fact, it would be difficult not to be amazed by comrade Massoud's profound Marxist understanding and his ability to formulate an adaptation of Marxism-Leninism applicable to the specific conditions of Iranian society.

It must also be noted that as the result of the breakthrough that this brilliant essay made in Iran's New Communist Movement, and considering its luminous practical impacts, The Organization of The Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas received broad support and international unity from revolutionary movements around the world especially in the Middle East. In other words, this book and its influence reached those movements as well.

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Armed Struggle; both a Strategy and a Tactic

Massoud Ahmad-Zadeh

1. Circumstances of the Genesis and Growth of the New Communist Movement

In the recent decade, our country has witnessed a new phase in the revolutionary struggle of our people. Although the puppet regime has resorted to all means to subdue this struggle, from intimidation to allurement to imprisonment, torture and murder, it has constantly encountered an ever more obstinate wave of struggle. In place of any one fallen combatant, tens of others have risen, and in the process the combatants have gained more experience in the struggle. Most striking in the present struggle of the people is the unprecedented growth of the communist movement in Iran. It may be said that our society has not, hitherto, witnessed such a movement, whether in terms of its authenticity or in terms of its depth and extent. The regime, of course, has directed most of its blows against the communist movement and its combatants because communists are the most persistent revolutionaries and are armed with the international weapon of Marxist-Leninism. The communists attach more importance to and are more successful at organization than the other fighters. The

most outstanding evidence of the growth of the communist movement and its ever increasing strength are the fierce attacks carried out by the police and the S.A.V.A.K. (the state secret police) against communism. Periodicals such as Jahan Nou, books published by the regime, and the buffoonish act recently put on by such sold-out traitors as Nik-khah and Parsa-nejad well reveal the regime's fear of the communist movement.[1]

In the present phase, this movement is basically characterised by the simple gathering of forces, its spontaneous growth and its isolation from the masses.[2]

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1. Parviz Nik-khah, a member of a group with Marxist tendencies, was accused of complicity in an assassination attempt on the Shah in 1965. Nik-kah was sentenced to life imprisonment, but several years later he appeared on national television and cowardly renounced his previous opposition to the regime. Since then he has become an important advisor to SAVAK and a propagandist for the Shah's regime and against Marxism. Siavosh Parsa-nejad was once active in the student movement in Europe and had returned to Iran with the intention of struggling against the regime. A member of the Revolutionary Organisation of the Tudeh Party, he was arrested in 1970. Like Nik-khah, Parsa-nejad surrendered, claiming a conversion to the Shah's ideas.
2. What is being spoken of here is the stage of the birth of the communist movement. Presently, the communist movement has developed to the level where it determines specific directions for action; it transforms the simple gathering of forces into an organized one and spontaneous growth into conscious growth. It has now reached the level where it is engaged in the path-finding for the establishment of contact with the masses and their struggles.

To comprehend why, we must look retrospectively. The imperialist coup d'etat of the 28 of Mordad (August 19, 1953)[3] broke up all the national and anti-imperialist political organisations. The only force which would have been able to learn from this defeat and on the basis of which analysis adopt a new line relevant to the new circumstances and to take into its hands the leadership of the anti-imperialist forces that were actually ready for struggle was a proletarian party. Unfortunately, however, our people lacked such an organization. The leadership of the Tudeh Party, a mere caricature of a Marxist-Leninist party, was only capable of throwing its devoted militant cadres under the blades of the executioner before fleeing.[4] Thus, the

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3. The CIA engineered coup d'etat against the anti-imperialist premier Dr. Mossadegh which returned the current Shah to power.

4. The Tudeh Party was founded after the Allied Forces exiled the dictator Reza Shah in 1941. With a reformist line and petit bourgeois leadership, the Tudeh Party mobilised a significant number of intellectuals and other sections of the petit bourgeoisie as well as many workers since a workers' revolutionary organization was lacking. Eventually, the party claimed to be a workers' party. It participated in the reactionary government of Prime Minister Ghavam in 1946. After the attempted assassination of the Shah in 1949, the Tudeh Party was declared illegal and its leaders were arrested along with other opposition leaders. Later they escaped to Eastern Europe. During the anti-imperialist, democratic movement of 1949-1953 led by Mossadegh, the Tudeh Party opposed the nationalization of the oil industry and helped sabotage Mossadegh's premiership. Active support by the Tudeh Party's organization might have prevented the reign of terror that began with the coup d'etat of 1953. Even after the

organized struggle basically came to a halt and whatever did take place was conducted by the remnants of the shattered organizations within the framework of the same old methods. This resulted, above all, in the further suppression of those who were struggling.

Despite this situation, at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, the development of the contradictions and recurrent crises brought about a rapid and spontaneous organization of national forces, which principally gathered around the National Front and its affiliated organizations. But, in the general framework of defunct slogans and limited by paralyzing methods, these struggles were also unable to accomplish anything in the face of an enemy that understands only force and exists on the strength of the bayonet. Of course, one result of this situation was increasing awareness of the regime. Demonstrations and strikes were successively defeated, and although

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coup, a significant part of the Tudeh Party remained intact including army officers in strategic posts. While many courageous and progressive members of the party waited for the call to action, the leadership vacillated, giving the new regime time to ferret out the officers' organization and underground units of the party. Even though the leadership called for members to write letters of repentance, many resisted savage torture and preferred execution by firing the squad to surrender. With the betrayal by the leadership, many party members lost hope and some joined the regime while some sought new alternatives for continuing the struggle.

these experiences and the regime's actions gradually led to the changing of slogans (particularly reflected in the uprising of the 15th of Khordad June 5), the methods of struggle and the organizational framework remained same.[5]

Through this process, the organizations became extinct. The awesome image of the bayonet again

5. The socio-economic crisis in Iran during the late 1950's and early sixties weakened the regime and brought up a resurgence of the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles in 1960-1963. Associates of Mossadegh and small, liberal bourgeois and petit bourgeois groups that had been inactive or underground since the 1953 coup d'etat felt that the time was right to revitalize the National Front. Although Mossadegh was under house arrest, he was still quite popular among the Iranian people, especially the urban masses, who associated the National Front with Mossadegh. Thus many people in or near the big cities gathered around the National Front. In May 1961 a demonstration by the National Front in Jalalieh Square, Teheran, attracted over 100,000 demonstrators. Due to the inept leadership, the inadequacy of the old methods and slogans, and internal conflicts between different sections, this struggle failed. With the initiation of U.S. directed reforms (the "White Revolution"), the Shah could once again flex his muscles; he closed this chapter of reformist struggle with the massacre of June 5, 1963, and subsequent repression. The years 1960-1963 witnessed many demonstrators and other political actions resulting in thousands being jailed, universities ransacked, and students assaulted, beaten and injured. Several, such as Kolhar (a student) and Khanall (a teacher) were murdered. The struggle of these years was a necessary phase in the history of the Iranian people's struggle. It showed that new theories, new methods, new organizations and new leaders were needed if the anti-imperialist, anti-dictatorial struggle of the people was to succeed. Ahmadzadeh and Pouyan and their theory of armed struggle are the results of this realization.

established its domination everywhere. But, the new circumstances differed from those of the period after the coup d'etat in one fundamental respect: no one could any longer trust the pervious slogans, the old methods of struggle nor the outmoded forms of organisation. The Tudeh Party, which had not been able to exemplify a communist party even for a moment during its existence, now had all its organizations demolished, its devoted cadres subdued, and its traitorous leaders on the run. This party was not even capable of providing a theoretical or frame of reference for the later phases of the struggle. Thus, in a situation of terror and repression; in a situation where our people's struggle had met with defeat; and in a situation where revolutionary intellectuals essentially lacked any theoretical or background experience, the task had to be undertaken afresh. The new communist movement got on its feet and the simple gathering of forces was initiated. The objective was not to muster force in order to strike again, but to analyze the conditions in order to find a new path for struggle. Throughout the years before this, the treacheries and errors of the Tudeh Party had completely destroyed its reputation, and no revolutionary intellectual was willing to co-operate with it. Under these circumstances, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois organisations, were able to attract these revolutionary intellectuals. This situation finally

led to the penetration of the ideologies and tactics of the left petty bourgeoisie into these organizations, however, their related ideologies also lost their credibility.

If during these periods the boundaries between Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and revisionism and opportunism on the other had not yet crystallised on an international scale, the distrust of the Tudeh party might initially have led to the distrust of communism also. It became clear, however, that the place of genuine Marxism-Leninism was indeed vacant and that it must be occupied. Hence, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, as the theory of revolution, became the sole gathering point for the most persistent revolutionaries. Thus, there appeared an extensive and striking acceptance of Marxism-Leninism by the revolutionary intellectuals, and acceptance which, was now moulded with the name a thoughts of Comrade Mao. In the process of the exchange and publication of communist works, particularly the works of Mao, communist circles and groups came into existence. Under the influence of revolutionary experiences and peoples' wars, the (theoretical) tendency toward mass armed struggle increased day by day. Meanwhile, the Cuban experience also attracted attention. There appeared those who wanted to engage in armed struggle by

forms not completely known to us.[6] Before they began, however, they were arrested and thus were unable to provide the movement with any positive or negative experiences. Therefore, despite the claims of a few, the defeat of the groups who wanted to engage in armed struggle did not by any means indicate the inappropriateness of armed struggle because these defeats stemmed from a series of organizational errors and from the failure to consider the rules of secrecy. When the simple gathering of forces commenced, any form of contact between the peoples' intellectuals and the masses had been cut off in practice, and there was no serious link among the intellectuals themselves, including the proletarian intellectuals. Now, after the inner development of the communist groups, they accept that their further growth is dependent upon serious contact with the masses, real participation in their daily lives and also the building of a bond among the communist groups as a first step towards their unity. While the subjective elements for real progress have been developing, the prospect for the unity of groups and real contact with the masses seems dim. Any attempt on the part of the groups to establish contacts with other communist groups and to

6. Ahmadzedah probably refers here to Jazani's group. Although at the time this Ahmadzedah knew little of this group, later Ahmadzedah's group joined with the remnants of Jazani's group to form the Organization of Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas (OIPGF).

participate in the people's daily lives and political struggle (which, of course, is certainly not extensive) exposes them to the danger of police attacks.

Our group, too, has gone through this same process. Our group was also formed with the immediate goal of studying Marxism-Leninism and analyzing the socio-economic conditions of our country. In its development, the group reached a junction: must the establishment of the proletarian party or the formation of an armed nucleus in the countryside to initiate guerrilla warfare be pursued? We believe that the revolutionary honesty required confronting this question seriously. Unless we had honestly believed that the initiation of guerrilla war would lead to defeat, rejection of this path would have been tantamount to the absence of revolutionary courage and to the fear of action. Our group, nevertheless, did reject this path. In my opinion, however, the rejection was fundamentally based on a series of theoretical formulas which, we understood to be universal and unalterable, and it stemmed less from a serious theoretical and practical analysis of reality.[7] Moreover, our theoretical approach to the present conditions,

7. To prevent any possible misunderstanding here, it is necessary to make a point. The discarding of general Marxist-Leninist principles is not intended here. The issue at stake is rather the mechanical perception of these principles and the failure to correctly relate them to specific conditions. For instance, the general principle, "The victory of the revolution is

our estimation of the purported changes[8] carried out by the regime, the rile of agrarian reform etc, did not lead us to turn away from that choice but rather confirmed it. Although we believed that armed struggle was inevitable, still we thought that the purported changes gave the role of the town and the proletariat more importance and that the countryside could no longer, as in the past, serve as a base for the

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impossible without a revolutionary party," in no way means that the revolution cannot start without the party, or even that the revolutionaries cannot conquer power; for, "the victory of the revolution" must be understood within a wide historical context because the victory of the revolution is clarified not only by the conquest of state power, but also by its maintenance and by the continuation of the revolution. The examples of Cuba and Congo Brazzaville are clear testimonies to this assertion. Contrary to "Che", who said that the Cuban Revolution seemed to contradict the above mentioned Leninist principle, the Cuban Revolution itself also verifies its correctness (as does the Congo Brazzaville case); as we saw, the maintenance and continuation of the revolution rendered the establishment of a proletarian party inevitable.

In our approach to Debray, other factors such as the errors, deviations and obscurities of his writing played a role. Yet, it is a good idea to deal more with the dilemma (the party or the armed struggle without the party) and to elaborate on it. Previously, the dilemma seemed natural, for our understanding of the party and its necessity was superficial and we did not distinguish between its content and its form. But now, the dilemma no longer exists for us. How do we deal with this apparent dilemma today? We declare that we must not wait for the party; rather, we must engage in armed struggle. It will be asked, then, what are you going to do with the party? We answer that the party comes up as a specific, not general, issue in the process of struggle. For what reason do we want the independent party of the proletariat? To guarantee proletarian hegemony, to continue the revolution to the socialist stage and...we are certain that in order to continue the revolution to

revolution. This view channelled our thoughts toward forming the proletariat party.

But, the purported changes were also being evaluated from two other directions. The Tudeh Party wanted to justify its inactivity and its reformist line by professing that in any case "positive" changes had taken place; that by whatever means, the feudal mode of production had been dissolved to a great extent; that the transition to capitalism had begun; that new contradictions and class divisions had appeared in society; that the proletariat had started its development and so on. They reasoned that the

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hegemony...the unity of the proletarian groups and organizations in a united party is necessary, but the question is not specifically and concretely facing us now. With the knowledge that the question will come up, we will, at the proper time and in the process of the people uniting around these organizations, establish the independent party of the proletariat. But in the meantime, let the armed struggle commence. The union of the groups and organizations is also at issue from the standpoint of the more massive political-military organization of the struggle. Again, we will solve this problem in the process of action. Hence, the establishment of the proletarian party is not a specific end to which the armed struggle serves as a means, but an indicator of a new phase in the course of the struggle. It is a phase during which the guarantee of proletarian hegemony will be posed as a concrete and pressing question. In the past, we accepted the necessity of armed struggle in general, and the formation of the party as a specific question was under consideration. Today, we accept the necessity of the formation of the party in general, and armed struggle, as a specific question, is under consideration.

8. "Purported changes" refers to the reforms promised by the "White Revolution"

assistance of the so-called socialist camp to the puppet regime and, in their opinion, to the people of Iran would lead to the development of industry, to the acceleration of the development of the proletariat and to the reduction of the regime's dependence on imperialism. This ridiculous reasoning is not a theoretical error but a justification for their true tendencies. According to their view, since changes had taken place and new contradictions had come into existence, there remained a long way to go before a "decisive struggle". What could be done was to gather forces by the undertaking of a series of reformist measure, to demand the hastening of positive steps on the part of the regime, and to attempt to force the regime into a series of tactical retreats. The key link in the struggle under the present conditions, therefore, was not to topple the "Shah's dictatorship" into the "Shah's democracy."

The "Revolutionary Organization"[9] which had split from the Tudeh Party precisely because of its opportunism, revisionism and its connectionist line

9. The "Revolutionary Organization was formed by cadres of the Tudeh Party in the mid-sixties. Though supporting armed struggle, the Revolutionary Organization initially had no specific line. Later it took a Maoist line with the idea of copying the Chinese Revolution in Iran. The Revolutionary Organization contended that Iran was a "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" society, thus ignoring the growth of capitalism in Iran. It contended that the main contradiction facing the people of Iran was feudalism.

and in order to preserve the perspective of armed struggle, along with many other revolutionary communists took the diametrically opposite view of the "purported changes." In their view, any acknowledgement of change and development was an indication of besmirching the necessity of armed struggle, of evading the decisive struggle, and marked the onset of concessionism. For this reason, they believed that feudalism was still intact and that the objective conditions for armed struggle existed. But this conviction, even though it contained an element of revolutionary authenticity and respect for the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism, was at variance with reality. To deal with the present realities requires a different viewpoint. The "Revolutionary Organization," due to its confinement within the framework of a series of theoretical of formulas, has not been able to correctly deal with the paradox of the "acknowledgement of change or armed revolution" and therefore denies change (just as our reliance on theoretical formulas had caused our relatively correct evaluation of the claimed transformation to be applied in an illogical manner to be a specific conception of the Party and its formation).

But what is the correct approach? Can it not be said that some changes have taken place, that feudalism has essentially disappeared, but that armed struggle has

not lost its necessity? That the moment of the decisive struggle has not been postponed? Has the disappearance of the contradiction and the appearance of a new one made a change in the principle contradiction of our society? Or, has it intensified the same contradiction?

2. Examination of the Present Socio-economic Conditions and the Question of the State of the Revolution

Since the Land Reform constitutes the basis of the so-called "White Revolution", we will stress this phenomenon. In this brief examination, we will show that the objective of the Land Reform has been the expansion of the economic, political and cultural domination of bureaucratic comprador capitalism in the rural areas. Its goal was not that of remedying any of the numerous ailments of the peasantry (so as to eliminate the grounds for revolutionary potential in the rural areas by directing peasant support toward the regime). Rather, due to its nature, the regime can only suppress the grounds for revolution in the countryside through ever-increasing economic, political and cultural oppression and suppression, though the branching of its influence into the rural areas and through the expansion of the dominance of the corrupt bureaucracy.

The alleged goal of the Land Reform was to give the land to the peasantry. Let us examine how this was executed:

1. Land was to go only to those peasants who were working on the master's land as tenants or

sharecroppers. In this way, all land on which any wage earners worked or which was under mechanised cultivation was exempt from redistribution. As a result, vast lands, including the extensive holdings of princes, princesses, big-shot bureaucrats, and the entourage of the bureaucracy were not redistributed, and thus a considerable segment of the peasantry remained landless. We must remember that in the midst of and prior to the height of the Land Reform, many landowners evicted the sharecroppers and allegedly engaged their land specifically in mechanized cultivation. By so doing, or on this pretext, their land also remained immune from redistribution, Several others had extensive sections of their land exempt from redistribution by granting their land to their offspring and relatives.

2. In many areas where land was redistributed, land did not fall into the possession of all the peasants because all the peasants did not have share-cropping or tenant contracts or, in other words, were not peasants but were working on the land as wage earners. It seems that according to the government's own statistics (which undoubtedly cannot be considered reliable) more than 40% of the Iranian peasantry has been deprived of land forever. In any event, some land was redistributed. Some landlords sold their land, and others rented it to the peasants. Naturally, as far as

possible, the best lands remained in the hands of the landlord and the worst lands were left for the peasants.

3. Finally, in some cases feudalism was preserved. Therefore, we now witness the following dominant forms in land relations. To a great extent capitalism has come into existence. Even though this form of production existed before the Land Reform, its development was accelerated by the Land Reform. Exploitation is carried out in its most savage form, and the agricultural labourer has indeed no financial security whatsoever. He is given or denied work according to the whims of the landlord who still remains a master. Some large landowners, particularly those of the entourage of the regime and the royal court, including the princes, in no way refrain from encroaching upon and appropriating the lands of the small landowners. We have been witnesses to numerous clashes between the large and small landowners. Whenever these two forms of ownership stand side by side, an intense contradiction appears. It is those large landowners who are able to drill deep walls when confronted by water shortage by means of their capital or through their relations with finance capital and the use of loans. The small landowner is obliged to rent their tractors and purchase their water; the large landowners sell him water and rent tractors to him on their own terms.

Small landownership as a form of production has, in the main, come into existence as a result of the Land Reform, although it had existed in some areas previously. Its main enemy is governmental bureaucracy and comprador capital subjecting the peasants to oppression and exploitation in various ways through the Ministry of Land Reform, the cooperatives, the various banks and recently the joint-stock agricultural companies. Every year at harvest time, the Land Reform agents appear to collect the payment on or rent of the land that has been sold or rented to the peasants. Day by day the oppressed peasants, usually unable to remit the demanded amount, assume a heavier burden of debts and loans with tremendous interest rates. Wherever the peasants have shown courage and refrained from the remittance of their payments, they have been immediately faced with the bayonets of the gendarmes, the repossession of the land by the Ministry of Land Reform and other suppressive measures. The formation of the joint-stock agricultural companies, which the peasants rightly resist and whose essence they feel with their flesh and blood, must in effect be termed a conspiracy for the deprivation of ownership by the small landowner, the inevitable consequence of the Land Reform. The cooperatives, by dispensing loans, selling seeds and manure, and by pre-purchasing the produce of the peasants, do not spare the peasant's last pennies.

Finally, one must consider the areas where the feudal system has remained intact.[10]

The objective of the so-called "White Revolution" was to expand imperialism's domination in the town and country. The "White Revolution" took place at a time when the puppet regime was faced with the people's anti-imperialist movement, precisely when the urban masses had risen against it. How could it be that the regime consciously set out to abolish its main class

10. In the discussion of the relations of productions dominant in the rural areas of Iran, the uneven development of production in the towns and in the villages must also receive specific attention. Nevertheless, we can speak of the dominant form of property that is the same small-holding property in Iran being intensely subjected to the rule and oppression of the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie. (Here, the lease-holding alternative, which has come into existence as a result of the Land Reform, is considered a part of the small holdings because the leaseholder is presently one step behind the small-holder. According to the Land Reform laws, this leaseholder will become ether an unfortunate small-holder or a more miserable agricultural worker or a city vagabond.) Yet, when we talk about a qualitative change in the expansion of the rule of comprador-bureaucratic capitalism (either in the town or in the village), exactly the essence of the so-called "White Revolution," we should not automatically identify capitalism with industry and the expansion of industrial production. Basically, the expansion of the rule of capitalism in countries such as ours is distinguished by the expansion of bureaucratic and finance capital long before the expansion of industry. Even though this kind of expansion, whether we wish it or not, will bring after it industrial expansion, as to how and to what extent, we see that it will be very disorderly, incomplete and bureaucratic in form.

basis (i.e. Feudalism)? Must it be concluded that the elimination of feudalism is merely a lie? Or must it be said that feudalism was not the mainstay of the regime? If feudalism was not the mainstay of the regime, then which economic power was reflected by the political power of the state? And which power's interest was primarily promoted?

In actuality, this power is world imperialism. The bases for the political dominance of feudalism were weakened by the Constitutional Revolution, and feudalism fundamentally forfeited its political rule to imperialism through Reza Khan's coup d'etat. The economic interests of the feudals could only be safeguarded by a central power supported and guided by imperialism. This central power, while suppressing the people's anti-imperialist movement, prepared the ground for the expanding influence of imperialism. Feudalism was, in reality transformed to dependent feudalism and wherever it rejected this dependence, it was subjected to the aggression of the central power. With the expanding domination of the central power and influence of imperialism, feudalism was more and more removed from its positions of power. As soon as the feudal economy stood in contradiction to imperialist interests, the regime, facing no serious difficulty and without needing the people's force to suppress feudalism,[11] basically buried what had already

turned into a corpse. In effect, Reza Khan's coup d'etat was incomplete without the "White Revolution".[12]

A comparison of the regime's land reform with a classic bourgeois land reform depicts well the disparities of the two and their different consequences.

In the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx evaluates bourgeois land reform and its role as follows: "After the first revolution had transformed the peasants from semi- villains into freeholders, Napoleon confirmed and regulated the conditions on which they could exploit undisturbed the soil of France which had only just fallen to their lot and stake their youthful passion for property. But what is now causing the ruin of the French peasant is his smallholding itself, the division of the land, the form of property which Napoleon consolidated in France. It is precisely the material conditions which made the feudal peasant a smallholding peasant and Napoleon an emperor. Two generations have sufficed to produce

11. Feudalism must not be mistaken for the feudals or the big feudal elements who were the functionaries of state rule. As a whole, the existence and the interests of these individuals have gradually become dependent not on the maintenance of a feudal economy, but on the durability of imperialist domination.
12. The regime boasts that the Constitutional Revolution was incomplete without the "White Revolution".

the inevitable result: progressive deterioration of agriculture, progressive indebtedness of the agriculturist. The "Napoleonic" form of property, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the condition for the liberation and enrichment of the French country folk, has developed in the course of this century into the law of their own enslavement and pauperization. ...The economic development of smallholding property has radically changed the relation of the peasants to the other classes of society. Under Napoleon, the fragmentations of the land in the countryside supplemented free competition and the beginning of big industry in the towns. The peasant class was the ubiquitous protest against the landed aristocracy, which had been overthrown. The roots that smallholding property struck in French soil deprived feudalism of all nutriment. Its landmarks formed the natural fortifications of the bourgeoisie against any surprise attack on the part of its old overlords. But in the course of the nineteenth century, the feudal lords were replaced by urban usurers; the feudal obligation that went with the land was replaced by the mortgage; aristocratic landed property was replaced by bourgeois capital. The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allowed the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages.... The bourgeois

order, which at the beginning of the century set the state to stand guard over the newly arisen small-holdings mulched with laurels, has become a vampire that sucks out its blood brain and throws it into the alchemist cauldron of capital. The Code Napoleon is now nothing but a code of distraints, forced sales, and compulsory auctions.... The interest of the peasants, therefore, are no longer, as under Napoleon, in accord with, but in opposition to the interests of the bourgeoisie, to capital. Hence, the peasants find their natural ally our leader in the urban proletariat, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order...".[13] (author's emphasis)

While in France two generations had to pass before "the progressive deterioration of agriculture" and "the progressive indebtedness of the agriculturist" were perceptible; here [in Iran], even a few years were too many for the peasant to find himself under a heavy burden of debts. The payment on the mortgage of the little land that had been given to him was enough to keep him in debt for years. The poor conditions of agriculture and drought and water shortage that small landowners faced from the very outset were sufficient to throw him ever more into the snares of large usurers and the tentacles of the financial rule of the

13. K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Progress Pub., Moscow, 1967. Pp 108-109.

comprador bureaucracy. It is not his smallholding but the control by the bureaucracy and the large comprador bourgeoisie that are the cause of his misery.

While in the past, the comprador bureaucracy supported feudal exploitation and the peasant recognized it in the form of suppressive force of the corrupt and oppressive bureaucracy's gendarmes, now, the peasant sees himself directly entrapped in the bloody grip of bureaucy and the comprador bourgeoisie. In France, smallholding at the outset was "the condition for the liberation and enrichment of the country folk." After the destruction of feudalism, after the complete establishment of the bourgeoisie in the town and its independence from the peasant's support, and moreover after "landmarks" no longer "formed the natural fortifications of the bourgeoisie" and had lost their significance as the protector of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the "attack on the part of its overlords", two generations had to pass until "the feudal lords were replaced by urban usurers: the feudal obligation that went with the land was replaced by the mortgage; aristocratic landed property was replaced by bourgeois capital;" thus the free and rich peasant of the past again saw himself entangled in the new fetters and exponentially increasing poverty.

In Iran, from the very beginning, the new organs of exploitation that were busy plundering the town and which stood ready to attack the countryside immediately replaced the feudal lords. Feudal obligations still continued, this time in the form of instalments and rent. Bourgeois capital, which existed in the villages before, was solidifying its foothold quickly. Here, the landmarks were not the natural fortification of the regime against the attack of the old overlords since in reality feudalism had lost its overlordship a long time ago and had neither political nor military power.

In any case, the peasant in the past saw a separation between feudal oppression on the one hand and the bureaucracy and the gendarme on the other, despite having repeatedly experienced their collaboration and unity. This time, he sees the two in the same cloak, that of the government's agents, the governmental and semi-governmental banks, the Ministry of Land Reform, the gendarmes and more recently the forest and natural resources rangers. As such, the peasant rightly regards his calamity as stemming not from his smallholding, but from the oppressive rule of governmental bureaucracy and its suppressive tools. The determined resistance of the peasant against the formation of the joint-stock agricultural companies illustrates this point.

The peasant is realizing now that the principle cause behind his past calamity is the government, the same government whose support of feudal oppression and suppression he had witnessed repeatedly. The more aware peasants recognized the "Land Reform" to be "politics" from the very beginning and experienced these "politics" quickly. Those peasants who dared to learn the motive of the regime and who resolved independently to chase the landlord off the land without "Aria Mehr's"[14] fatherly support, did not, of course, encounter the landlord who chose to flee, but were blocked by the gendarmes' bayonets and suppressed.

Therefore, the so-called "White Revolution" not only did not solve any of the numerous problems of the great majority of the country folk, but in large measure incorporated the contradiction between the peasant and the feudal lord into that between the peasant and the bureaucracy and the suppressive governmental apparatus. Thus, by intensifying this

Contradiction and rendering it more conspicuous, it aided the peasant in recognizing the real enemy and its true nature. The severe contradiction between a major segment of the peasantry and the forest and pasture

14. "Aria-Mehr" or "Light of the Arians" is one of the titles the Shah has given himself.

rangers (rangers created for the protection of the forests and pastures that have been "nationalized" to lay the grounds for the entrance of comprador capital in order to fill the pockets of a handful of parasites), a contradiction which has repeatedly led to armed clashes, illustrates the deep contradiction between the peasantry and the governmental apparatus, which is dependent on imperialism.

But what is the course of events in the town? While the bourgeois revolution had resulted in the severing of the feudal shackles binding the urban masses hand and foot, in the abolishment of heavy feudal obligations, and in free competition of industry, here, the "White Revolution" coincided exactly with the suppression of the urban masses and the consolidation of a central power that had for years kept them in chains. It was carried out precisely to consolidate imperialist rule and the interests of imperialist monopolies[15] to increasingly suppress national industry, the national bourgeoisie, and the petty

15. As frequently stated by Iranian revolutionaries, the main goal of the "White Revolution" was to intensify the penetration of capital into Iran and thus further integrate the Iranian economy into the world capitalist system. This process has continued persistently following the "White Revolution." A significant example is the conference of 35 U.S. lords of monopoly capital held in Teheran in 1970 to further investigate ways to exploit Iranian resources and human labour power. During the conference different strats, especially students and

bourgeois artisan and shopkeepers; and finally, to further intensify the exploitation of the proletariat.

For years, the town was experiencing the oppression, suppression, exploitation and poverty emanating from imperialist domination. The keeper of this domination was the same force that was instituting the "White Revolution". While in bourgeois revolution, it was necessary for the newly liberated masses to experience the new conditions for decades in order to understand their nature and feel the new bonds and new suppressive rule over them, here, the urban masses had understood all this beforehand; the events of 1963, particularly the uprising of the 15th of Khordad [June 5] were responses to the pretensions of the regime. If afterwards, the waves of struggle ebbed, it was not due to an acceptance of the regime's lies, but to the violent suppression of the struggle. How was it possible to believe in the so-called "White Revolution" in the face of increasing poverty, continuous bankruptcy, the intensification of exploitation by the violent domination of foreign capital and the fattening of a handful of comprador capitalists and big-shot bureaucrats at the expense of the bankruptcy of the commercial and industrial

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religious leaders, demonstrated in opposition to this sell-out by the Shah. A religious leader, Ayatollah Saidi Khorasani, who distributed leaflets protesting this conference, was arrested and ultimately tortured to death.

bourgeoisie and the brutal exploitation of the workers? Thus, while two generations sufficed until "the interests of the peasants, therefore, are no longer, as under Napoleon, in accord with but in opposition to the interests of the bourgeoisie, to capital," and "hence, the peasants find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order:" here in Iran, from a historical standpoint, the peasants like the past semi-serfs in a semi-feudal, semi-colonel country find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat. In fact, as a result of the expansion of comprador capital into the rural areas, a closer relationship between the peasantry and the proletariat has developed. In the town, too, the brutal rule of comprador capital more than ever has caused the contradiction between the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie and specifically the petit bourgeoisie, to be overshadowed by the contradiction between them and comprador bureaucratic capitalism and imperialist domination. This process has developed through the confinement of any capitalist mode of production to that of comprador capitalism and through the bankruptcy and gradual elimination of the national bourgeoisie caused by the imperialist monopolies.

Why do such fundamental differences exist? Actually, the explanation of any change and transformation in

society would be futile and nonsensical without considering the principal contradiction of the existing system, namely, that between the people and imperialist rule. The problem of imperialist domination must be regarded not as an extraneous factor that plays some role, but rather organically as the basis for any analysis and elucidation.

Reliance on force and anti-revolutionary violence has always been an integral part of imperialist domination. Imperialism initiated its invasion of the East through dependence on its political and military force, which stems from its worldwide economic power. Depending on the fore-mentioned anti-revolutionary violence, it disrupted the natural development as compared to that of Western societies. As we know, the bourgeoisie, subsequent to its gradual take-over of the positions of economic power, engages itself in the take-over of the positions of economic power, engages itself in the take-over of the positions of political power so that it may consolidate its economic power. But here, in the East, imperialist economic domination was possible only through political and military aggression and any continuation of economic domination has been inevitably shaped by anti-revolutionary violence. Hence, in Reza Khan's coup d'etat we observed the establishment of a central power without it reflecting a bourgeois economic

power. (The central power and the measures taken by it confused some people into thinking that Reza Khan's rule represented the national bourgeoisie.) Thus, on the one hand, we encounter a bourgeois political superstructure with the cutting off of the influence and power of the local feudals; on the other hand, we witness the continuation of feudal exploitation. At this time we witness the power of capitalist monopolies before the development of capitalism has yet begun. The feudal mode of production is changed without any corresponding change in the political rule. Feudalism is eliminated without giving the peasantry the opportunity to feel free for a moment. Feudalism is eliminated while the national bourgeoisie, more than ever, is also suppressed. In fact, with the establishment of imperialist rule, all the internal contradictions of our society were overshadowed by one contradiction—the contradiction that spreads the world over, the contradiction between the people and imperialism. In the last half century, our country has witnessed the expansion of this contradiction: the daily augmentation of imperialist domination. Any form of transformation must resolve this contradiction. The resolution of this contradiction means the establishment of the people's sovereignty and the downfall of imperialist domination.

3. On the Question of the Stage of Revolution

In solving the question of the stage of the revolution, attention must be paid to these particulars. With the establishment and expansion of imperialist domination, there is first the division of political power between feudalism and imperialism followed by the transformation of feudalism into dependant feudalism and, finally, the destruction of feudalism. Under these conditions, the national bourgeoisie, not yet developed and weakened by the pressure of foreign capital, loses the possibility of organizing as a class and in the end gradually dies out. Hence, the national bourgeoisie cannot compose an independent political force. The struggle against imperialist domination (i.e. international capital) contains some elements of the struggle for a socialist revolution within this anti-imperialist struggle and develop in the course of the struggle. The national bourgeoisie is hesitant and unable to mobilize the masses because by its nature it is incapable of persistence in such a struggle and because of the historical conditions of its existence and its ties with foreign capital. Also, the peasantry, because of its material conditions in production, can never form an independent political force. Thus it must either place itself under the leadership of the proletariat or entrust itself to the bourgeoisie. The

only force remaining is the proletariat. Although the proletariat is quantitatively weak, it is very strong qualitatively and in its potential for being organized. The proletariat, as the most persistent enemy of imperialism and feudal domination and relying on the international theory of Marxism-Leninism, can and must assume the leadership of the anti-imperialist movement. It is in this regard that the fundamental differences between the new bourgeois-democratic revolution and the classic bourgeois revolution unfold. Although the immediate goal of the new bourgeois-democratic revolution is the end of imperialist domination and the destruction of feudalism and not the abolition of bourgeois private property, in the process of its development, the embryo of the socialist revolution is implanted in its womb and nurtured there very rapidly by the anti-imperialist character of the struggle, the mobilization of the masses, the proletarian leadership of the struggle, and the fact that any duration of capitalist relations gradually bring about close ties with imperialism followed by the domination of imperialism. In this manner, only a few years after the victory of the Chinese revolution, the proletarian leadership was transformed into the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the socialist revolution commenced in practice. As summed up by Chairman Mao, the Chinese experience serves as an example.[16] But now that feudalism has been eliminated

in our country, has the Iranian Revolution left its bourgeois-democratic stage and entered into the socialist phase? In my opinion, posing the question in this manner is incorrect. Regis Debray expresses a significant point in this regard: "The nub of the problem lies not in the initial programme of the revolution but in its ability to resolve in practice the problem of state power before bourgeois-democratic state, and not after. In South America the bourgeois-democratic state presupposes the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus."[17]

In reality, during the last half century of the revolutionary struggle our people have faced a state power that has assumed a growing bourgeois character in the process of increasing imperialist domination. As a result, the political dependency of feudalism has always been dependent upon their anti-imperialist struggle. Thus, the more feudalism as a mode of production has retreated and therefore the more the state has become bourgeois in form and character, the more significant the socialist elements of the revolution have become. The struggle against the domination of world capital has further turned to the struggle against capital itself, and the necessity of

16. It would be better to quote Chairman Mao's own words, but due to their inaccessibility, this was impossible.
17. R. Debray, Revolution in the Revolution?. Monthly Review, N.Y., 1967.

proletarian leadership has become more evident. Since the Land Reform has not benefited the peasantry, such slogans as "the land should be given free to those who work on it" and "abolish all state tributes" remain the fundamental slogans of the revolution for the peasantry. On the one hand, considering the limited foundation and the increasing limitations of imperialist rule and, consequently, its ever increasing reliance on anti-revolutionary violence as the principle means of preserving its domination; and on the other hand, keeping in mind the broad mass base of the revolution and the fact that the condition for the victory of the revolution is the victory of protracted armed struggle, revolution actually commences with the most mass oriented and generalized slogans and programs. In the course of this protracted armed struggle, which proletarianizes the masses objectively and subjectively, the revolution will succeed and continue through the most radical and revolutionary measure. The (protracted) armed struggle is the environment within which the socialist elements of a bourgeois-democratic revolution develop rapidly. This

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18. It is necessary to mention a few points about a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society and the stage of the revolution. In our opinion, the assertion that imperialist rule, from an extensive historical point of view, is in basic contradiction with feudalist rule does not require verification. According to Marx, world capitalism will disintegrate the existing relations (to different degrees wherever it steps and will endeavour to bring the

is the lesson that the Chinese Revolution has given, that the Vietman Revolution shows, and finally that the Cuban experience, despite its shortness, has proven.[18]

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society under its domination within its universal system. In our opinion, the coexistence of imperialism with feudalism is a temporary and tactical one. Whether one wishes it or not the feudalist system will gradually be dissolved in the belly of the world capitalist system. Imperialist domination, in its colonial form, initiates a violent suppression of the traditional relationships in society. In its semi-colonial form, there is conciliation and concession between imperialist rule and that of feudalism. And in its neo-colonial form, the society under consideration will enter the complete imperialist system as an organic part. Imperialist domination passes through a spiral development wherein the neo-colonial society is a repetition of the colonial society at a more developed level.

Concerning the stage of the revolution, we can thus say that there are three kinds of national democratic revolutions: the democratic revolution of a colonial society, the democratic revolution of a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society, and the democratic revolution of the neo-colonial society. The democratic revolution is a national one because it opposes imperialist rule and embraces the people as a whole. Each one of these stages of revolution is one step closer to the socialist revolution. But, aside from the question of the stage of the revolution as an economic issue, there is also a political issue, which is related to the practical process of the revolution. The question of where and how the revolution will continue and enter the socialist phase depends precisely on the question of whether the proletariat and its vanguard have been able to assume the leadership of the struggle and have united the peasantry and the left petty bourgeoisie under their leadership.

4. Our Line

As we have said, in the course of its development and in its analysis of the experience of the Cuban people, our group confronted the following question: is not the path of the revolution the formation of the guerrilla nucleus and the initiation of armed struggle? Can the revolution be tackled without the party? We became familiar with the Cuban experience essentially through Regis Debray's "Revolution in the Revolution?" Without a deep understanding of Debray's thesis and the Cuban Revolution and, again, without a clear view of the objective conditions of our people's struggle, we rejected Debray's thesis and the Cuban way. Why did we permit ourselves to reject them without having on hand a comprehensive analysis of the conditions of our country and without really knowing the inner elements of the Cuban way? In my opinion, what caused this was a theoretical error stemming from a superficial acceptance of a series of theoretical formulas based on past revolutionary experiences. This point will later be shown.

In this way, we accepted that our goal and that of the other communist groups must be the creation of the Marxist-Leninist party. Immediately, the question was posed: what should be done to create such a party?

Two fundamental duties then confronted us. We and the other groups would have to educate the cadres for the future party amongst the masses. That is to say, by working amongst the masses and participating in their life of struggle, particularly that of the proletariat, we had to prepare them for the acceptance of such a party.

At this point, the initial differences of our circumstances with those of past revolutionary experiences (China and Russia) became evident. We had not observed, until now, the question of the necessity of the creation of the party not being posed without the practice of struggle itself demanding it, without the grounds for it existing amongst the workers and anti-proletarian masses. The elements and constituent parts of the party and its cadres, the groups and organizations that already participate in the life and practical struggle of the masses in proportion to their capabilities, were all always at hand. Always, the economic and political struggles of the masses and the relationship of the conscious vanguards with the masses existed; yet, the dispersed nature of these struggles, their shortsightedness and halfway measures, demanded the vast organization of a party. But while we recognized the necessity of creating the party, due to the absence of spontaneous mass movements, due to the non-participation of that intellectual force in the life and practical struggle

between Marxist-Leninist groups, we found ourselves facing a difficult path to the formation of the party. We came to believe that the creation of one organization out of various groups would have significant weaknesses and heterogeneity due to the absence of participation in the actual life of the masses, the groups' confinement to the intellectual environment and the lack of common goals and perspectives. This would not be the true unity of groups based on active political life and active links with the masses, but a knocking together of groups that sooner or later would fall apart as a result of a series of tactical or strategic differences. In fact, we were seeking a party that from the outset, or very soon thereafter, could be transformed into the real vanguard of the masses. Since we also believed in the inevitability of armed struggle, the party would have to prepare the conditions for armed struggle, convince the masses that armed struggle was the only way and then begin the armed action. We believed that only such a party would have the right to determine the strategy and tactics of the struggle. If we had paused to consider the disparity of circumstances (specifically that between Russia and ours) then perhaps, while realizing that the path to the creation of the party was difficult, we would not have been so careless in failing to define this path. Could we not have believed that the condition for forming such a party, for

participation in the real struggle, and for the creation of a force capable of acting as a genuine vanguard is the armed action itself? If we had not committed the error of identifying urban armed insurrection with protracted guerrilla warfare, we could have regarded the Cuban Revolution as an experience worth studying, justly believed that the spreading of Marxism takes place on the basis of reality and not vice-versa, and at the same time claimed that the insurrection is the work of the masses.

Why is the insurrection the work of the masses? Didn't the Cuban experience show that a small armed motor force can initiate the insurrection and gradually lead the masses to insurrection?[19] Here, of course, the concept of insurrection does not connote an armed urban uprising (characterized by the sudden and massive armed movement of the masses together with

19. We never intended to deny the generality of the principle that "insurrection is the work of the masses." Yet, this principle must be interpreted from a dialectal viewpoint; for example, the specific forms and formulas expounded by Lenin concerning the uprising should not be considered as universal. In Lenin's view, the vanguard cannot call for the uprising unless it actually has behind it the majority of its class and the people. In other words, a true vanguard, which has become the real vanguard in the process of the struggle has the right to call for the uprising, whereas, in the Cuban situation, the vanguard could not have come into being unless it had itself initiated the uprising. Under these circumstances, "the uprising is the work of the masses" means the increasing advance of the uprising completely depends on the increasing support of the masses. Lenin's era could not have a "conception of the initiation of the

a leadership) but the protracted armed struggle to which the masses are gradually drawn.

These problems were posed at a time when the group understood that it had to direct its attention outside of itself, to reality, the masses and other communist groups. On the one hand, however, we had to contend with police attacks and searches that were being carried out against communist groups, and, on the other hand, the problem of contact with the masses seemed so difficult and seemingly beyond our means. How could we establish contact with the proletarian masses? Should we not reach the workers where they have organized themselves as a class in the organs (ranging from small proletarian circles to unions, syndicates, etc...) that have come into existence in the course of the spontaneous struggle?[20] It is through the course of this spontaneous struggle and class

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uprising" because it did not have a conception of the protracted guerrilla war. At that time, the insurrection constituted a short process in time that would begin with the participation of the broad masses. But now, we regard the insurrection as a people's war that is set in motion by the small "motor" of the armed vanguard.

20. The intention is not to deny the possibility of establishing contacts with the workers. We ourselves have enjoyed the co-operation of a considerable number of our proletarian comrades. The point is that the possibility of contacting the workers, in its classical form and in its real meaning, does not exist. It is possible to work amongst the workers. One can get recruits from them, of course with ample difficulties and low outcome, but one cannot conduct mass work amongst the workers. One cannot attempt propaganda and circulation.

organization that, on the one hand, circles of workers come into existence which have a wider horizon and contemplate a broader and more protracted struggle; circles of working masses, circles in contact with the revolutionary intellectuals who are the source of political consciousness. On the other hand, in the course of its development, this spontaneous struggle more and more approaches a political struggle. Parallel to this course, the progressive workers' circles develop and expand, becoming more receptive to political propaganda and political organization.

Socialist consciousness, too, is introduced to the workers through the intellectual circles' contact with the workers' circles and with the masses. In this context, a comparison between the development of the Russian intellectual circles during the early years of the twentieth century and the present intellectual circles of our society can bring out the differences in conditions between the two. Lenin portrays a typical circle in Russia at that time in the following way:

"A student's circle establishes contacts with workers and sets to work; without any connection with the old members of the movement; without any connection with study circles in other districts, or even in other parts of the same city (or in other educational institutions); without any organization of the various

divisions of revolutionary work; without any systematic plan of activity covering any length of time. The circle gradually expands its propaganda and agitation. By its activities it wins the sympathies of fairly large sections of workers and a certain section of the educated strata which provide it with money and from among whom the committee (League of Struggle) grows its sphere of activity quite spontaneously; the very people who a year or a few months previously spoke at the students' circle gatherings and discussed the question, "Where do we go from here?", who established and maintained contacts with the workers and wrote and published leaflets, now establish contacts with other groups of revolutionaries, procure literature, set to work to publish a local newspaper, talk of organizing a demonstration, and finally, turn to open warfare..."[21]

But what are the conditions we face? It is best to consider the development of an intellectual circle in Iran:

On the basis of the study and exchange of communist publications, a few individuals come together. At first, the study constitutes the basis of the circle's endeavours, subsequently a certain amount of

21. V. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done," Selected Works, Progress Pub., 1970. pp. 198-199.

objective study of society is pursued. In general, the group has no extensive contacts with the workers nor does it attract the attention of even a small section of the working class. In practical terms, they have no role or active relation with the people's spontaneous movements, which are themselves sporadic and limited. Publishing local journals, organizing demonstrations, and particularly waging open warfare must not even be mentioned; it is during this limited development that many of these circles become targets of police blows under police-dominated conditions and are shattered.

What is the cause of this disparity of conditions? In the case of Russia, the existence of a spontaneous mass movement that bespeaks the preparedness of the objective conditions for revolution provided an inexhaustible source of experience for the masses and for the conscious vanguard revolutionaries who were in contact with it and seeking to guide it. This spontaneous mass movement, which was initially and essentially economic, by way of its militant organs and in the course of its development, gave the working masses their class organizations and gradually as it became politicized created within itself a number of more persistent and more revolutionary proletarian circles. Moreover, this movement along with the efforts of the revolutionary intellectuals established

contacts with the intellectual circles. The secret and semi-secret workers' gatherings to which it gave birth constituted the objective foundation for and the source which nourished the intellectual force of the proletariat, and on the other hand, the intellectual force of the proletariat then took leadership of the spontaneous movements. Gradually, the subjective conditions for the revolution developed and grew on the basis of these same spontaneous movements and through social awareness and the conscious leadership furnished at the outset by the circles of revolutionary intellectuals and later by the proletarian party. It was with this same background and through these same organizational forms that the revolutionary organization, which had established a direct and active relationship with the masses, came into existence.

In this light, the question that confronted the revolutionaries was this: Should they head the mass movement or not? Should a movement that is fundamentally economically and politically short-sighted be transformed into a well-rounded political movement? These intellectual-proletarian circles as a single unit had to form an organization of united professional revolutionaries and by way of leadership of all forms of struggle with a political context, push the movement forward. An organization of professional revolutionaries that could guarantee

"continuity," eliminate fragmentary and dispersed work, devise a prolonged and steadfast program for an all-encompassing, far-reaching struggle and guide the masses in this struggle had to be established.

In effect, masses of workers had been drawn into the struggle, had to some extent acquired class organization and had also produced their own organs of struggle. Alongside these organs, proletarian circles that were extensively in contact with the masses of workers and which enjoyed the possibility of vast circulation and propaganda had been created. Now the question was this: Should this spontaneous struggle be transformed into a struggle which would be political in every aspect or not? It is precisely the method of approaching this question that distinguished the revolutionaries from the economists, the advocates of piecemeal efforts, and the followers of the spontaneous movement. According to Lenin, the economists reasoned that:

"The working masses themselves have not yet advanced the broad and militant political tasks which the revolutionaries are attempting to "impose" on them; that they must continue to struggle for immediate political demands, to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government."...Others, far removed from any theory

of "gradualness," said that it is possible and necessary to "bring about a political revolution," but this does not require building a strong organization of revolutionaries to train the proletariat in steadfast and stubborn struggle, all we need do is to snatch up our old friend, the "accessible" cudgel. To drop metaphor, it means that we must organize a general strike, or that we must simulate the "spiritless" progress of the working-class movement by means by means of "excitative terror." Both these trends, the opportunist and the "revolutionaries," bow to the prevailing amateurism; neither believes that it can be eliminated, neither understands our primary and imperative practical task to establish an organization of revolutionaries capable of lending energy, stability, and continuity to the political struggle."[22]

But here in Iran, there are no traces of spontaneous mass movements as such and if there are, from the standpoint of time, place and scope, they are dispersed and limited. Here, there are no signs of class organizations or proletarian organizations. As a whole, the masses of workers are not involved in any course of struggle. And if among them, there appear conscious elements who organize themselves into small circles, they, too, lack the possibility for

22. Ibid. pp 201-202.

circulating, propagandizing and mass work. In effect, the absence of extensive spontaneous movements and difficult police-dominated conditions (undoubtedly the two are inseparably connected) have kept the workers far from any kind of struggle and thought of political struggle, and have deprived them of all experience, class organization, and even trade-union consciousness. As a result, workers' circles, which contemplate political struggle are scarce and there are virtually no serious links existing between the intellectual circles and those workers' circles and in no turn between these circles and the masses of workers. Therefore, the masses of workers are not prepared to accept struggle and political consciousness. Only subsequent to years of spontaneous economic and reformist struggle can the worker gradually become prepared to welcome political struggle, socialist consciousness, political and party organization. Here, where any form of reformist movement is immediately suppressed, it is natural that the masses of workers are increasingly separated from political struggle because political struggle requires persistence, organization, and continuous self-discipline and demands consciousness and devotion. In this situation where the worker is inevitably preoccupied with struggling for his daily bread and water, he neither has the opportunity for accepting political struggle nor does he, in fact, accept it. Thus, we cannot witness the

extensive emergence of the workers' circles in the absence of a spontaneous movement.[23]

Yet, is it absolutely true that always and under all conditions spontaneous movements reflect the abundance of the objective conditions for revolution, and that spontaneous movements indicate the imminence of the revolutionary phrase? Can the opposite be also true? That is, should we deduce that the lack of broad and spontaneous movements indicate a lack of objective conditions for the revolution, and that the revolutionary phrase has not yet arrived? In my opinion, no. Under the present conditions in Iran, the lack of spontaneous movements does not mean a lack of objective conditions for revolution. We, in studying the objective conditions in our country, demonstrated that any recourse to "lack of preparedness of the objective conditions for revolution" reflects opportunism, compromise and reformism. It reveals a lack of political courage and is a rationalization for inaction. I think we must

23. Wherever there is oppression, there is also resistance. But, what kind of resistance? A restricted and dispersed one. So, it is better to speak of the stagnancy of the resistance and the spontaneous movement and its lack of development.
When we say that the workers are, inevitably, preoccupied with their bread and butter, all we mean is that the intolerable daily work and the more intolerable family troubles do not even allow the workers the time to think about the issues, in conditions where the work atmosphere lacks any actual combative movement.

essentially keep in mind that the causes of the absence of mass movements are. On the one hand, the violent repression, constant and lengthy terror imposed by the imperialist dictatorship, which together with the broad political and ideological propaganda of the reaction, constitute the principle factor in the survival of imperialist domination; and on the other hand, the crucial weakness of the revolutionary forces in organization and leadership. Even when the masses were ready, these leaderships never succeeded in drawing them into the struggle on a broad basis. Because of incorrect leadership the masses were led to defeat. All of these elements taken together have created an atmosphere of inactivity, defeat, despair, and capitulation, what R. Debray calls "the old burden of fear and humiliation." But what enables us to say that the objective conditions for revolution exist? Did we not show, by analyzing the objective situation, that the masses are potentially inclined, due to their living conditions, to carry the burden of the anti-imperialist revolution? Is not this enthusiasm and ardour of the revolutionaries, these tireless quests of intellectual forces of the revolutionary and progressive classes in search for the path to revolution, these recurring police raids, these lockups, these tortures, and these assassinations, all the subjective reflection of the readiness of the objective conditions for the revolution? Unless the existing objective conditions

necessitated the finding of a solution for the problems of the revolution, how would it be possible otherwise for the problems to be posed to widely, and for so many circles and militant groups to exist, drawing their members from the oppressed classes? And finally, are not these sporadic outbursts of the popular movement proof of the existence of the objective conditions for revolution?

And what is our road? Today, sitting in wait for the extensive spontaneous mass movement to then guide it, without having engaged in revolutionary action, without attempting to thoroughly furnish the subjective conditions through revolutionary action itself, is tantamount to following the spontaneous movement in circumstances such as those in Russia. It signifies precisely the acceptance, in practice, of the existing situation. At one time, we reasoned that the existence of scattered groups corresponded with the absence of spontaneous mass movement of the masses; that the existence of a vast revolutionary organization corresponded with the presence of broad mass movements and with the growth and intensification of contradictions. But now, it must be said that the absence of spontaneous movement results not from the insufficient development of contradictions, but from persistent police suppression and the inactivity of the vanguard. In these circumstances, conditioning

the existence of the vast revolutionary organization on that of the broad mass movements is, of course, conditioning it on the impossible, if it is done without considering the role of the vanguard in creating such movements. The real vanguard of the revolution is the organization of revolutionaries able to actually and practically show the masses how to struggle and remove the dead-end from the course of the struggle despite the grave separation that exists between the vanguards and the masses. If we do not seriously consider by what methods of struggle can the real vanguard be created and if we regard the sufficient development of the contradictions as the condition for such an organization, then it seems that we are no different from those opportunists who were the followers of the natural course of events in Russia of that time. Then, the opportunists, the followers of the spontaneous movement, accused Lenin of exaggeration in his evaluation of the role of the conscious element, that he: "demands direct struggle against the government without first considering where the material forces for this struggle are to be obtained, and without indicating the path of struggle." This cannot be explained by purposes of secrecy, because the program does not refer to a plot but to a mass movement. And the masses cannot proceed by secret paths. Can we conceive of secret demonstrations and petitions?

Lenin responds: “All those who talk about “overrating the importance of ideology”, about exaggerating the role of conscious element, etc., imagine that the labour movement pure and simple can elaborate, and will elaborate an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers “wrest their fate from the hands of their leaders.

Thus, the author comes quite close to the question of the material forces” (organizers of strikes and demonstrations) and to the “paths” of the struggle, but, nevertheless, is still in a state of consternation, because he “worships” the mass movement, i.e. he regards it as something that relieves us of the necessity of conducting revolutionary activity and not as something that should encourage us and stimulate our revolutionary activity. It is impossible for a strike to remain a secret to those participating in it and to those immediately associated with it, but it may (and in the majority of cases does) remain a “secret” to the masses of the Russian workers, because the government takes care to cut all the communications with the strikers from spreading. Here indeed is where a special “struggle against the political police” is required, a struggle that can never be conducted actively by such large masses as take part in strikes. This struggle must be organized, according to “all the rules of the art,” by the people who are professionally engaged in

revolutionary activity. The fact that the masses are spontaneously being drawn into the movement does not make the organization of this struggle less necessary. On the contrary, it makes it more necessary...".[24]

Where the conditions are such that the regime's police terror aims at and has succeeded in severing the links between the people and their intellectuals; where no links exist among the strikers; where terror and repression have held back the masses from any appreciable movement; where this same terror and permanent repression have consistently caused the masses to assume negative attitudes towards struggle and to avoid any political idea which in their opinion does not offer any salvation; and where the regime attempts to suffocate any mass movements in embryo – is a "special struggle" against the political police necessary? Can the masses perform this task? Can the masses be expected to perceive the straw nature of the regime or to learn it through their own experiences? How can the masses who do not ask why should we struggle but can we struggle, and how can we resist the face of the regime's awesome power, possibly become conscious of their historical power when repression has led certain "revolutionary" intellectuals

24. Ibid, p. 208.

to explain the ferocity of this "paper tiger" by the objective conditions being immature and the contradictions insufficiently developed, while at the same time not seeing that it is precisely the repressive force of the anti-people army which is the main factor for the survival of imperialist domination? How can the struggle which finds its course in history and whose victory and historical conditions guarantee; the struggle whose roots are in the material conditions masses' existence; the struggle which is reflected at the same time in the conscious action of the revolutionary vanguard and the sporadic and dispersed movements of the masses; and finally the struggle which under heavy dictatorial and persistently repressive conditions has taken on an explosive character at times bringing a large part of the masses out on the streets and other times dying out as a transient flame; how can the reality of this struggle be demonstrated to the masses in a concrete way? How can we crack the colossal barrier of suppressive power; a colossal barrier created by the constant repression, by the lagging of the people's leadership, by the inability of the vanguard to fulfill its role, and finally by the hellish propaganda waged by a regime that relies on the force of the bayonet; a barrier separating the people from their intellectuals, separating the masses from themselves and separating the necessity of mass struggle from the existence of mass struggle itself? How can we crack

this barrier and mobilize the sonorous surge of people's struggle? The only way is armed action.

The necessity for the conscious role and active practice of the revolutionary vanguard has not been weakened but rather strengthened precisely due to the increasing role of the counter-revolution in the equation. At the present time it is only through the most acute form of revolutionary action, that is, through armed struggle, and the shaking of the colossal barrier that the vanguard can show the masses the struggle which finds its course in history. It must be shown that "the struggle has really started, and its progress requires the support and active participation of the masses" (paraphrasing Regis Debray). It must be shown in practice that anti-revolutionary violence can be conquered and that stability and security are a force. It is in the course of this action that the masses' historical stamina, accumulated and dormant behind the colossal barrier of suppressive power, is gradually released. And it is in this same course that the masses gradually and in the heart of the armed struggle become conscious of themselves, their historical mission, and their undefeatable strength. It is at this point that some raise their voices against us, crying: "These impatient, adventurous, leftist youths do not have the patience to wait until the masses are ready for armed struggle, until the proletarian vanguard

organization (of course, along a society political line) prepares the masses for armed struggle. They do not have the patience to wait until "the exploited and oppressed masses realize that they will not be able to continue their existence as before, and demand its change" and "the exploiters are unable to live and rule, as in the past," (Lenin, Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder) to then take up the armed struggle; they have mistaken the struggle against the political police and the militia for political work, political struggle and persistent political activity."

Although the forms of these accusations differ, their essence is the same as that of the charges made against Lenin by the Russian opportunists. They said that there was no need for the organization of professional revolutionaries and that,

"By theoretical reasoning (not by the growth of party tasks, which grow together with the party") Iskra solved the problem of the immediate transition of the struggle against absolutism. In all probability it senses the difficulty of such a task for the workers under the present state of affairs, but lacking the patience to wait until the workers will have gathered sufficient forces for this struggle."

And Lenin responds:

"Yes, we have indeed lost all "patience", "waiting" for the blessed time, long promised us by diverse "conciliators", when the Economists will have stopped charging the workers with their own backwardness and justifying their own lack of energy with allegations that the workers lack strength."[25]

The truth is that if the struggle against despotism, at that time, was fundamentally political, now the struggle against despotism is basically political-military. If in Russia the true vanguard would come to the fore as a result of a series of economic, political and ideological struggles, now in Iran, solely a political-military struggle is able to create the true vanguard. Let us explain further. What is the main task of the vanguard? It is not the historical task of the revolutionary vanguard to make use of conscious revolutionary practice in order to establish links with the masses so as to tap into the historic power of the masses and to bring that power, which is the determining factor, onto the actual and decisive battlefield of the struggle? The more complicated the conditions, the more powerful the suppressive forces of the enemy, the more urgently the question of the revolution is posed, and naturally the more difficult will be this "tapping." It is true that when the masses become conscious, on the basis of their material

25. Ibid, p. 191

conditions, they are transformed into a tremendous material force, the only force capable of transforming society. But the problem has always been to know how to convey this consciousness to the masses; through what organizations, and by what means. And in addition, through what forms of organization and what methods of struggle can the revolutionary force of organization be guided in the correct direction so as to bring about the victory of the revolution, the downfall of reaction and the conquest of political power.

With the increasing alertness of reaction, the growing reliance upon suppression as the main instrument for rule, and along with the passage of revolution from the West to the East, the role of the conscious vanguard and that of the militant organization of vanguard revolutionaries have acquired a greater significance every day. In the era of Marx and Engels, the vanguard organization consisting of professional revolutionaries never had the importance it attained in Lenin's era.

If in Russia it was imperative that an organization of professional revolutionaries perform this role by employing various methods of political struggle and all-around political exposures, in China and Vietnam it became necessary to perform these tasks in the

highest form of struggle, i.e. armed struggle. In Russia it was possible to undertake armed insurrection only when the masses, on a wide scale, rejected living under the existing conditions and virtually demanded change. This demand for change and this inability to rule had come about through the process of an economic-political struggle. Thus, the principle that attempting an armed uprising without the masses accepting its appropriateness through their own political experience is an abortive undertaking was proven.

Furthermore, the principle that if the call for the uprising and the proposal of a particular slogan, e.g., "The rule of the soviets" was put forth a little too soon or too late, it would cause the defeat of insurrection was also proven. Whereas, under the conditions of Russia, the historical vigour of the masses took form through a series of fundamental economic and political struggles gradually passing from potential to actuality and erupting into armed uprising, in China, the revolutionary consciousness was being conveyed to them in the midst of a prolonged armed struggle and as a result, it lacked that explosive character.

In this way, the armed urban insurrection is transformed into a prolonged armed struggle and the

revolutionary vigour of the masses gradually enters the decisive forefront. Thus, the people's army also becomes the "armed propaganda" force. Actually, when the main base of the revolution is in the countryside; when the rural masses subjected to imperialist and semi-feudal domination, and whose material living conditions automatically disunite them (according to Marx, they do not even constitute a class), and thus, when the rural masses lack any possibility for organizing organs for classical economic-political struggle (trade unions and syndicates), one sees that the only form of action that can organize the peasantry is armed struggle, and the only organization capable of giving it organization and unity is a political-military one.

To defeat the reaction, the broad rural masses must be drawn to the struggle. To defeat Reaction, the reactionary army must be smashed. To smash the reactionary army, a people's army must exist. The only way to smash the reactionary army and to build the people's army is prolonged guerrilla struggle; a guerrilla war is necessary not only in terms of military strategy for smashing the powerful army, but also in terms of political strategy for mobilizing the masses. The political and military factors are fused together in an inevitable and organic way. On the one hand, the mobilization of the masses is the condition for the

victory of armed struggle both militarily and politically. Yet, on the other hand, mobilization of the masses is not possible without armed struggle. This is the lesson taught by not only the Cuban revolutionary war but also those of China and Vietnam. Does anyone hold that the Chinese masses on a broad scale possessed revolutionary consciousness and understood the necessity of armed struggle and the appropriateness of this tactic beforehand? Or is it that this question is posed incorrectly and we are now faced with different conditions?

Perhaps, objections will be raised claiming that it was the Communist Party which initiated the Chinese revolutionary war and this party initiated the Long March only after years of fundamental political struggle and after resorting to urban armed uprisings and gaining experience. Thus, we too only have the right to turn to armed struggle after such a period. But, if in China it was possible for the party to establish itself with a few members and after a few years of political experience transform itself into a large vanguard force, it was due precisely to the particular conditions that existed there. What follows should be read carefully:

"In the period (1920-1927) Sun Yatsen was leading the Koumintang Party. The Communist Party, with its

own independent organization, functioned within the Koumintang Party. We, the communists, had imposed some conditions on our participation in the Koumintang organization: 1. Unity with Russia. 2. Koumintang's unity with the Communist Party, meaning that our party was to maintain its independence and to have political and organizational freedom action 3. Assisting the workers and the peasants. This condition required that the Party be reorganized, the anti-revolutionary elements be expelled and the army take on revolutionary leadership.

Sun Yatsen accepted the conditions, and on that basis, co-operation was initiated between us. In 1924, our party decided to introduce its members into the Koumintang. But, at that time, the Chinese Communist Party, despite its considerable influence among the workers and peasants, had no more than a hundred members. The participation of the communist members and combatants in Koumintang enabled the Communist Party to work better among the workers and peasants. In this way, the Party directly worked among the workers, the peasants and the students, and strengthened the unity of the workers. The Party succeeded, through co-operation with the Koumintang, to extend its activities among the country's intellectuals, including the northern area

and united the students not only in the South but also in the North.

We assisted Sun Yatsen in composing the revolutionary military forces. We created the "Vampova" military school to train the army's leadership cadres i.e., the revolutionary officers. Comrade Mao Tse-Tung became a member of Koumintang Central Committee." (Lessons From the History of The Communist Party of China)

What can be seen here is not only the democratic conditions of that period, but also the direct participation of the Communist Party in state power created vast possibilities for free activity not only among the workers and the students, but also the peasants. This party was able to infiltrate even the army and train communist military cadres. These conditions made it possible for the process of worker-peasant unity to begin, not in the course of an armed struggle, but by means of free political and organization activities, and to commence the revolutionary war with an army. The point that the Communist Party, having only a few hundred members, enjoyed a wide influence among the workers, the students and even the peasants, displays how the Chinese Communist Party was able, to some extent, under a favourable set of conditions, to rapidly

transform itself through unarmed experiences into a real vanguard force.

Should we now sit and wait for such a favourable state of affairs so that we can then become the real vanguards and prepare the conditions for armed struggle? The real vanguard must itself come to the fore in the course of armed struggle and politco-military action. Should we wait until the Communist Party is formed, and then initiate the revolutionary war on a large scale, for example with an army? The answer is that the politico-military nucleus itself can, by initiating guerrilla warfare and in the process of its development, create the party, the people's true vanguard politico-military organization and the people's army.

To depict the differences between the democratic or semi-democratic conditions where purely political activities are possible, and those of a vast and intensely violent dictatorship where the urban masses and at their head the proletariat, and foremost the peasantry lack any possibility for any form of organization, we must turn to the situation in Russia.

If in Russia: "Political exposure *in itself serves as a powerful instrument for disintegrating* the system we oppose as a means for diverting from the enemy his

casual or temporary allies and as a means for spreading hostility and distrust among the permanent partners of the autocracy."[26] (author's emphasis)

In Iran, under the present conditions, only politico-military exposure, only the essentially political armed action can serve as a powerful instrument for "disintegrating" the system. The politico-military armed action alone can intensify the internal contradictions of the ruling bureaucracy.

If in Russia: "The moral significance of this declaration of war will be all the greater, the wider and more powerful the campaign of exposure will be and the more numerous and determined the social class that has declared war in order to begin war."[27]

Here, today, the declaration of war is the war itself; the two are inseparable. The moral significance of war depends on its material progress and its material progress depends on its moral significance. The more numerous the blows dealt to the enemy, the more it disintegrated; the more political force grows, the more its moral significance and its appeal to the masses will increase. And this causes the material strengthening of the politico-military force.[28]

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26. Ibid, p. 190.
27. Ibid, p. 190.

Now we are ready to examine Regis Debray's "Revolution Within The Revolution?" and absorb the lessons of the Cuban Revolution in depth. In this examination, we will find further explanations and more objective evidence in approval and clarification of the above mentioned ideas.

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28. A further explanation about the formation of the party: Stalin, in "The Brief History..." says that the party of the proletariat consists of a combination of the proletarian movement and socialist theory. But, let us view our circumstances. In our view, speaking about a real proletarian movement in Iran under the present conditions is meaningless. The extreme strain and repression, on the one hand, and the fact that the secondary contradictions of our society, such as the specific contradiction between labour and capital, have on the other hand, been overshadowed by the principal contradiction between the people and imperialism and have caused any movement to assume a political and mass character from the very outset. Thus, the independent movement of the proletariat has fewer manifestations. But, the political struggle in our society inevitably has to be an armed one. Thus, the proletariat acquires organization and consciousness not in a proletarian movement, but in a mass armed struggle. And hence the party of the proletariat will be established in this manner. The armed struggle, initiated today by the groups, must set itself the goal of mobilising the masses and not the proletariat. It must rely on the whole people and express their general demands. Wherever one can better struggle and mobilize the masses, that is where one must go. For us communists, it is not at all necessary to first establish a base among the proletariat and mobilize them and then transfer our struggle to the villages. If necessary, we can also carry our struggle to the villages. Mao has made a point that is worth mentioning on this matter.

When the question of going to the countryside was posed in China, some were dissatisfied with the fact that it would

decrease the role of the proletariat. Mao responded: "Have no fear, the important matter is to mobilize the masses, to wage armed struggle; what does it matter if the proletariat plays a lessor role, quantitatively?" ("Why Red China Can Exist")

Here, a very significant point is made. Under the present conditions, the groups prior to party organization, conduct a struggle that relies on the whole people and expresses their general demands. In this struggle any revolutionary group, communist or otherwise, can participate. Hence, from the standpoint of a more effective and broader organization of the struggle and the unity of the revolutionary forces, the unity of all these groups within the context of an anti-imperialist united front becomes inevitable in the process of the struggle. In this light, the unity of all groups and revolutionary and anti-imperialist organizations that accept the armed struggle-line, in the town or in the countryside, becomes more necessary and more immediate than the unity of the proletarian forces within the framework of the proletarian party. The formation of the united front is placed on the order of the day for the revolutionaries prior to the establishment of the proletarian party. If the proletariat acquires organization and consciousness within the womb of mass armed struggle, then the proletarian party is conceived and grows within the womb of the anti-imperialist united front. It will then find a distinct form only when the principle of securing proletarian hegemony and the continuation of the revolution is, specifically and urgently, placed on the order of the day.

"The communist," the organ of some Marxist-Leninist Iranians abroad, correctly explains that the formation of the party is a prolonged process, similar to that of the people's army, and that it is not necessary to have an all-encompassing party to commence the armed struggle. But what alternative does it offer? It offers the establishment of a militant nucleus in the countryside, drawing the peasants to the armed struggle, and the establishment of revolutionary bases with the tidal expansion of these bases.

We do not permit ourselves to express a word of definite opinion about the establishment of revolutionary bases and their tidal expansion because it is not at all certain what circumstances will develop after the armed struggle. What faces

us is the matter of creating a militant nuclei in the countryside and of drawing the peasants to insurrection. As it has been thoroughly explained in the essay itself, it is neither possible to create a nucleus in the countryside by means other than armed struggle, nor is it possible to draw the peasants to insurrection through political work. Even if such an insurrection occurs, there is still a need for the armed vanguard to counter the enemy, who is armed head to toe with twentieth century military hardware. In any event, the need for the armed vanguard is inevitable.

5. The Examination of Debray's "Revolution in the Revolution?"

As we said, under the influence of a series of pre-judgements, we failed at a deep understanding of the fundamental concepts that Debray had presented in "Revolution in The Revolution?" as the inner elements of the Cuban experience. In fact, we rejected in practice these new concepts without understanding them.

We did not say that the path shown by Debray was incompatible with Iran's specific conditions nor could we say that it was impracticable under Latin American conditions in as much as we had no precise knowledge of these conditions. Nevertheless, we rejected it. This rejection was not based on a set of specific objective considerations, but rather was formulated on the basis of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism.[29]

It appeared that Debray's thesis denies the role of the Marxist-Leninist party as the only force capable of giving an all-embracing leadership to the revolution. It

29. We re-emphasise that the issue is not the denial of the generality of the principles of Marxism-Leninist. Rather, at issue is our shallow and dogmatic understanding of these principles on the one hand and our faulty understanding of Debray's theses on the other.

appeared that Debray's thesis underestimates the importance of the theory of Marxism-Leninism, i.e. revolutionary theory as the guide to practice. It appeared that Debray had ignored the leading role of political matters over military ones and had even assigned priority to military matters over political matters. Debray quotes Castro: "Who will make the revolution in Latin America? Who? The people, the revolutionaries, with or without a party." (Debray, p. 98.)

Debray then asserts:

"Fidel Castro simply says there is no revolution without a vanguard and that this vanguard is not necessarily the Marxist-Leninist party. Those who want revolution have the right and the duty to create a vanguard independently of these parties...There is, then, no metaphysical equation in which vanguard = Marxist-Leninist party. There are merely dialectical conjunctions between a given function-that of the vanguard in history-and a given form of organization-that of the Marxist-Leninist party. This combination arises out of prior history and depends on it. Parties exist here on earth and are subject to the rigours of terrestrial dialectics. If they were born, they can die and be reborn in other forms." (Debray, pp. 98-99)

These assertions were celebrated by the liberal and the so-called anti-dogmatic intellectuals since they understood in their own minds the refutation of the authoritative and vanguard role of any Marxist-Leninist party. They want to enjoy the title of revolutionary and leader, however, their liberalism does not permit them to relinquish their ideological unscrupulousness and pseudo-Marxist eclecticism. They can accept neither Marxist-Leninism as the only scientific world outlook-the ideology that can guide a permanent revolution-nor the discipline needed to work in a Marxist-Leninist organization. They thus abuse Fidel and Regis Debray's assertions although it is evident throughout the book that the issue is not the denial of the leading role of the proletariat and his ideology. The Marxist-Leninist party, here, is viewed as a special form of organization. According to Debray, if a party does not profoundly and radically change its peacetime organization and does not forge a new organization appropriate to the responsibilities of a real vanguard, then the Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries have the right to launch the revolution apart from this Marxist-Leninist party as a special form of organization in order to bring into existence a new organization which can fulfil the responsibilities of a true vanguard-a truly Marxist-Leninist vanguard-and in practice become worthy of the name which the supposed Marxist-Leninist parties have usurped.

In fact, here we have a distinction between the form of the party and its content. The content of the party is the task of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard in history, a proletarian organization's task in history; its form consists of those organizations that are required to accomplish this historical task. Whereas the content always remains the same, these organizational forms are subject to the rigours of terrestrial dialectics. Thus the party can die and be reborn in a new form. This is why we are faced with the "reconstruction of the party" (Debray, p. 102), " the rebirth of the party in a new form," etc. Debray himself rebuffs those petty-bourgeois intellectuals who want to abuse these assertions in order to justify their liberalism. He resolutely says:

"Let us speak clearly. The time has passed for believing that it suffices to be 'in the party' to be a revolutionary. But the time has also come for putting an end to the acrimonious, obsessive and sterile attitudes constituting two sides of the same coin, basically identical. The Manichaeism of the Party (no revolution outside the Party) finds its reflection in anti-party Manichaeism (no revolution with the Party); both crave complacency. In Latin American today a revolutionary is not defined by his formal relationship with the Party, whether he is for or against it. The value of a revolutionary, like that of a

party, depends on his activity." (Debray, p. 104, footnote)

When action and particularly armed action is posed, these very same ivory tower intellectuals step back and in order to justify their ivory tower idleness and indeed in order to justify their own existence, say that revolution needs theory and that it needs a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic-political conditions. Meanwhile, they ignore the fact that exactly because of their "lack" of relations with this very armed action, these parties have now fallen from their vanguard position. They ignore the fact that the old organization of the Marxist-Leninist party has lost its proportionality to a new historical task, that now a new Marxist-Leninist organization and a more rigorous discipline than that of the previous organization are required and that every person's relationship to the revolution will be determined by his relationship to this new organization.

But before we consider Debray's principal idea, namely, the relation between the party and the guerrillas and political military work, it is appropriate to clarify the relationship between theory and practice from Debray's point of view.

In "The Errors of the Foco Theory," Clea Silva

contends that Debray is attempting to destroy the basic principle that "without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement" when he says "The best teacher of Marxism-Leninism is the enemy, in face-to-face confrontation. Study and apprenticeship are necessary but not decisive."

In my opinion Clea Silva's deduction is not correct. However, let us see what is meant by theory. Silva himself replies: "There is revolutionary struggle only when we know how, against whom, and at which moment we must struggle." (Silva, p. 23) Does Regis Debray consider these to be secondary, unimportant, or unnecessary problems? I think this is not the case. Doesn't Debray attempt to advance a theory and a series of strategic achievements based on the experience of the Cuban revolution? Is his book not basically an attempt to answer how and by what means the enemy should be fought? Debray does not present a comprehensive analysis of the Latin American socio-economic conditions in his book. Does this indicate that he considers this problem unimportant and unnecessary? Why then does he consider, for example, the lack of socio-economic analysis on the part of the Latin American communist parties as a shortcoming? However, Debray's illogical and excessive attention to the Cuban revolution's particular forms and particularities, indeed, to the

exceptional aspects of the Cuban experience, and his attempt to generalize them throughout the Latin American cause a series of errors that should be mentioned.

Even if the Cuban revolutionaries applied strategic principles unconsciously, should we too start without awareness of the strategy, without a relatively clear understanding of the general lines of action which lay ahead of us? If we want to initiate a people's war, should we not have a clear understanding of the strategy of the peoples' wars doing "as much harm as good" (emphasizing the dialectical relation of theory and action) with such superficial and empiricist treatment that therefore one should not study them or "one may well consider it a stroke of good luck that Fidel had not read the military writings of Mao Tse-tung before disembarking on the coast of Orient." If the Cuban path is to be retraced step by step, which is unthinkable, and if we wish to generalize every exceptional case, one should mention that the Cuban revolutionaries themselves did not intend to undertake a protracted war at the beginning, whereas for us the protractedness of war is an established fact. (They wanted to overthrow Bastista's government by performing a series of combative shock operations concomitant with urban insurrections. In the course of action this plan ended in failure and a new path was

adopted.)

In fact, since revolution in all societies occurs under a series of general laws, and even peoples' wars encompass a series of general laws, all the past revolutionary experiences provide lessons, which should be learned and for this reason "do much good." But if one considers that in the final analysis revolutionary action enables one to discover the specific objective conditions of each country and to correct and elaborate the revolutionary theory, then undoubtedly mechanical generalizations "do harm". Only with clear general lines and a general strategy of action is it possible to establish an organic relationship between experience and tactical principles; to draw lessons from them; to correct and elaborate the tactical errors in relation to the general strategy and thus even to correct and elaborate the general strategy itself and determine with precision its pertinent special forms of action.

Debray says: "The armed revolutionary struggle encounters specific conditions on each continent, in each country, but these are neither 'natural' nor obvious. So true is this that in each case years of sacrifice are necessary in order to discover and acquire an awareness of them." (Debray, p. 20) Is it possible to understand the specific conditions without reference

to the general conditions? And are not the revolutionary experiences useful for understanding the very same general experiences? The assertion that "In Latin America a few years of experience in armed struggle of all kinds have done more to reveal the particularity of objective conditions than preceding decades of borrowed political theory", (Debray, p. 23-24) by no means lessens the importance of revolutionary theory; rather, it merely implies that borrowed political theory cannot become the proper guideline for revolutionary action. But only in connection with theory and the general conditions and the analysis of the specific conditions can this experience be the mainspring of a new theory and a new guideline for action. In brief, it is action that finally determines the validity or invalidity of our theory. Nonetheless, we are compelled to initiate our action by summing up previous theories and experiences.

There are those who contemplate a relatively long period-a period whose basic characteristic is theoretical education and ideological struggle-for grasping the theory of revolution and an all-embracing knowledge of the objective conditions. They say that we need theoreticians similar to Lenin. Of course, they do not mean the Lenin who was reared in the process of a prolonged and active struggle, but rather

someone who has a vast encyclopaedic theoretical knowledge. Before we close this discussion, it is appropriate to mention one point regarding their argument:

In the history of the revolutionary experience and the international communist movement of the current century, we encounter essentially three types of struggle: ideological, economic, and political. If we consider the historical succession of these experiences, we clearly observe how the role of the theoretical and economic struggle has progressively diminished and how political struggle has increasingly dominated the whole of the revolutionary struggle. In order to comprehend the lessening of the importance of theory in contrast to practical political struggle, it is sufficient to glance at the documents of the communist movement: "Capital"," Anti-Duhring"," What is to be Done?"," On New Democracy", etc. In brief, in today's international communist movement, which is proceeding mainly in the subjugated countries, we seldom come across theoretical works on the level with "Capital"," Anti-Duhring", or "Materialism" and "Empirio-Criticism". Does this fact not indicate that the international communist movement, which in general is engaged in direct revolutionary action, neither has the opportunity nor the need to work on pure theory? Does this not imply that we increasingly

need practitioners rather than theoreticians?[30]

The situation with regard to the economic struggle is the same. If we consider the process of revolutionary struggle in each country where it has gained importance, we will note that the economic struggle is more and more losing its significance. This situation itself is also the consequence of the ever increasing dominance of politics over economics, the consequence of the dominance of the class enemy maintained by the most suppressive means of repression and terror, the consequence of the imperialist global domination. In short, it is the consequence of imperialist global domination passing through its period of decadence. In fact, the development of the process of revolution on the global scale on the one hand, has more than ever put on the order of the day the problem of how to seize political power, the acute problems of how to make revolution and in what way the revolution can crush imperialist

30. For a clearer expression of the subject matter, one should say that if a century ago, persons such as Marx with his vast knowledge were needed to respond to the theoretical needs of the communist movement, and if responding to the theoretical needs required vast and prolonged theoretical work, today it is not so. The content of the revolution has become clear and a general guideline for practice has been obtained. In addition, the compilation of the special theory of revolution is linked more to revolutionary practice than to theoretical work. However, the need for a general and special theory of revolution certainly has not been lessened.

domination, and in short, direct revolutionary action. On the one hand, the very same process of revolution on the global scale is a type of theoretical preparation for the present revolution. Now the content of revolution is clearer than ever, while what remains to be clarified, and what will be clarified only through direct revolutionary action, is the specific forms this content assumes under specific conditions. The difficulty of the task rests not in preparing the program of revolution, determining the objectives of the revolution, or discerning the forces of revolution and counter-revolution, but rather in determining the ways and means to be applied in order to carry the revolution to victory.

6. Party and Guerrilla: Political Work and Military Work

We used to reject Debray's views on the relationship between the party and the guerrilla, and between political work and military work. On the one hand, we were confronting Mao's and Giap's stress on the guiding role of the communist party in popular armed struggle. On the other hand, Debray was telling us that the vanguard is not necessarily Marxist-Leninist. But we showed in the previous lines that this is not so, and saw that the issue is not over the denial of the role of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard. Rather, it is over those forms of organization and revolutionary action that a vanguard must employ in order to fulfil the tasks of the vanguard and transform itself into the genuine vanguard of the people. But what is this new organization and new action? And why have these new forms of organization and action become necessary? Before anything else, one should note that Debray's thesis basically rests on the fact that the instrument of survival of imperialist domination is mainly the violent and repressive military apparatus; his thesis also rests on the fact that the methods of maintaining this dominance have rendered all forms of reformist struggle not only insignificant but also impossible. Debray believes that the development of the revolutionary movement has reached such a stage

that the main link of the present revolutionary struggles in Latin America is the problem of seizing political power and crushing the backbone of imperialist domination, i.e. the army. Thus he says:

"In Latin America today a political line which, in terms of its consequences, is not susceptible to expression as a precise and consistent military line, cannot be considered revolutionary. Any line that claims to be revolutionary must give a concrete answer to the question: How to overthrow the power of the capitalist state? In other words, how to break its backbone, the army, continuously reinforced by North American military missions?" (Debray, p. 24)

Thus, one who does not truly envisage this problem, and evades its solution, even though accepting armed struggle in words, is not revolutionary. It is at this point Debray's fundamental thesis is put forth, a thesis that should receive our attention now more than ever. What is the path of revolution? Is it the political party that should initiate armed struggle; or is it armed struggle itself which in its process of development and growth, in its process of increasing popularization, creates an organ capable of giving comprehensive leadership to the revolutionary struggle of the masses? Is it the Party that should prepare the subjective conditions to come into existence during armed

struggle? Should efforts be directed towards creating or strengthening the party or towards the practical preparation for armed struggle? Debray says "These questions have been met with a standard response in the history of Marxism and in history as such: A response so immutable that the mere asking of it will seem a heresy to many. That answer is that the Party must be strengthened first, for it is the creator and the directing nucleus of the people's army. Only the party of the working class can create a true army of the people-as the guarantor of a scientifically based political line-and win power in the interest of the workers." (Debray, p. 95)

This is the response of those who accept the necessity of armed struggle in a certain phase and as a particular means. Of course, the words of reformists who question the necessity of armed struggle no longer have any weight, nor is it an urgent necessity to respond to them. But on what grounds does the argument of those who believe in the antecedence of the party to armed struggle and of political work to military work stand?

Debray presents their argument in two parts:

"Theoretical Orthodoxy: It is not a matter of destroying an army but of seizing state power in order

to transform the social structure. Bourgeois state power has its own superstructure (political, judicial, constitutional, etc.) which is not to be confused with its repressive apparatus.

It is the representatives of the exploited classes and their vanguard, the working class, to carry on this political fight up to and including its armed form, revolutionary civil war. Now then, a class is represented by a political party, not by a military apparatus. The proletariat is represented by that party, which expresses its class ideology, Marxism-Leninism. Only the leadership of this party can scientifically defend its class interests.

To the extent that it is a matter of intervening in the total social structure, it is necessary to have scientific knowledge of society in all its complexity, at all its levels (political, ideological, economic, etc.) and in its development. This is the condition for carrying out a massive struggle at all levels; and the military struggle, only one level among others, has meaning only within the context of comprehensive intervention at all levels by the popular forces against bourgeois society. Only the workers' party, on the basis of a scientific understanding of the social structure and of existing conditions, can decide the slogans, the goals, and the alliances required at a given moment. In brief, the

party determines the political content and the goal to be pursued, and the people's army is merely an instrument of implementation." (Debray, pp. 95-96)

As we indicated, we encounter these statements precisely at a time when the difficulty of the matter is not theoretical but practical, and the burning issue at hand is not the understanding of the society but rather its change, and in brief when the hub of the matter lies in finding those forms of action and organization with which one must carry out the revolution. Does this not indicate a fundamental fallacy in the perception between form and content, in perceiving that the party-as a special form of organization- is itself an instrument? Precisely at a time when the repressive army is the chief factor in maintaining imperialist domination, is it not a kind of political retreat to say that the principle problem is not to destroy the army but to conquer the state power?[31]

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31. Lenin says: "The economists by relying on general truths about the subordination of politics to economics concealed their ignorance of the immediate political task."
Seizure of political power is a definite goal and its necessity is a universal fact. The question is that in seizing political power, what is the decisive factor. Now, if instead of responding to this need and determining the concrete path of action and the main method of struggle, we come forth to say that the goal is the seizure of political power and not the destruction of the army, that one should comprehensively intervene on all levels, that one should use all forms of struggle, etc., then we will have uttered generalities behind which lie hidden our incapability, our lack of courage, and our political ignorance.

In a situation where one must precisely determine what form of action and organization ought to be selected, is not evading the definition of the principal form of action a type of reformism? It is, of course, true that "the main issue is the conquest of state power," but in today's conditions the principal and necessary requirement for the conquest of state power is the confrontation with and the annihilation of the army and repressive power of the dominated state. The point is not that armed struggle is one form of many various forms of struggle which under special conditions and with special preparedness becomes necessary. Rather, the point is that armed struggle is that form of struggle which constitutes the groundwork of an all encompassing struggle, and only on such a basis do other various forms of struggle become necessary and useful. The point is that the organ-or if we wish to call it the party-of the proletariat's class struggle, an organ which is truly a vanguard of the people, an organ which is truly able to guide the manifold struggle of the masses, can come into existence only through armed struggle.

Debray says: "There is, then, no metaphysical equation in which vanguard = Marxist-Leninist Party," (Debray, p. 98) Here, the dispute is not over the denial of the content of the vanguard Marxist-Leninist party, rather it is over a specific form of

action and organization. Thus, the equation Marxist-Leninist party = vanguard, where form and appearance are shown on one side and content on the other, is necessarily a concrete and historical equation and not an immutable and everlasting one. It is only within specific historical conditions that for a given content, specific forms are imperative. Therefore, "...there are merely dialectical conjunctions between a given function-that of the vanguard in history-and a given form of organization-that of the Marxist-Leninist party. These conjunctions arise out of prior history and depend on it. Parties exist here on earth and are subject to the rigours of terrestrial dialectics." (Debray. Pp. 98-99)

At this point Debray sets out to refute historical orthodoxy, an historical orthodoxy, which justifies theoretical orthodoxy with reliance on the experiences of the peoples' wars and the vanguard role of the political party. Despite its reliance on the experiences of the peoples' wars, this orthodoxy as a whole results in a separation between political and military work. At the beginning, this separation is temporal; that is, it is believed that only a vanguard party can guide armed struggle and the people's war, and that this vanguard party will be formed not through armed struggle itself, but rather through other forms of struggle which are mostly political, economic or ideological.

Actually, the reliance of this orthodoxy on a series of purely formal phenomena in the experiences of the peoples' wars not only creates a real separation between the peoples' wars and revolutionary practice, between political work and military work, but also causes erroneous inferences from the lessons of the peoples' wars themselves. Neither peaceful struggle nor a purely political and economic struggle, but special conditions permitted the communist parties of China and Vietnam to transform themselves into a genuine vanguard, able to guide the people's war. Debray properly shows how adherence to a series of particular forms of action whose concrete conditions have been denied by history transforms the tactical separation between political and military work, between preparation for war and war itself, into a strategic separation.

Debray asks: "In what form can the historic vanguard appear?" He replies: "What is depends on what was, what will be on what is. The question of parties, as what they are today, is a question of history. To answer it, we must look to the past." (Debray, p. 99) At this point, Debray refers to the conditions of birth and growth of the parties of China and Vietnam with a dialectical and concrete view. He shows how these parties, without problems such as "revolution with or without party" ever being posed, very early

transformed themselves into vanguard parties. Also, the history of these parties strikingly shows that they successfully transformed themselves into vanguard parties only in the midst of a real struggle and while engaged in the seizure of political power.

"A party is marked by its conditions of birth, development, the class or alliance of classes that it represents, and the social milieu in which it has developed. Let us take the same counterexamples in order to discover what historic conditions permit the application of the traditional formula for party guerrilla relationships: China and Vietnam.

1) The Chinese and Vietnamese parties were involved from the beginning with the problem of establishing revolutionary power. This link was not theoretical but practical and manifested itself very early in the form of a detrimental and tragic experience. The Chinese Party was born in 1921, when Sun Yat-sen's bourgeois revolution...was growing stronger. From its inception it received direct aid from the Soviet mission, including the military advisers led by Joffe and later by Borodin. The latter, on his arrival, organized the training of Chinese Communist officers at the Whampoa Military Academy, which soon permitted the Chinese Party, as Mao said in 1938, 'to recognize the importance of military matters.' Three years after

it was organized it underwent the disastrous experience of the first revolutionary civil war (1924-1927), the urban insurrection, and the Canton Strike in which it took a leading role. It assimilated this experience, and under the supervision of Mao Tse-tung, transmuted it into self-critical understanding, which led to the adoption of an antithetical line, contrary even to the advice of the Third International, i.e., the withdrawal to the countryside and the rupture with the Koumintang.

"The Vietnamese Party came into being in 1930, immediately organized peasant insurrections in the hinterland which were quickly repressed, and two years later defined its line, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, in its first program of action: 'The only path to liberation is that of armed mass struggle.' 'Our party,' wrote Giap, 'came into being when the Vietnamese revolutionary movement was at its peak. From the beginning it led the peasants, encouraged them to rise up and establish soviet power. Thus, at an early stage, it became aware of the problems of revolutionary power and armed struggle.' In brief, these parties transformed themselves, within a few years of their funding, into vanguard parties, each one with its political line, elaborated independently of international social forces, and each profoundly linked to its people.

2) In the course of their subsequent development, international contradictions were to place these parties-like the Bolshevik Party some years earlier-at the head of popular resistance to foreign imperialism...The class struggle took the form of a patriotic war, and the establishment of socialism corresponded to the restoration of national independence: the two are linked. These parties, spearheading the war of the people against the foreigners, consolidated themselves as the standard-bearers of the fatherland.

(3) The circumstances of this same war of liberation led certain parties originally composed of students and the best of the workers elite to withdraw to the countryside to carry on a guerrilla war against the occupying forces. They then merged with the agricultural workers and small farmers; the Red Army and the Liberation Forces (Vietminh) were transformed into peasant armies under the leadership of the party of the working class. They achieved in practice the alliance of the majority class and the vanguard class: the worker-peasant alliance. The Communist Party, in this case, was the result and the generative force of this alliance. So were its leaders, not artificially appointed by a congress or co-opted in the traditional fashion, but tested, molded, and tempered by this terrible struggle which they led to

victory...

Without going into detail, historic circumstances have not permitted Latin American Communist Parties, for the most part, to take root or develop the same way. The conditions of their founding, their growth and their link with the exploited classes are obviously different. Each one may have its own history but they are alike in the opportunity they have not had, existing as they do in countries winning power in the way the Chinese and Vietnamese parties have; they have not had the opportunity, existing as they do in countries possessing formal political independence, of leading a war of national liberation; and they have therefore not been able to achieve the worker-peasant alliance-an interrelated aggregation of limitations arising from shared historical condition.

The natural result of this history is a certain structure of directive bodies and of the parties themselves, adapted to the circumstances in which they were born and grew. But, by definition, historic situations are not immutable. The Cuban Revolution and the process it has set in motion throughout Latin America have upset the old perspectives. A revolutionary armed struggle, wherever it exists or is in preparation, requires a thoroughgoing transformation of peacetime practices..."(Debray, pp. 91-101)

What is the task of Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries? If we put aside the revisionist and reformist parties, parties, which essentially deny the necessity of armed struggle, few paths will be set forth for discussion. If a party has accepted the necessity of armed struggle as the decisive path, then it must profoundly and fundamentally transform its peacetime organization. No longer is there any room for armed action to be treated as a branch of party activity, or for the guerrilla forces to be subordinated to a political force detached from military and war problems.

If an action is basically political-military, and if the fighting cadres are composed of the political cadres of the past, this should fundamentally affect the structure of leadership and organization. However, the important thing is that the guerrilla force not be in the direction reformist goals and not as a branch of party activity, but rather as a political-military action constituting the basis and pivot of the struggle. But what path is open to revolutionary forces facing a party with a reformist leadership? Should they expand their efforts building a party (as a special form of organization and action) that in the course of non-armed struggle transforms itself into a vanguard, isolates the revisionist and reformist parties, and then prepares the conditions for armed struggle? Or, should these very same tasks be fulfilled during armed

struggle? Debray shows how adoption of a series of, in fact, reformist tactics and incorrect comprehension of the new conditions; conditions which make any kind of peaceful or merely political or ideological struggle futile; conditions under which political parties have no deep ties with the masses, mar revolutionary strategy and cast the matter of armed struggle to the abyss of oblivion.

"Hence the oft-repeated classic involution: a new revolutionary organization appears on the scene. It aspires to legal existence and then to participation in 'normal' political life for a certain time, in order to consolidate and make a name for itself and thus prepare the conditions for armed struggle. But, low and behold, it is gradually absorbed, swallowed up by the routine of this public life, which becomes the stage for its normal activities...

The prospects of insurrectional struggle diminish, delayed first for a few months then for years. Time passes, with its vicissitudes, and there is an increasing tendency to view the opening of hostilities as a somewhat sacrilegious temptation, a kind of adventurism, perennially 'premature'...The militants must understand that to enter into armed struggle at any given moment would be to destroy the sacred unity of the organization, to sabotage its legality, to

provoke repression against its leaders. In short, the political organization has become an end in itself. It will not pass over to armed struggle because it must first wait until it establishes itself solidly as the party of the vanguard, even though in reality it cannot expect recognition of its vanguard status except through armed struggle. This vicious circle has plagued the revolutionary struggle for years.

Consequently, it is useless to create antibodies in the heart of existing political organizations: the opportunist infection, far from being halted, will be aggravated, exacerbated." (Debray, pp. 120-121)

Under conditions where, says Debray, "without armed struggle there is no well-defined vanguard," the time has passed for us to recognize the revolutionaries by their verbal affiliations with the revolution and Marxism-Leninism.

"...It is necessary to avoid the diversion of efforts and resources toward 'pure' political or 'pure' ideological fronts...Inasmuch as the revolutionary movement can only be activated by an insurrectional outlook, efforts must be concentrated on political-military organization. Revolutionary politics, if they are not to be blocked, must be diverted from politics as such. Political resources must be thrown into an

organization which is simultaneously political and military, transcending all existing polemics."[32] (Debray, p. 124)

Hence:

"Antibodies must be created at the base, at the level of the masses by offering them a real alternative within their reach. Only then will the existing political leadership be changed. In most Latin American counties, it is only when armed struggle has begun or is about to begin that the process of removing the revolution from its ghetto, from the level of academic talk-fests, from a cast of permanent globe-trotters, can get under way. In philosophical language, a certain

32. We do not have information about the pro-Chinese groups in Latin America and therefore a perfect judgement on Regis Debray's statement is not possible. One of Regis Debray's statements, however, could well be correct, namely, on the necessity of a practical and not verbal relationship to the revolution and the insufficiency of an exclusively ideological or exclusively political struggle. However, it appears Regis Debray is influenced by Cuba's position (which, contrary to Debray's supposition is not only verbal but practical) on the Peking-Moscow dispute, a position which initially originated from Cuba's severe economic dependence on the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, it appears that this tactical dependence has turned into an ideological political position, reflected in Fidel's statement that "we don't belong to any sect." To say that the split has occurred on erroneous issues is one thing, but another thing to say that it is verbal and available information on this matter is insufficient. But here we are acquainted both with opportunistic elements who, with their verbal allegiance to Peking's position, have wanted to gain fame and popularity for themselves, and with those who have sincerely adopted this position but in practice are far from revolution position.

problematique has vanished since the Cuban Revolution, that is to say, a certain way of posing questions which governs the meaning of all possible answers. And it's not the answer that must be changed, but the questions themselves. These 'Marxist-Leninist' fractions or parties operate within the problematique which is imposed by the bourgeoisie; instead of transforming it, they have contributed to its further entrenchment. They are bogged down by false problems and are accomplices of the opportunistic problematique, quarrels over precedence or office holding in leftist organizations, electoral fronts, trade union manoeuvres and blackmail against their own members. This is what is called quite simply politicking. In order to escape it, there must be change of terrain, in every sense of the word."(Debray, pp. 121-122)

Therefore, under the present circumstances, "The principle stress must be laid on the development of guerrilla warfare and not on the strengthening of existing parties or the creation of new parties...Insurrectional activity is today the number one political activity." (Debray, p. 116)

"Under certain conditions, political and the military are not separate, but form one organic whole, consisting of the people's army, whose nucleus is the

guerrilla army. The vanguard can exist in the form of the guerrilla force itself. The guerrilla force is the party in embryo. " (Debray, p. 106)

What can be learned from this experience? What lessons does it teach us? Before we conclude, it is desirable to consider some of the criticisms addressed to this thesis.

Clea Silva: "The theory that armed force is the embryo of the party is based on the assumption that all conditions are ripe and that there is no time to organize on a party basis. In contrast to this, Lenin said that it is never too late to organize." (Silva, p. 20) Debray does not say that all conditions are ripe, rather, he says that the necessary conditions to initiate armed struggle exist, and that the sufficient conditions for expansion and popularization of the armed struggle will develop in the course of action. Secondly, here the question is not whether to organize, rather, it is the question of the creation of an organization appropriate to the historical task of the vanguard. Clea Silva's assertion shows that he has not correctly understood Debray's views. For example, he says: "If we observe the countries of Latin America closely, we see that the majority of them are full of small revolutionary organizations with minor differences, which individually fall short of meeting the

requirements of a party but if united, would form such a party." (Silva, p. 20) Only a narrow concept of party, and only belief in "unity before action" can yield this conclusion. The point is that it is precisely this revolutionary action, armed action, which prepares the conditions for a real and fruitful unity of the revolutionary forces:

"For reasons of both emergency and principle the armed revolutionary front is a must. Wherever the fighting has followed an ascending line, wherever the popular forces have responded to the emergency, they have moved into the magnetic field of unity. Elsewhere they are scattered and weak. Events would seem to indicate the need to focus all efforts on the practical organization of armed struggle with a view of achieving unity on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles." (Debray, p.126)

The same misconception of the problem of organization is also seen in the case of the Cuban comrades Simon Torres and Julio Aronde. In Cuba certain alliances took place and constituted the political organization of the July 26th Movement and certain alliances were made between this movement and other organizations before the inception of armed action; consequently it was a political organization which created the guerrilla foco. (Simon Torres and

Julia Aronde, "Debray and the Cuban Experience"). In my opinion, this does not contradict Debray's thesis that the guerrilla foco is the embryo of the party, and that organizing armed action and armed action itself can produce real alliances. The organization or the front considered by the Cuban comrades was actually a political-military organization or front, which was formed for the preparation of armed action and initiation of the insurrection. And then when armed struggle started it made the survival of the front on the basis of a revolutionary line possible and from the front created a real vanguard. Debray's view might not even be that a handful of men can set in motion a revolution and lead it to victory by merely proceeding to a mountain and fighting. Debray himself warns in the beginning of his book that the Cuban revolution should not be reduced "to a golden legend, that of twelve men who disembark and whose numbers multiply in the twinkling of an eye." (Debray, p. 15) To cite Debray, if we consider the surface glitter of the Cuban revolution and view it as a golden legend, surely the Cuban revolution cannot be repeated. But what about its inner elements and its method? Debray's effort is more to show these inner elements and the general lines of the Cuban path, and not to specify all the details of the phases which occurred from the beginning to the end. In my opinion, we should not

neglect or reject the fundamental aspects of Debray's views either because he emphasizes the decisive factor and fails to mention or consider the work which is necessary prior to the inception and during the course of decisive action, or because he also emphasizes the action of the small motor of the masses. For example, the Latin American revolution will be a massive, protracted war and will include direct confrontation with imperialism. The war will have a popular character and thus Latin America will witness the revival of previous forms of struggle (from street operations to extensive wars between armies), and therefore we cannot proclaim that certain forms of struggle such as "armed propaganda" or "armed self-defense" have lost their significance. Moreover, it is wrong to define the fundamental form of struggle (Clea Silva, "The Errors of the Foco Theory"). Yet these facts by no means contradict Debray's thesis. Debray neither denies the protracted character of the war, nor its popularity, nor the diversity of the forms of struggle. Under present circumstances, he asserts that in order to set in motion the big motor of the masses, the small motor is compelled to initiate the work with special forms of struggle. He does not intend to confine all the forms of struggle that come about in the course of popular struggle to a single frame.[33]

It is sufficient to consider his examination of "armed self-defense" and "armed propaganda" to discover that from the beginning he has revolutionary war in mind. In fact, the Cuban revolution, from the point of view of its inner elements, could only show the beginning of a revolutionary popular war because the unique and

33. In order not to justify Debray, it seems necessary to point out his errors. Edgar Rodrigues, in his article "The Venezuela Experience and the Crisis of Revolutionary Movement in Latin America," numerates Debray's errors: belittling the work of organizing, and suggesting a spontaneous viewpoint; over-valuation of the catalysing aspect of armed struggle, and belittling the preliminary and preparatory matters of the struggle. In our view all of these may have resulted from generalising the secondary aspects of the Cuban revolution over the whole of Latin American reality. Such errors are also apparent with regard to the relationships between city and country, the party and the guerrilla, and theory and practice. Thus Debray commits the same mistake that he subjects to criticism, that is, being dogmatic. For example, Debray himself shows different orientations with regard to the relationships between party and guerrilla or city and country are in fact the outcome of an essential difference. This difference originates from viewing armed struggle "as another branch of party activity," but not as the decisive branch of activity, nor as the fundamental framework of activity where only in relation to and within this framework do other forms of struggle gain importance. Nonetheless, he forgets this point and becomes dogmatic with regard to the relationships between city and countryside; he builds and polishes a series of metaphysical concepts such as the countryside is equivalent to the proletariat and the city is equivalent to the bourgeoisie. The city-dwelling leadership is incapable of understanding the significance of the problems and difficulties of guerrilla war not because the leadership lives in the city, but rather because of an essential belief that belittles guerrilla war as the decisive path.
The point that should be noted, however, is that we have examined Debray's book in relationship to our own conditions

exceptional circumstances under which the revolution took place allowed the revolution to achieve final victory before secure revolutionary bases were completely formed and became a starting point for a new phase, before the masses become involved in the war on a large scale and before the popular army was created. Whereas now the increasing vigilance of the repressive forces, direct imperialist intervention and other factors deny this easily won victory to the

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and needs and have dealt only on those aspects of the book which are fundamental and crucial to us. Regardless of a series of concrete differences between the conditions of our country and Latin America, the revolutionary movement in Latin America is basically more advanced than in Iran. Thus we cannot thoroughly examine Debray's book without considering those conditions. For example, one can consider the case of the over-valuation of the catalysing aspect of the struggle. Latin America in 1967 (the publication date of Debray's book) had undergone various armed struggle experiences following the Cuban revolution. In the territory of constant coups d'etat and instabilities, perhaps the over-valuation of the catalysing aspect of the armed struggle and the belittling of the work of organizing (noting the comparatively advanced level of organization of the revolutionaries in the organizations and parties in relation to Iran) is an obvious error. But in Iran, in a country which has supposedly been named the "Island of Stability" in a turbulent ocean, in a country with eighteen years of apparently unalterable strangulation, in a country where any form of organization is destroyed with indescribable cruelty, one should assign the necessary importance to the catalysing, agitating, and hopeful aspect of the struggle. Basically, this aspect of the struggle is now crucial. Just as the Latin American revolutionaries possess certain organization and organizing know-how, armed struggle too should possess them to a level comparable to the general level of Latin American revolutionaries and combatants.

armed struggle. It does not appear that Debray considers the Cuban experience the complete path that every armed struggle should travel. Therefore, it cannot be said that he, from the phase of "emergence of foco to the achievement of the final victory, considers the military action as the only form of political work." As soon as the guerrilla force is established and can create revolutionary support bases, or liberate some zones, all kinds of possibilities for political education of the masses, training of cadres, and political propaganda, etc., are conceivable. To cite Debray, one can then deliver a hundred speeches, and they will be heard too. The relation between political and military work constitutes one of the fundamental points of Debray's book. According to the view of many people, one of Regis Derbray's major errors is the incorrect understanding of this relation. According to them, Regis Debray gives priority to military over political work. Debray's understanding of this relation becomes sufficiently clear in this statement: "Any line that claims to be revolutionary must give a concrete answer to the question: How to overthrow the power of the capitalist state? In other words, how to break its backbone, the army...?" (Debray, p. 24). To Debray, since the revolutionary movement has reached a state where armed warfare constitutes its main link, some political concepts find expression in military matters. For example, Lenin

confronted the advocates of economism and spontaneous movements and even Trotskyism ("What Is To Be Done?" and "One Step Forward Two Steps Backward") over a professional, organized and disciplined revolutionary organization. Debray shows that on another level, this can find expression in the confrontation between the advocates of an armed vanguard and the advocates of armed self-defense. He says: "Just as economism denies the vanguard role of the party, self-defense denies the role of the armed unit, which is organically separate from the civilian population. Just as reformism aims to constitute a mass party without selection of its militants or disciplined organization, self-defense aspires to integrate everyone into the armed struggle, to create a mass guerrilla force..." (Debray, p. 29)

In order for the relation between military and political matters to be illuminated, it is fitting to examine Debray's views regarding armed propaganda. His view on armed propaganda and how it must take place after or during direct military action against the enemy and not before, is based on a series of concrete considerations, which one cannot interpret as disparaging political work. The fact that Debray regards armed propaganda as an imported political concept is due to the fact that one must not confuse the political nature of the movement or the inherently

political work with a series of political and/or political-military tactics. Debray says that armed propaganda is based on this: "The guerrilla struggle has political motives and goals. It must have the support of the masses or disappear; before enlisting them directly, it must convince them that there are valid reasons for its existence...In order to convince the masses, it is necessary to address them...in brief, to carry on political work, 'mass work'. Hence, the first nucleus of fighters will be divided into small propaganda patrols...Cells, public or underground, will be organized in the village...The program of this Revolution will be reiterated again and again. It is only at the end of this stage, having achieved active support by the masses, a solid rearguard, regular provisioning, a broad intelligence network, rapid mail service, and a recruiting center, that the guerrillas can pass over to direct action against the enemy." (Debray, p. 47)

It is correct that guerrilla warfare has political motives and goals. It is correct that the winning of the support of the masses constitutes the crucial problem of war; and it is correct that for this purpose inherently political work must be performed. But as to how this work is to be done (as to whether military action should necessarily follow political propaganda, must speeches necessarily be delivered from the outset, and prior to armed action should a series of public and

underground communication networks and cells be organized) are matters which precisely depend on the conditions. And if we establish an uninterrupted connection between these tactics and inherently political work, we will have confused the goal with the means and the form with the content. The danger arises that the impossibility of adopting a particular tactic might be construed to mean that no grounds for action exist. Debray says that if in Vietnam or China armed propaganda is placed on the order of the day, it is because of the special conditions which exist there.

1. Because of the high density of the peasant population and because the enemy is an occupier, the revolutionary propagandists can easily mingle with the people "like fish in water". (cf. Debray, p. 50)

2. "The propagandists are linked either with the bases of revolutionary support with a people's army capable of backing them up or protecting them in their activities. Most important, they attest to the tangible and visible reality of military victories. Village meetings and assemblies have a pragmatic and serious content-no empty, programmatic lectures, no 'fine words' of the kind the peasants so justly fear, but appeals to join up or give support to existing combat units..." (Debray, p. 50) But what is the Latin American situation?

"(1) The guerrilla focos, when they first begin their activity, are located in regions of highly dispersed and relatively spare populations. Nobody, no new arrival, goes unnoticed...They [peasants] know very well that fine words cannot be eaten and will not protect them from bombardment. The poor peasant believes, first of all, in anyone who has certain power, beginning with the power to do what one says. The system of oppression is subtle; it has existed from time immemorial; fixed, entrenched and solid. The army the guardia rural...enjoy a prestige all the greater of being subconscious. This prestige constitutes the principle form of oppression: it immobilizes the discontented, silences them and leads them to swallow affronts at the mere sight of a uniform. The neo-colonial ideal is still to show force in order not to have to use it, but to show it, is in effect to use it.

In other words, the physical force of the police and army is considered to be unassailable, and unassailability cannot be challenged by words but by showing that a soldier and a policeman are no more bulletproof than anyone else. The guerrillero, on the other hand, must use his strength in order to show it, since he has little to show but his determination and his ability to make use of his limited resources. He must make a show of strength and at the same time demonstrate that the enemy's strength is first and

foremost his bluster. In order to destroy the idea of unassailability-that age-old accumulation of fear and humility vis-à-vis... the policeman, the guardia rural-there is nothing better than combat. Then, as Fidel tells us, unassailability vanishes as rapidly as respect engendered by habit turns into ridicule...

(2) The occupation and control of the rural areas by reaction or directly by imperialism, their vigilance today greatly increased, should rid a given group of armed propagandists all hope of remaining unnoticed...The armed unit and people's vanguard are not dealing with a foreign expeditionary force, with limited manpower, but with a well-established system of local domination. They themselves are the foreigners, lacking status, who at the beginning can offer the populace nothing but bloodshed and pain...." (Debray, pp. 51-52)

"(3) Lastly, the absence of organized regular or semi-regular forces. Armed propaganda, at least if it is geared to combat, seeks precisely to organize regular units or to expand existing units by means of 'political recruiting.' Thus, villages are 'stormed' to assemble the populace and hold propaganda meetings. But in reality how have the inhabitants of these villages been helped to rid themselves of their class enemies? In the course of these operations, few arms have been

acquired. Even if young peasants are spurred by enthusiasm to join the guerrilleros, with what will they be armed?

Many comrades have concluded from these experiences that an ambush of a column of reinforcements or some other blow levelled at the enemy in the vicinity would have aroused more enthusiasm in a given village, attracted new recruits, given a more profound moral and political lesson to the villagers, and – most important of all-would have procured the arms so essential to a new guerrilla unit." (Debray, p. 53)

"Does this mean that armed propaganda or agitational activities should be rejected? No. To judge from certain successful experiences, a guerrilla unit leaves something-or at least someone-behind it, in the course of its advance, behind its own lines if such exist, for the purpose of organizing what is to become a base of solid support. But in this case the physical security of the populace is assured by regular forces, capable of repulsing the enemy. The base thus begins to organize itself as the embryo of the people's state. The work of agitation and propaganda-the effort to explain the new organization to the populace and to bring about the transfer of zonal administration to mass organization-becomes fundamental, and future combats depend on

it. Propaganda then attests to the liberating nature of combat and instills this message in the minds of the masses...We can see that no present Latin American guerrilla movements have reached the stage where these activities are on the order of the day.

In other words, armed propaganda follows military action but does not precede it...The main point is that under present conditions the most important form of propaganda is successful military action." (Debray, pp. 55-56)

We observe that the dispute is not over the political motives and goals of the movement, or whether or not to do mass work; rather the question is this: through what forms of action and organization can one address the masses and draw them to the struggle? One should carefully note that depending upon different conditions, inherently political work can assume a purely political form, can be political-military work, or can even be purely military work.

7. Conclusion

What should we do? What path lies ahead of the Iranian communist movement? How can the communist movement transform itself into the genuine vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle of our people? How can it pull itself out of the swamp of the intellectual milieu in which it is fundamentally trapped and establish a profound link with the masses?

In both theory and practice, the communist movement must and can give an objective answer to this question. In what manner can we smash the tyrannical imperialist dominance, which depends mainly on its armed repressive forces? How can we unmask the myth of the "island of stability and security"? How can we show to the masses the path of revolution, the path to the seizure of power for the exploited and oppressed, and the path to victory; how can we draw them to the battlefield? In our opinion, the communist movement can find this path. If it wants to transform itself into the genuine vanguard and not tag along behind the masses, it must in practice show this path to the masses. If armed struggle is the people's only path to salvation, and in our opinion the communist movement has accepted this path, then procrastination is meaningless. Contemporary revolutionary experience and our own

experience shows us the general path, the general strategy of revolution. These experiences have shown that neither with peaceful work, nor with merely political work, nor with clandestine work can we transform ourselves into the vanguard of the people and prepare the conditions for the so-called mass armed struggle. Under the present conditions, any political struggle must necessarily be organized on the basis of armed struggle. Furthermore, only the armed small motor can set the big motor of the masses into motion. The subjective conditions of the revolution shall fully take form in the course of armed action. The genuine vanguard, the vanguard that has a profound bond with the masses and is capable of extensively arousing and guiding the masses, can come into existence only through the course of armed action within the process of political-military work. Yes, at the beginning, the bloodshed and affliction that the operations of the armed vanguard causes the masses, the terror that the regime stirs up, may produce a passive attitude among the masses who have close contact with the guerrilla operations. But as soon as the armed vanguard is established and can strike both political and military blows as well as material and moral blows against the enemy, the path of the struggle gradually becomes clear for the masses, and they depend on their support. To cite Debray, winning the support of the masses is not very easy but

as soon as it is won and wherever it is won, it causes astonishment.

Che Guevara states the experience of the peasants' encounter with the guerrilla as follows: "After our regrouping and the first clashes accompanied by the repressive actions of the Batista army, there began terror and dread among the peasants and they showed coldness toward our forces. The fundamental problem was this: if they would see us, they would have to denounce us. If the army would learn of our presence through other sources, then their lives would be endangered for revolutionary justice acted swiftly.

In spite of a terrorized or at least a neutralized and insecure peasantry choosing to avoid this serious dilemma by leaving the Sierra, our army was entrenching itself more and more... Little by little, as the peasants came to recognize the invincibility of the guerrillas and the long duration of the struggle, they began responding more logically, joining our army as fighters." (Che Guevara, p. 197)

Because of the long history of repression and suppression dominating the life of our masses and because of the successive defeats of the movements of our people, our masses, not only in the countryside but also in the city, have increasingly tended to view

their existing situation as unalterable. Here, that "age-old accumulation of fear and humility" (Debray, p. 52) has seriously converted the faith of our masses into "nothing can be done to confront this force". Deeply rooted religious beliefs, submission to existing conditions, and reliance on a superior force, which initially grew out of human weakness before the forces of nature, have all been strengthened because of the people's weakness before the ruling social forces. These rooted beliefs cannot be changed by speeches, and the existing repressive force cannot be challenged by words. The masses cannot be drawn into the struggle merely by political propaganda; they cannot be convinced of their invincibility and of their decreed victory in this manner. Only armed action can inflict a breach in the impasse faced by the masses; the feasibility of the destruction of the repressive power must be shown in practice. To convince the masses of its power, the armed vanguard must show its strength. Does all this mean that the masses are no longer capable of any perceptible spontaneous movement? No, this is not the case. At the point when their patience reaches its limits, the masses too are set in motion, confrontations occur; furthermore, due to the conditions of terror and suffocation, these confrontations are accompanied more and more by armed confrontations. But because of the very same conditions, these movements do not find the

opportunity to expand and are suppressed. When no possibility of any kind of continuity in purely political peaceful work exists, when any kind of bond between the vanguard and the masses does not exist, the main effect on these movements will be further suppression of the people. The only line of continual work that can acquire some strength from these movements together in a larger context is continual political-military work.

Now, the question is what methods of armed action are practical under the present conditions? One thing is certain: the condition for the victory of the revolution is the destruction of the counter-revolutionary armed forces, and this task requires a people's army. But how is a people's army created?

Under the present conditions of society, the people's army is fundamentally engendered through guerrilla struggle in the countryside, and this fact necessitates the formation of guerrilla foco. (When broad mass movements are absent, particularly in the countryside, immediate arming of the masses is not the number one objective. Here, the purpose of guerrilla foco is only to initiate at the outset armed action on the countryside by armed bands usually made up of the revolutionary vanguard.) But what preparations and conditions guarantee the growing survival of the

guerrilla foco or focos? Can an armed group alone, in its course of development, become the motive of a mass movement with the initiation of operations in a suitable region? The experiences of guerrilla warfare in Latin America show that a guerrilla foco, when politically isolated and militarily encircled without any profound link with the urban movement, without effective support in the city, and without the ability to broadly attract the minds of the masses, cannot last long and sooner or later will be liquidated by the special forces of the enemy. Therefore, some of the Latin American revolutionaries talk about the establishment of armed struggle in the city. Even the Cuban experience contains certain lessons on this subject. However, Debray, by ignoring and belittling those methods and organizations of struggle which under all circumstances are necessary for the survival and continuity of the decisive struggle, does not lay the necessary stress on this aspect of the Cuban experience; this is one of his errors. It is correct that in Cuba the decisive struggle was armed struggle in the countryside, but what part did the struggle carried out in the city play in the whole of the struggle? Does Debray himself not accept that Batista could not utilize more than ten thousand of his fifty thousand soldiers against Fidel? Why? Was this not because of the existence of other forms of struggle in the city which were conducted by other organizations and the

July 26th Movement itself? Given that a radio station can by no means perform an organizing role, how did it happen that even before the insurgent forces possessed a radio station, the armed struggle in the countryside could attract, particularly in the city, the attention of the broad masses? If the insurgent did not see that organized, disciplined, protracted and permanent activity through organized groups was necessary in order to awake the attention of the broad masses, to identify themselves to the people as the only vanguard, and to stimulate in the city those movements which have political-military significance for the struggle in the countryside (actually, this was performed in practice by the spontaneous movement and through the action of other fighting organizations and even through the urban wing of the July 26th Movement-thus the slogan "all guns, all bullets, and all resources to the Sierra"), then one cannot conclude that under any conditions whatsoever the guerrilla movement needs no organized and coordinated urban armed action either prior to the formation of the guerrilla foco or in the course of guerrilla operations in the countryside. In fact, what in Cuba was being done spontaneously here must be carried out through an organized political-military action. (In this context, spontaneity means that while those operations being performed in the city by various organizations had a significant impact on the decisive path to victory, they

were not begin performed with a conscious relationship to the decisive path; that is the objective of these operations was not exactly to provide determined political-military support to the guerrilla movement in the countryside.) But in the course of armed operations, which unavoidably emanate on a broad basis, the combative groups soon become revolutionized. And would these small groups not be transformed, in the course of armed action, into organized groups? Would the unity of communist groups not be achieved, in the course of armed action, on the basis of an armed line? And couldn't these groups and their unity, in the course of armed action, prove themselves to the masses, show in practice the way to alter the situation and seize power, and within certain limits transform themselves into the vanguard of the masses? And don't the operations in the countryside need the political-military support of the city for its own growing survival? Will this political-military support be achieved automatically or through organized work?

It is possible that some of those who, to quote Lenin, advocate "close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" will tell us, "you want to create a mass organization, while the objective of we, the Marxist-Leninists, should be the creation of a proletarian organization whose ranks are filled mostly from the

proletariat." The very same people were asking Lenin "If we undertake the organization of a nation-wide exposure of the government, in what way will the class character of our movement then be expressed?"

They in fact want to justify their inability to be pioneers in the struggle, their fear and despicable attitudes, and their lack of political courage. Lenin replied:

"We Social-Democrats will organize these nation-wide exposures; all questions raised by the agitation will be explained in the consistent Social-Democratic spirit, without any concessions to deliberate or not deliberate the distortions of Marxism. The all-round political agitation will be conducted by a party that unites into one inseparable whole, the assault on the government in the name of the entire people. The revolutionary training of the proletariat, and the safeguarding of their political independence, the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, and the utilization of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters will rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat."

And this is our answer: The first condition for the proletarian and revolutionary leadership in this movement is the pioneering of the Marxist-Leninist. It

is we who will become the precursor of this struggle; it is we who will have started armed struggle. Under the present conditions, aren't revolutionary armed action and its objectives, based on a Marxist-Leninist line, the greatest manifestation of communist practice and the most revolutionary method of anti-imperialist struggle? If the prerequisite for drawing the masses, including the proletariat, into the struggle is armed struggle itself, should this armed struggle have only the proletariat as its goal or should it rely on all the masses? Shouldn't revolutionary action and propaganda start from their most popular form? If the vanguard party comes into existence in the course of the struggle, what is wrong with also creating formal links with the proletariat in the process of armed movement? Is it not in armed struggle itself in which the working class will assume its proper role in the anti-imperialist struggle? The Cuban experience has a very instructive lesson in this regard to which Simon Torres and Julio Arone allude:

"From the time Fidel went to Mexico he had a plan to which he adhered throughout the struggle. This plan might be indicated metaphorically by a means of pyramid in which the organizational forms constituting the base are broad enough to contain different classes, while the apex is made up of a coherent armed nucleus capable of subordinating

conflicts 'from below' in the interest of activating all forms of struggle against the dictatorship.

...Is it necessary to add that the armed unit, superimposed on the other forms of organization and leadership and also in the position an organizational 'centre,' fulfilled a double function: first, to maintain the cohesion and functioning of one front of classes; and second, within that front, strategically to guarantee the primacy of the most revolutionary classes?" (Torres and Arone, pp. 54-55)

"...The broad base of the Movement corresponded to the narrow social base of the Batista government under the conditions of profound crisis within the traditional political parties which permitted a regrouping of forces in a new way; and its central armed nucleus corresponded to the form in which it was necessary to liquidate the bourgeios-latifundista-imperialist domination. Batista's March 10 coup had closed all avenues to a reformist way..." (Torres and Arone, p. 59)

If armed struggle can mobilize the masses and produce the overthrow of the ruling power, then it is the duty of the Marxist-Leninist to become, with whatever organizations, methods, and slogans necessary, the harbinger of such a struggle. We should learn from

experience. We have to ask ourselves why the communist parties of the Middle East became futile organizations and detached from the masses? We have to ask ourselves why the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle in this region is (still predominantly) in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie? Don't these coups,[34] some of which succeeded to some extent to mobilize the broad masses in an anti-imperialist struggle, show that when overthrowing the ruling power is the order of the day, the communist parties of this region exist as though there are still years to come before the question of seizure of power is to be posed?

Today the peril exists that through inactivity the Marxist-Leninists will surrender the leadership of the people's anti-imperialist struggle into the hands of the petit-bourgeoisie. The communist movement, if it is to assume the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle of the people, if it is to transform itself into the real vanguard of the masses, must dare, must give both in theory and practice, a concrete answer to the question of how to replace the imperialistic ruling power and transfer power to the exploited. If the vanguard role of the Marxist-Leninist in this protracted armed struggle falls to secure the

34. Coups d'etat led by the petty-bourgeoisie such as Nasser's in Egypt, Ghasser's in Iraq and the Ba'athist coup in Syria.

revolutionary proletarian leadership in this struggle, nothing else can.

The Middle East today is one of the most important and stormy regions of the world; the anti-imperialist struggle in this region has attained powerful heights; the revolution will more and more assume a regional character. The repressive instrument of the present ruling power, which until now had been used for the suppression of the peoples of Iran, is also becoming a cudgel to suppress and intimidate the anti-imperialist movements of the region. This so-called "island of stability", under the orders and with the assistance of its bosses, wants to silence the turbulent ocean. The struggle of the Kurdish people subject to the most severe oppression is now gaining new heights. How can we assist it? How can the struggle of the Kurdish people perform its proper role in the anti-imperialist struggle of all the peoples of Iran? In what way can we defeat the imperialist conspiracies of the ruling power? How can we assist the victory of the anti-imperialist forces in this region? Is not the unity of the Marxist-Leninist forces and the issue concerning the revolutionary united front composed of all oppressed classes, which has a decisive importance for the struggle of the people of Iran, attainable only through the course of armed action? For these reasons, the armed struggle is not only decisive, but also urgent.

The struggle is prolonged and difficult; the support of the masses is not easily won; it requires continual hard and prolonged work. But, the masses will certainly respond to the hard and prolonged work and they will certainly respond to the practical calling of their vanguard. Revolution takes form within the revolution itself; and the truth is that even the revolution, in the process of revolution which has started with the most popular and the most general objectives, attains the most revolutionary objectives in the process of this uncompromising struggle by employing the most revolutionary tactics. The masses, in the course of this hard and prolonged struggle, under the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, become increasingly proletarianized and will trust their leadership more and more. The struggle against imperialism is transformed into the struggle against capitalism; the struggle against imperialist expropriation is transformed into the struggle for socialist expropriation. Armed struggle not only eliminates the tragic separation between the Marxist-Leninist vanguard and the masses, but also prepares the ground for them to unify strategically as well as tactically, not on the immediate and urgent objectives alone, but also on the most general objectives. The communist movement must dare; it must not fear temporary failures; the time for action has now arrived; "The weapon of criticism must give its place

to the criticism of the weapon."

Now we should conclude:

The experiences of the peoples of Latin America and the experiences of our own peoples (particularly those of the Kurdish people) have shown that a guerrilla struggle in the countryside will not be victorious without the political-military support of the city and without the political-military work of the urban forces. Now the question arises that while it is correct that a struggle in the countryside that does not have the support of the city will eventually be defeated, should we not even start such a struggle? If we have relative confidence in the support of the city in the foreseeable future, and if the survival of the rural guerrilla is guaranteed until such a juncture, should we not even start such a struggle? It is here that we must come out of the world of generalities and examine the conditions of our country in detail.

Before anything else, one should note the fundamental point that the armed struggle in Iran will start with group-type formations and with small groups that have limited capabilities and force. Although some of these groups have certain connections with one another, we cannot consider these groups as actually and concretely being a unitary and solidified force. In

armed struggle, the principle of dispersing the forces of the enemy is a very fundamental principle, and the armed action which is initiated by a group, if not continued by other groups, will sooner or later experience defeat.

Thus this fundamental principle is obtained: all revolutionary groups that have recognized their revolutionary tasks must, by their military work, strike blows against the enemy, disperse the forces of the enemy, expose the enemy, and educate the masses in any way they can. The method each group adopts to this end is determined with respect to a series of technical and tactical facts. For instance, a group settled in Kurdistan must naturally operate there. But are the cities of Kurdistan suitable places for urban guerrilla activity? Of course not. The base of the revolutionaries who are settled in Kurdistan and who want to become engaged in armed struggle must be stationed mostly in the countryside, although in the city we can also mobilize a small force for a series of political-military tasks. The case of revolutionaries who are settled in Azerbaijan, the northern regions of the country, etc., is the same. Basically, the city in Iran most suitable to vast urban guerrilla activity is Teheran. A few other big cities such as Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashad, etc. are relatively, and to a limited extent, suitable. Furthermore, at the beginning the agitational

and the political aspect of armed struggle is fundamental and decisive, and its military aspect is secondary. Thus armed struggle should have an all-encompassing influence on all of our people. In addition, a wider and more structured organization of armed struggle and the establishment of co-operation between fighting groups is an urgent issue. Therefore, the existence of political-military work in big cities, particularly in Teheran as the crossroads of the communication network of the country and the country's important production and economic centre, and as the connecting centre of fighting groups everywhere, is a decisive matter. We should, however, note that the enemy will attempt to suppress this struggle with all its force and capability and with all it has in its power. This is why the military aspect of armed struggle will gain increasing importance; and as soon as this happens, the exodus to the countryside and the extension of the major arena of the struggle to the countryside will become a decisive factor.

If we wish to conclude, we can propose the following general line for the revolutionary groups of Iran: Under the present conditions, armed struggle constitutes the major form of struggle. At the beginning, it has a dominantly agitational aspect. Politically, the guerrilla struggle in the city, either for a movement as a whole or for the guerrilla struggle in

the countryside, plays a vital and crucial role. However, urban guerrillas can exist specifically in Teheran and to a lesser extent in a few other major cities. Thus, considering the vital principle of dispersing the forces of the enemy and in this regard noting that the military aspect of the struggle will rapidly and increasingly gain importance, it is the duty of the revolutionary groups to start their political-military work wherever it seems expedient considering the enemy's military potential, the technical and tactical possibilities of our own forces, the social and economic conditions of the people, and the geographical conditions.

Introduction to "On the Necessity of Armed Struggle and Refutation of the Theory of Survival"

George Habash

The history of the Iranian peoples is rich in revolutionary struggles against colonialism and the various manifestations of foreign interference as well as struggle against the reactionary, dictatorial puppet regime and the comprador bourgeoisie. This is in addition to the struggle against the racial chauvinistic oppression - one of the forms of national and class oppression whose victims are the masses of different nationalities living under the reactionary regime of the Shah.

In this rich and long history of national and class struggle, the Iranian people have had to make many precious sacrifices. This is a result of Iran's rich endowment of natural resources and its important strategic position. Thus Iran has always attracted colonial powers, as demonstrated by the special attention given to it by the American imperialists. These powers are willing to give the regime any kind of assistance needed in order to safeguard the reactionary regime which serves to protect the savage plunder of Iran's resources by the imperialist monopolies. In addition, the regime is used as a stooge

for the oppression of liberation movements in the Middle East, in the gulf, and in other Arab countries.

This regional and world-wide role of the stuggle of the Iranian people gives this struggle a broader role than that of a national struggle. It is of great importance to all national liberations movements in the entire region and especially to the Arab liberation movements. Therefore, the unity between the liberation struggle of the Iranian people and that of the Arab people has greater signficance than its historical context. Thus, this unity is an international responsibility of national liberation movements from which will develop a sound foundation for the progressive democracy in the free and progressive future of the region. This unity establishes a greater bond between brothers who have waged liberation struggles against the same enemy,that is, against American imperialism with its many reactionary, Zionist and racist bases.

Thus, we view the struggle of the Iranian people, especially its revolutionary and progressive vanguards, on the level of a unified, strategic solidarity in this fateful struggle. This is natural since there exists a parallel unity, through the links between the reactionary stooges, amongst the puppet Shah's regime, the aggressive military system of Zionism in our land Palestine, and the reactionary puppet Arab

regimes. But, our revolutionary solidarity is a progressive one, existing among the people in struggle against this imperialist, racist and reactionary unity.

So far, we have considered the general unity between our people and the people of Iran; but specifically we consider the Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayee Guerrillas as one of the most valuable revolutionary vanguards whose existence is necessitated by the struggle of the Iranian people at its present stage. We admire their heroic struggle, with its many sacrifices, as we appreciate the role they play in creating solidarity between the struggle of the Iranian people and that of the Arab people in general and the people of Palestine in particular.

Now about the book that is in our hands, which without doubt is a discussion of a crucial problem. and about its heroic author, the martyred comrade Amir Parviz Pouyan, who decorated it with his own blood. It is of special importance to all national liberation movements specifically at that stage when faced with the choice of either armed struggle against the most savage kinds of repression, oppression and terror, or, as the martyred comrade calls it, the "theory of survival" faced with the same conditions.

In refuting the "survival theory," the book goes deeper

than its progressive theoretical, scientific and practical level. It prepares the fundamental basis for the formation of a struggling Fedayee vanguard to crush and conquer the obstacles of dictatorial repression as a means to remove the impediments of fear and horror blocking the path of the masses and to organize them into a revolutionary, popular organization or political party, the proletarian party.

If this book devotes most of its attention to the refutation of the "theory of survival" and stresses the historical necessity of creating the vanguard under these conditions and is victorious in this task, it is because this is the subject that forms the essential core of the ideological discussions in Iran. It was necessary to give the same attention to the transition or growth of the vanguards of the struggle to the revolutionary party.

Undoubtedly, it was the martyrdom of comrade Pouyan which delayed the discussion and elaboration of this subject. It is therefore the responsibility of other comrades inspired by this heritage which is sealed with blood to arm themselves with experience and to attempt to fulfill the above mentioned task. Performing this requires a Marxist-Leninist consciousness and should be based on the teaching experiences of the struggle of the people of Iran, its

working class, and its struggling Fedayee vanguards.

In concluding this short introduction to this book, I am happy to reaffirm on my behalf and in the name of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and in the name of the struggling people of Palestine that we have absolute and full faith in the victory of the Iranian people in their heroic struggle against the puppet, chauvinist and reactionary regime against all imperialist forces backing it, as we have faith in the victory of our people against our common imperialist. Zionist and reactionary enemy. All of us today are struggling for the liberation of the whole region and the establishment of a democratic and progressive future for the region and for peace and true brotherhood as part of the free world, free of all exploitation and domination, a world of justice, peace and socialism.

Dr. George Habash
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Secretary General

The Necessity of Armed Struggle and Refutation of the Theory of "Survival"

Amir Parviz Pouyan

The following article was written in the Spring of 1970; since then I have found no appropriate opportunity for its correction and development. Now this article is being published without any modifications or alterations, so that it can be corrected and developed in the future upon receiving the opinions of the comrades. It should not be considered complete. In my own opinion, its development is necessary.

In the three months since this article was written, we have frequently examined the policy of armed action and each time have naturally learned new things from our discussions. Therefore, it appears necessary for me to reflect in my article what we have learned, and to make alterations in my writing if it is so required.

The militant elements, especially the Marxists, are not at all in secure conditions. The police have mobilised all their forces and are trying night and day to discover the underground network of the struggle and to identify the militants. The enemy does not hesitate in the least to use any suitable tactic or special methods to suppress the militants.

Following the defeat of the anti-imperialist struggle in Iran (1953) and the re-establishment of fascist rule of the imperialist agents, there has developed a state of terror and suppression in our country which has enabled the police to gain the collaboration of many of the cowardly, profiteering elements who have betrayed the people's interests.

Under the circumstances where the revolutionary intellectuals lack any type of direct and firm relationship with the masses, our situation is not like the example of "fish living in the sea of the people's support". Rather, it is the case of small and scattered fishes surrounded by crocodiles and herons. The terror and suppression, the absence of any democratic conditions, has made the establishment of contact with our own people extremely difficult. Even the most indirect and consequently the least fruitful contact is far from easy. All the enemy's efforts are directed towards preserving this state of affairs. So long as we are without any relationship with our own masses, it is easy to be discovered and suppressed. In order to be able to withstand this situation, and at the same time grow and create the political organisation of the working class, we must break the spell of our weakness and establish a direct and firm relationship with the masses.

Let us examine the exact methods used by the enemy to keep us away from the people. It has brought all the workers' and peasants' centers under its control. The military and non-military establishments control the movements of the urban residents to and from the villages. It has obliged the peasantry of many areas to inform the authorities of the entry of non-authorized urban residents to the villages.

In small and large factories there is an office of the National Security and Information Organization (SAVAK) operating constantly. Employment of any worker or any office personnel is preceded by a full investigation of his past activities and connections. Even after employment the SAVAK, when possible, keeps the employee's every movement under full surveillance. Therefore, difficult as it is for militants to gain entry into the factories, it is still more difficult for them to proceed with agitational and organizational work.

The existing terror and suppression even make the use of secondary gathering centres of the workers and petty bourgeoisie, such as the teahouses, very difficult. In the cities, penetration among the workers is practically limited to accidental acquaintances, which are not always organizationally fruitful.

The process through which a worker is educated to become a disciplined revolutionary is a complex, arduous and lengthy one. Our experience shows that workers, even the younger ones, despite all their discontentment with the situation in which they live, do not exhibit much enthusiasm for political education. The reasons for this state of affairs lies in the total absence of any tangible political movement along with their lack of consciousness which has resulted, partially, in their acceptance of the dominant culture of the society. The young workers, especially, waste their limited leisure time and scanty savings upon cheap petty bourgeois banalities. Most of them are tainted with lumpen idiosyncrasies. At work, if it is possible to utter a word, they try to make the working time seem shorter by resorting to vulgar conversation. The book readers among them are customers of the most decadent and filthy contemporary reactionary works. By preventing any mass political movement and by facilitating access to cheap entertainment, our enemy tries to accustom the workers to the acceptance of the general characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie. Hence, by doing so, to spread among them the antidote to political consciousness.

The police create a state of fear and suppression in the factory more than anywhere else. All methods are used to keep the workers in a constant state of fear and

apprehension. The large factories in particular have been turned into military barracks, where the "productive soldiers" are put to work. An army discipline is enforced so that there might be but the least waste of time or chance of contact between the workers. Any tendency towards a strike or non-violent demonstration of grievances is met with the most brutal reactions: detainment, long interrogations, expulsion, and at times, torture. Each of these can have long-term negative effects on the future subsistence of the worker and would endanger their chance of being able to work or being employed at other production establishments and often results in their being replaced by one of the thousands in the reserve army of labour.

A worker who even before having had any record, had to confront innumerable difficulties merely to be able to sell their labour power, a worker who must frequently find an influential sponsor, or resort to the middlemen, or even pay a considerable amount of money to obtain a job, would find it almost impossible to get employed after having a bad record. Thus, although reluctantly, the worker prefers to become a manageable sheep and remains indifferent to political problems in order to survive.

In factories, private or state-owned, in any place which

is a market for the sale of labour power; exploitation in its most shameless form is the order of the day. Workers are practically deprived of all sorts of social security; their labour power is bought only to the extent to which it is needed to proceed to a desired volume of production. They live in the eighteenth century, with the exception of having the questionable privilege of the twentieth century police rule.

If we express the oppression brought against them in words, they themselves feel this oppression with their whole being. If we write about their sufferings, they themselves constantly experience these sufferings. Nonetheless, they tolerate them, accept them with patience and, by taking refuge in petty bourgeois entertainment, try to ease the burden of this suffering. Why?

The various reasons can be summed up into one. They presume the power of their enemy to be absolute and their own inability to emancipate themselves as absolute. How can one think of emancipation while confronting absolute power with absolute weakness? It is precisely this assumption which is the reason, a negative reaction to their ability - for their indifference to political discussion, and even at times, their ridicule of it.

A relationship with the proletariat, with the aim of drawing this class into political struggle, cannot be established except by changing this assumption, by destroying these two absolutes in their minds. Thus, under existing circumstances, where there exists no democratic possibility of making contact with, giving political consciousness to, and organizing the proletariat, the proletarian intellectuals must of necessity make contact with the masses of its class through revolutionary power. The revolutionary power establishes a moral tie between the proletariat and the proletarian intellectuals and the continued exercise of this power will lead to organizational ties.

Here we should pause for a moment and explain how this moral tie would come into being and how it would lead to organizational ties in due course.

We have briefly discussed earlier the main means by which the enemy has chosen to keep us away from the proletariat, and the proletariat from us. We can sum up once more. We have seen that one of the main means is through terror and suppression, which the workers and all the popular strata feel under the domination of the fascist police. The other means is the submission of the proletariat to a culture, which the anti-revolutionaries try to imprint on their minds. There is, undoubtedly, a relation between these two

factors: fear from the police activities and submission to an anti-revolutionary culture. The proletariat submits to this culture because it is deprived of the material conditions for resistance against it. Rejection of this culture is possible only when the proletariat has begun the process of abolishing the bourgeois relations of production. In fact, it is only in the course of political struggle that the class-consciousness of the proletariat will find its greatest possibility to manifest and develop itself. The working class, so long as it considers itself devoid of all kinds of actual power to overthrow the rule of its enemy, cannot make any attempt in the direction of rejecting the dominant culture. It is after embarking on a plan to change the infrastructure that is able to employ the super-structural factors to assure its victory. It would establish its own special moral and cultural outlooks and make them flourish, as the precursor of a new order, absolutely different from the old.

The absolute domination of the enemy, which finds its reflection in the minds of the workers as their absolute inability to change the established order, has the indirect effect of submission to the enemy's culture. Thus, terror and suppression, which is the crystallization of the enemy's power, act as the cause for submission of the worker to the dominant culture. What here is an effect, immediately after its

appearance, turns itself into a new cause for avoidance by the proletariat of the revolutionary struggle.

Therefore, in order to liberate the proletariat from the dominant culture, to cleanse its mind and life of petty bourgeois poisonous thoughts, to terminate its alienation from its special class outlook and equip it with ideological ammunition, it is necessary again to shatter its illusion that it is powerless to destroy the enemy.

The revolutionary power is used to deal with this matter. The application of this power, which in addition to its propaganda nature is accompanied by distinct political agitation on a large scale, makes the proletariat conscious of' a source of power which belongs to it. First, it will find out that the enemy is vulnerable, and it will see that the swift breeze that has just begun would leave no room for the absoluteness of' the enemy's dominance. If this "absolute" is endangered in action, then the absolute can no longer survive in his thought. Therefore, it will of the power which has started its emancipation. Alienation from the vanguard will be replaced by the support, which has materialized inside the proletariat toward it.

Now, this revolutionary vanguard is merely distant

from the proletariat but no longer alienated from it. The proletariat will think of the vanguard with passion not only because it sees that, for its sake, a small group has gone into battle with an enemy equipped with all extensive arsenal, but all the more so because it sees its own future directly aligned with the future of' this small group.

The revolutionary power that is exercised by the proletarian vanguard is the reflection merely of a fraction of the power of the working class. Yet, what is a swift breeze must turn into a devastating storm in order to make it possible to overthrow the established order. Thus, this incomplete reflection must be replaced with a complete reflection of its power. Hence, the exercise of revolutionary power plays a twofold role: on the one hand, it restores to the proletariat its class consciousness as a progressive class, and, on the other hand, it persuades it to play an active role in securing the victory of the struggle which has begun in order to secure its own future. This course begins with passive support by the workers for the revolutionary struggle and, as it continues, will lead to its active support.*

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* As soon as the revolutionary power through its deed is turned into a living tangible reality, the masses, and especially the young workers, intellectuals and students will demonstrate interesting initiatives in the struggle. We cannot foresee the specific initiatives but we call foresee a general picture by an

It is no longer sufficient to speak about the vanguard with enthusiasm and to wish it success wholeheartedly, but it is necessary to turn this "enthusiasm" into "cognition" and this "wish" into assuming a direct role in the struggle. Since the exertion of revolutionary power can, in its course, reach such a turning point, then it can also render the enemy's weapons ineffective. Neither terror nor suppression can hinder the march of the workers towards the source of their vanguard's power. Nor can bourgeois culture hold its previous dominance over their minds, serving as a super-structure for their flight from the struggle and submission to the established order. The spell breaks and the enemy

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analysis of the spirit which will prevail in conditions where revolutionary power is exercised. People start with the simplest initiatives to express their dissatisfaction, thereby adding the "revolutionary power". Street walls will be covered with harsh slogans against the existing conditions. Acts of petty sabotage in locations, establishments or anything belonging to the bourgeois, bureaucratic and comprador enemy, and in general, to the rich, will develop the extent of initiatives. These acts of sabotage; as they continue, will especially endanger the very things that the enemy is extremely afraid of losing. Young workers, cleverly and without leaving any trace, begin to sabotage production. They wreck the machines, intentionally work carelessly or even steal the instruments of labour. These acts, on the whole, demonstrate the tendency of the masses to participate in the struggle and aid the revolutionary power. Each initiative is in itself an experience that prepares them for a greater act. In fact, the masses in this way increase their revolutionary capacity and experience, and go one step forward in assuming a more essential role.

looks like a defeated magician. What makes his defeat is precisely our victory in establishing a most intimate and direct relationship with the proletariat for organizational ties and this attempt is no longer confronted with the hindrances by the workers themselves.

The unity of the proletarian vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist groups and organizations, could not but take such a road. Exertion of the revolutionary power would make the police domination more brutal but wouldn't increase it. This domination cannot possibly increase, for today our enemy has mobilized all its forces to discover and suppress the militants. It only uncovers its real nature and would completely unmask its face revealing to all the people its savagery which, so far, in the absence of any vehement revolutionary movement, it has deceptively disguised.

It is under these circumstances that the revolutionary forces, and at their forefront, the Marxist- Leninists, would come together in order to be able to withstand the enemy's blows and survive. They would either have to join the enemy (i.e. by following a defeatist line which in practice means supporting the enemy), or they would have to join together. To remain isolated is tantamount to annihilation. However, being drawn closer together and even joining forces

does not, as of yet, constitute unity.

The organizational unity of' the organized Marxist-Leninists, which creates the unitary political organization of the proletariat, is realized during circumstances where the exercise of revolutionary power has, in the course of time, reached its climax. With each blow at the enemy, the absolute domination of' the enemy in the minds of the revolutionary masses is demolished and this propels these masses a step towards participation in the struggle.

Thereafter, it is the enemy who has to expose its face more clearly at each step in order to survive and suppress ever more swiftly and, consequently more brutally, its revolutionary enemies. The enemy increases its pressure on all the classes and strata under its domination by the exercise of counter-revolutionary violence against the militants. Thus, the enemy intensifies the contradictions between these classes and itself, and by creating an atmosphere which it is bound to create, it propels the political consciousness of the masses to leap forward. It insanely attacks everything like a wounded beast. It is suspicious of all but its allies who are its sources of power and sustenance. Every small expression of dissatisfaction, every suspicious move, every word of

discontent, is met with the worst reactions. It imprisons, tortures and shoots the people, yearning to restore the bygone security.

The methods it inevitably employs, however, would just as inevitably work against itself. It wants to prevent the masses from participation in a revolutionary movement, yet each moment pushes more of them toward that course of struggle. Thus, it imposes the struggle on the people, seeing the continuation of its domination harder than before, it makes the people's tolerance of this domination more difficult than before. The masses join the struggle, put their power at the disposal of their vanguard and vindicate the specific strategy of the revolutionary struggle with their active participation.

This strategy is the conclusion of the assessment of the degree of revolutionary determination of every dominated class. It necessitates the organizational unity of the Marxist-Leninist elements in order to confirm the leadership of the proletariat, which undoubtedly is the most resistant and revolutionary class. The proletariat having joined the struggle and in order to make this struggle fruitful, needs its own specific political organization. The proletarian vanguard is fed with the power of its class and the proletariat, in depending on its political organization,

secures the necessary assurance for the fruitfulness of its power. Thus, the Worker's Party is born.

In constructing the party of the working class, the correctness of each policy is assessed according to the quality of the methods that it presents for the growing survival of Marxist-Leninist groups and organizations. The survival of these groups and organizations is important due to the fact that these are the actual components of a potential whole. Yet, if this "survival" lacks the character of growth, it fails to develop into a cohesive whole. Thus, every line that would aim at mere survival of the Marxist-Leninist groups and organizations and pays no revolutionary attention to their growth, is an opportunist and defeatist line. We should also demonstrate that this line is, in turn and in the final analysis, a liquidationist line as well. Furthermore, we must demonstrate that the theory of "let us not take the offensive in order to survive", is in fact nothing else but saying "we should allow the police to destroy us in embryo without meeting any hindrance."

If defeatism is liquidationism, then there remains no room for asking, "why should we survive"? All the same, posing this question helps us recognize the opportunistic nature of the above- mentioned theory. This theory of "refraining to take the offensive" means

negating all kinds of constructive attempts to increase the possibilities of the revolutionary forces.

This theory wishes to keep the struggle within the limits of the extremely meager possibilities not controlled by the enemy such as simple gatherings of elements not remarkable in quantity, in fact hardly exceeding the number of one's fingers, and then occupying these elements with the study of Marxist and historical works along with the observance of secrecy. The sphere of activity of these elements to the furthermost point is limited to totally passive and dispersed contacts with some people from each dominated class and strata. Every element in these organizations continues his/her habitual life in this kind of activity and naturally no effort appears necessary to change it.

Notwithstanding, there is no doubt that this gathering has been formed on the basis of realizing the same goals as those of the active revolutionary group, paving the way for the formation of a communist party and mastering the revolutionary theory. Yet this organizational gathering which tries to secure its survival through taking a passive stand against the enemy necessarily has to have a mechanical conception of the process of formation of a party and the mustering of revolutionary theory. It predicts that

the party of the working class will be formed at "an appropriate moment" from the union between the Marxist-Leninist groups which have been able to save themselves from the enemy's blows. The revolutionary theory, too, is the product of the studies which these groups have been able to conduct on Marxism-Leninism, on the revolutionary experiences of other people, on the history of their country and on the passive and dispersed contacts they may have had with the people as the complementary condition. According to this theory, through a series of factors that are inexplicable to us, the historical determinism is to realize the formation of a party. Again the proletarian vanguard, which by now is united, is supposed to draw the masses into the struggle during "favourable conditions".

In this theory, "appropriate moment" and "favourable conditions" are metaphysical conceptions which, without explaining anything, are used to temporarily cover its obvious weaknesses. They are put to work in order to establish a link between the abstract interpretation and analysis of this theory and reality.

If this link is metaphysical, then undoubtedly this relationship will never be real and organic. It is also quite natural that a theory, which is not derived from objective reality, naturally cannot establish a proper

link with the objective reality. The thesis, which to show its correctness and objectivity absolutely avoids going beyond its meager possibilities for existing, will in practice fall into an obvious subjectivism. Thinking of the future but lacking any means to reach it, it resorts to the metaphysics of "appropriate moment" and uses it as a bridge that can only be built in a non-dialectical mind. This theory which by displaying itself in a formula desires to give itself all appearance of mathematical precision, will diverge more than ever, from reality and, from the dialectics of the revolution. It claims: study plus a minimum of organization without any revolutionary striving for its growth plus the "appropriate moment" equals the working class party. And the party of the working class plus "favourable conditions" equals the revolution.

Undoubtedly, this formula cannot be correct as a solution for removing the present difficulties facing the revolutionary forces in the course of organizing the proletariat and the revolutionary masses. The "appropriate moment" and the "favourable conditions" will not materialize unless the revolutionary elements in every moment of their struggle meet the historical necessities properly. Then, what does this formula serve? It serves the opportunism, which justifies its paralyzing fear of the

enemy by presuming that its disintegration is impossible and its domination indestructible. It limits its revolutionary tasks to a point, which avoids any engagement with the police. It devolves the development of the struggle to a metaphysical and consequently, imaginary determinism. Thus, we see that the grouping which originally had the aim of striving to construct the party of the working class, by taking an opportunistic line, gets each moment closer to burying its goal, and becomes interested in its own unfruitful survival more than ever. This thesis, which aspires to serve the proletarian goals, sacrifices these goals in practice in order to save itself. "Let us not take the offensive in order to survive", reveals itself in practice as "let us dismiss all revolutionary endeavors to construct the communist party in order to survive".

Nevertheless, the dialectic of the revolutionary struggle which finds its first great manifestation in the process of the genesis of a proletarian party, not only will not furnish this enthusiasm to survive but will give it the saddest of answers by imposing upon it an untimely death. It is at this same point that we clearly find out what was defeatist is liquidationist as well. It is no longer a debate over the fact that the policy aimed at "survival" has, because of its opportunistic attachment to this aim, lost the ability to grow, rather,

the discussion is about the fact that such a line, in practice, would negate what it had devoutedly set its aim at. This line, in the practice of struggle, will run into a dead-end and will have no way out except by choosing one of two exits: either to adopt an active and revolutionary stand against the enemy and thus save itself; or to turn renegade and look for affection from the police to secure its survival.

The enemy has specific criteria for its behaviour. It says, "come to terms with me in order to survive, accept my rule in order to save yourselves from my deadly blows". Any focus of activity which does not accept this call for unconditional surrender, whatever its field of activity, is considered a focal point of danger and, if it could not impose its survival on the enemy, it has nothing to do other than await the devastating attack of the enemy. There is nothing more rejoicing to the enemy than to have us as harmless victims. It shoots anyone remaining at the barricades. Either, one has to answer each blow with a blow in return or has to come out of the barricade holding a white flag. There is no death more precocious than dying at the barricades without shooting.

But it appears that not all of the pillars of the theory of "survival" are yet demolished because this theory

assumes, as the condition for its soundness, the addition of the principle of secrecy to the principle of "refraining from the offensive". It argues that not only must we refrain from taking the offensive but we must also conceal each of our moves from the enemy's eyes and, naturally, the enemy not knowing us, thus cannot strike us.

If we asked what can guarantee the success of secrecy perhaps we will hear the answer that happens to be the most correct one - fully knowing the elements called into co-operation and continually striving to give them organizational training. The acceptance of this answer as a necessary condition for the preservation of an underground network is irrefutable. What can be refuted is the sufficiency of this condition; there is no need to refer to any historical experience to prove that this condition is insufficient. It is only necessary to take a look at our own present conditions. Our own short-term experiences demonstrate that any kind of over-dependency upon the organizational efficiency of any one comrade is a mistake. In fact, none of us, no matter how careful and sincere, can go on without making mistakes in this area. What can guarantee one hundred percent flawlessness is absolute inactivity. When we take action, study Marxism, try to propagate it, and enjoy some sort of contact (no matter how limited) with

others, it is possible to make mistakes. Not only our own mistakes endanger us, but also the mistakes of others open us to a perpetual front of vulnerability.

In the course of action we inevitably come into contact with elements and circles that are practically careless in guarding themselves and others. At the beginning it is neither possible to recognize them nor is it possible to educate them. I find it unnecessary to back up this reasoning with some tested examples, because I am sure that each militant comrade can enumerate many examples concerning this issue. In general it should be said that danger can always come from any one individual and that putting trust in individuals and their training, no matter how successful, cannot eliminate the dangers completely. However, the problem is that the danger does not end at the level of the individual. It begins with the individual and threatens the entire organization. We should think of how to free the organization from this danger.

Thought should be given as to what can open a defense umbrella over the entire organization, so that mistakes by the individual (what one should always expect) would not destroy the organization. One should find out what must be combined with the principle of secrecy (that necessary but insufficient

condition) so that together they can provide the conditions for our growing survival. Secrecy is a method of defense but, by itself, it is a passive method and remains that way as long as it is not supplemented with firepower.

Thus, it is natural to emphasize that secrecy, without being accompanied by revolutionary power, is a non-active and insecure defense. If secrecy and revolutionary power together must be the condition for our survival, it is unavoidable to refute the fundamental principle of the theory of "survival", i.e., the principle of "refraining to take the offensive". Hence, the thesis of "let us not take the offensive in order to survive" will necessarily be replaced with the policy of "we must take the offensive in order to survive".

* As soon as the revolutionary power through its deed is turned into a living tangible reality, the masses, and especially the young workers, intellectuals and students will demonstrate interesting initiatives in the struggle. We cannot foresee the specific initiatives but we call foresee a general picture by an analysis of the spirit which will prevail in conditions where revolutionary power is exercised. People start with the simplest initiatives to express their dissatisfaction, thereby adding the "revolutionary power". Street walls

will be covered with harsh slogans against the existing conditions. Acts of petty sabotage in locations, establishments or anything belonging to the bourgeois, bureaucratic and comprador enemy, and in general, to the rich, will develop the extent of initiatives. These acts of sabotage; as they continue, will especially endanger the very things that the enemy is extremely afraid of losing. Young workers, cleverly and without leaving any trace, begin to sabotage production. They wreck the machines, intentionally work carelessly or even steal the instruments of labour. These acts, on the whole, demonstrate the tendency of the masses to participate in the struggle and aid the revolutionary power. Each initiative is in itself an experience that prepares them for a greater act. In fact, the masses in this way increase their revolutionary capacity and experience, and go one step forward in assuming a more essential role.

An Analysis of One Year of Urban and Mountain Guerrilla Warfare - How did the Siahkal Insurrection Begin?

Hamid Ashraf

Introduction

One year since the beginning of the guerrilla warfare in Iran, aspects of this movement are still unknown to many who have engaged in this struggle and for others. In this pamphlet I try to shed light on different features of one year of struggle and present an analysis of the movement's experiences.

Under the circumstances that the police forces' pressure had obstructed any constructive attempt of political groups and any activity of dissidents had been suppressed with extreme violence, and tremendous fear and humiliation had created a great barrier the Jungle Group started activity. We had actually come to this conclusion that forming a broad-based organization with a purpose to organize people would not be possible at the beginning of the struggle due to the harsh police state. In brief and to put in simple words, the main aim of the group was to break the atmosphere of repression in the Iranian political milieu and show the people of our country that the only possible way of struggle is armed struggle.

The Jungle Group was founded by three former cadres of a group formed in 1966[1]. These three was remnants of a group aiming at initiating armed struggle in Iran. In winter 1967 the group received a heavy blow and its main leaders were arrested. Some cadres gave up political activity and two cadres could go abroad and join the anti-imperialist anti-Zionist movement of Palestine. These two planned to return to Iran after gaining military experiences.

Three members of the group whose identity had not been revealed to the police stayed in Iran to found a new group based on the experience of the disbanded one. Having taken preliminary steps, these three succeeded to recruit 32 sympathizers who advocated starting an armed struggle. These people were organized in a clandestine group and began to provide logistics. In this period, all the cadres lived as ordinary people without going to hideout, and for this reason they always faced the risk of being detained. This group that was later known as the Jungle Group was reorganized in fall 1968. The group had eight cadres that increased to 22 in a period from fall 1968 to

1. This group was founded by Bijan Jazani and Hassan Zia Zarifi. The group was preparing to form an armed struggle against the former regime but police could infiltrate the group and arrested its members before any action in 1967. The key members were sentenced to long-term prison. In a criminal extrajudicial killing, the Shah's regime killed these political prisoners in 1955.

winter 1969.

Logistical activities of the group until summer 1969 included providing 14 short and long guns, preparing maps of the north of Iran, carrying out regular reconnaissance expeditions in mountainous areas and preparing an information archive. Now, one of the cadres that had fled abroad secretly returned to Iran. Spending a little while in prisons of Arab countries, this comrade, Aliakbar Safaei Farahani, could join Fatah where he, now nicknamed Abu Abbas, was promoted to the rank of the commander of northern fronts due to his brilliant qualities. He returned to Iran alone without knowing about the fate of the remnants of the group. His plan was to find and gather old comrades and organize a peasant revolt. In Iran, he noticed a well-prepared group which had acquired all necessary provisions existed and could serve for the implementation of his plans.

With hopes revived due to the good preparation of the group, Safaei returned to the Palestinian camps to seek help from the Palestinian movement and collect some ammunition. In spring 1970, the ammunition were at hand, and comrade Safaei, as well as another cadre who had fled the country with him, came back to Iran. Their preparations equipped the group satisfactorily. From then on, the group focused on

implementing logistical plans and further reconnaissance expeditions. To provide financial resources, the group invaded a branch of Bank Melli Iran (in Vozara Street, Tehran) and confiscated a sum amounting to 1,600,000 Rials that was totally spent for the group's plans.

By assistance of our comrades in the north[2] we organized a system of food storage and communications. In September 1970 everything was ready for the start: maps, pistols, machine guns, ammunition, explosives, individual and collective equipments, communication system etc.

2. North means here Iranian northern provinces stretched along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Heavy rainfalls in this area have created dense forests suitable for guerrilla warfare.

Chapter 1 - From Makaar Valley to Siahkal

A six-member team of mountain vanguards started their expedition from Makaar Valley, near Chalus, toward the west on Sept. 06, 1970. Appointments were arranged to allow the team communicate with cells in towns during passing through the areas where local comrades resided in foothills.

The group arranged its movements in highland forests of Gilan and Mazandaran provinces from west to east in order to survey the region from geographical and military standpoints. The group had planned to start military operations as immediately as the preliminary reconnaissance that allowed the team to have well-organized mobility completed. The operation was to assail a military station and disarming its personnel. The team should immediately leave the area in order to escape the expected reaction of the enemy as it was well known that after the first guerrilla operation, villagers, who didn't have a clear understanding of guerrillas, would not respond favorably. We knew only that continuing military operations could gradually impress residents of rural areas and encourage them to support the movement morally and physically.

Based on these two understandings – the military reaction of the regime and the absence of quick support from villagers – we had decided that the team should leave the area immediately after the operation and inflict the next blow in another area where the enemy did not expect another operation. The objective of the operations in this phase was to declare the beginning of armed struggle and changing the political atmosphere of the country. In brief, the first strategic objective was to change the political atmosphere and set forth the idea of armed struggle before political organizations and put an end on the long-lasted debates on this matter.

This phase should be carried out by elite guerrillas with the ability of considerable mobility, performing small but spectacular attacks, and avoiding engagement in heavy conflicts with enemy forces.

Preparations for this plan had been made, and the guerrillas, relying on their own self-sacrifice spirit and revolutionary faith, had prepared themselves to adapt to these conditions. Acquaintance and adaptation to neighborhoods and routes in the forests and mountains, providing food reserves and individual and collective requirements were the matter that would be handled little by little.

These were all technical issues of the first phase of the struggle in the mountain that could be dealt with well. But, the jungle group had to face other problems. It was thought that "armed propaganda" in the northern towns located close to the center of operations should coincide with the operation in the mountain. We even talked about the priority of operations in urban areas. However, the jungle group had limited resources and energy and therefore could not solve both problems specially because urban cadres had not yet received military training and our professional cadres were no more than one or two. Another matter was that the group had set forth the plans that required more energy. Under these circumstances, contacting other revolutionary groups was really necessary. Therefore, we began regular meetings with the group of comrade Ahmadzadeh[3]. Owing to security considerations and counter-intelligence requirements the relationship between the two groups developed very cautiously and was focused on theoretical issues of the Iranian revolution.

Ahmadzadeh group, based on experiences of the Brazilian revolutionary movement, recommended organizing guerrilla warfare in urban areas. The group favored the idea that the movement should first

3. Masoud Ahmadzadeh, a cofounder of OIPGF, arrested, tortured and executed in 1971.

flourish in cities and from then on the struggle should begin in the countryside based on the expanded movement in cities. In other words, they believed that the struggle's focus should in the second phase be shifted from the city to the countryside. On the other hand, the Jungle Group suggested the simultaneous beginning of the warfare in urban and rural areas. Our argument was based on the propaganda character of armed struggle at its beginning. We thought the task should be carried out in both town and countryside. Albeit, we gave priority to the urban warfare but this priority was tactical because we thought operations in cities would prepare public opinion to pay attentions to the operations in the mountain and would render it greater influence. But, to comrades in Ahmadzadeh group the time preference had a strategic character. At any rate, connections between the two groups focused on theoretical issues throughout fall 1970. The mountain guerrilla band proceeded toward the west, and the two groups had not yet reached agreement.

To Ahmadzadeh group, organizing the mountain struggle was impractical and hold that only based on the energy accumulated in urban warfare we can continue the struggle in mountains. And really, resources of their group were not to the extent to let organized attempts in urban areas. In fact, they did not have much experience in the urban guerrilla warfare,

and on the other hand – and as the more important matter – they were not in the picture on our resources and our practical steps. We decided to reveal our measures after reaching theoretical agreement with them. However, counter-intelligence precautions led to prolongation of debates and failure to conclusive final agreement.

The commander of the mountain guerrilla band, comrade Safaei was ready to initiate the planned operations. He specially counted on the possibility of recruiting men from Ahmadzadeh group. Furthermore, Ahmadzadeh group had at its disposal means in some towns of Mazandaran Province that could settle major problems facing the mountain guerrilla band. Therefore, comrade Safaei continuously urged us to reach an agreement with Ahmadzadeh group, and this happened in early January 1971. However, Ahmadzadeh group still based the possibility of operations in the mountain on starting operations in towns and believed that the mountain band should wait for the organization and preparation of urban cadres. On the other hand, we favored simultaneity because the mountain band was in a fit condition to carry out operation and surely problems cropped up if we failed to trigger off operations as scheduled. These possible problems were such as:

1. Possible danger arising from lengthening the reconnaissance period and unwanted premature clashes with gendarmerie forces
2. Demoralization of mountain cadres resulting from unlimited waiting

For these reasons, the commander of the mountain guerrilla band found it wise to set about the combat, especially because the commander's mistrust of the successful settlement of theoretical debates between the two groups and a reaching a possible rapid agreement was growing. Ultimately, urban cadres of the mountain guerrilla band asked for a two-month respite to organize men and prepare them to join the band. However, the plan did not proceed as expected regarding the unprofessional career of Ahmadzadeh group's cadre and the fact that they resided in various cities and towns and not all of them were convinced of an agreement that caused further persistence of debates. The two-month respite ended and we had not yet taken practical measures though we expected a change to happen soon. The mountain guerrilla band, in the meanwhile, carried out further reconnaissance expedition in eastern areas of Mazandaran Province that was beyond the plan. This extra expedition finished in February. The band could no longer continue its activities in the same mode. It should either retreat to the city or start the operations (up to

this date, the number of members of the band, which still relied on its own limited resources, increased to nine but one of the men was missed in the forest and the search for him for several days came to nothing).

The mountain guerrilla band carried out two reconnaissance expeditions (one lasted two mouths and another one and a half month) that covered from Chalus valley to Khalkhal, east of Mazandaran[4] and from Chalus valley to Ramian in east of Mazandaran[5], and were ready to engage in the action. They had high morale and had grown strong, vigorous and were now full-blown experienced guerrillas.

At any rate, the commander of the mountain guerrilla band informed that he would trigger off operations in February despite the hesitation of urban cadres. Our urban segment had not yet fully prepared plans for operations in cities but we were prepared to perform attacks with propaganda purposes. In January, one of the cadres of the jungle guerrilla band, who was a conscript officer in the army, and for this reason had assigned his political responsibilities to another comrade, was arrested for reasons impertinent to the guerrilla band. He was comrade Ghaffur Hassanpour who had broad information about our small group.

4. To be corrected to read west of Gilan.
5. To be corrected to read north of Gorgan.

He was tortured for twenty days that led to his murder. Under torture, he finally made some confessions. These confessions provided clues for finding other members of the jungle group. Other members of the group who did not expect the exposure of information on activities of the group (we thought because the comrade had been arrested for matters impertinent to our group he would not have revealed information on the group but this was a serious miscalculation, and the members whose identity had been discovered by the enemy should go underground as promptly as possible) were surprised and arrested.

Waiting for a long time and the lack of a strong underground urban organization at that time led to disastrous consequences on February 2. On this day, the planned assault of the security forces of the regime began against us. Within 24 hours three comrades in Gilan and five in Tehran were arrested and so only five out of the whole urban members of the group survived. In fact, our urban network was disbanded. Now, a worthy member from Ahmadzadeh group named comrade Farhoodi joined the countryside[6] band and the number of the band increased to nine. They moved from east of Mazandaran to Siahkal area

6. The same mountain band.

by cars and deployed in southern hills of Siahkal, Deylaman mountains, and prepared to start operations. On February 5, we contacted comrades of the countryside band and informed them of the received blows. Neither we nor any member of the countryside band knew another member, comrade Nayyeri[7], who was a schoolteacher in Siahkal hills and knew the location of hidden food storages, had been arrested too. Of course, this comrade was not aware that the countryside band had taken position near Siahkal. We, still uninformed of the arrest, came to the conclusion that he would be arrested soon. Therefore, the countryside band decided to inform him that he should hide himself from the police.

On February 8, the date that was planned for a raid on the gendarmerie station, comrade Hadi Bandehkhoda descended from the mountain to meet comrade Nayyeri, the young teacher in Shaghuzlat village, and tell him about the imminent threat of arrest and help him escape. However, he was unaware of the damage which inflicted upon the urban organization had been extended to the rural organization and the gendarmerie personnel had kept a watch on Nayyeri's abode. At any rate, comrade Hadi Bandehkhoda got caught by the enemy after an armed clash. The

7. Under savage tortures, comrade Iraj Nayyeri revealed the location of the food storage in Kakuh Peak, Siahkal. He was sentenced to life in prison by the military court.

comrades in the heights heard the shooting and decided to start the attack according to the plan in order to release the captured comrade.

On the dawn of February 8, they left the camp and after taking the control of a minibus in Siahkal-Lunak road waged attacks on Siahkal gendarmerie station. The main target was the gendarmerie station and forestry station. The whole inventory of the gendarmerie station, including nine rifles and machineguns were confiscated. The deputy commander of the gendarmerie station and another person were killed in the operations. The comrades retreated to southern heights without suffering any casualties. (Furthermore, the arrested comrade was not found in the gendarmerie station because the commander of the station had already transferred him to Rasht[8].)

From February 8 to Feb. 27, 1971 the mountain band was the subject of concentrated attacks of the enemy. They fought bravely and destroyed more than 60 officers and privates of the enemy army.

8. The capital of Gilan Province.

Chapter 2

This has been a question for everybody: "why did the mountain band lapse so quickly into debacle?"

There have been various analyses to explain this failure but various aspects of this attempt have not been clear to many who have discussed this failure. Here we try to discuss main and secondary causes of the failure but some points should be noted in advance.

Our group started operations with this assumption that we might be destroyed in every moment of the action. We had endeavored extremely to conceal our activities. But were we actually successful in this attempt? Our comrades carried out reconnaissance in the mountain and the forest for months without leaving a trace, and our urban and communicational cadres supplied their logistic needs. We knew the pre-operational activities should last too long. We knew this well and had experienced it (here, the contradiction between preparation time and preparation quality appears). A group has to make preparations without which it cannot act, and naturally better preparation would increase the chance of success. On the other hand, preparation should be completed in a limited span of time because this time by itself is a negative factor for inexperienced groups

at the beginning of activity because it allows the police to trace and strike the group or team that is not yet well-experienced. We comprehended this contradiction but we could not estimate the correct time of beginning. Therefore, the desire to begin operations with greater means discouraged us from acting on the date we had planned and so time worked against us and in favor of the enemy. We received blows in the city without making an action. It should be pointed out that timing is a negative factor for a group or team only before beginning operations because the group still does not enjoy a practical experience of confrontation with the enemy, but certainly as operation begins and the group starts to get experienced in action and develops into a guerilla organization timing would no longer play a negative role. From then on, the future belongs to revolutionaries, and time would serve as a positive factor.

In my opinion, the reasons that came together to lead to destruction of the mountain band were mainly tactical errors. But, the mountain band committed a big strategic fault in terms of political, military and commandership that are described here. The tactical reasons for the failure of the mountain band were:

1. Delay in beginning the operations

2. The absence of a strong clandestine organization with secret cadres
3. The absence of a well-organized counter-intelligence system
4. Lack of practical and theoretical coordination with other groups
5. Lack of firmness of members of the mountain band in handling daily businesses so that when four guerrillas were captured by some villagers they, due to their subjectivism, did not react violently based on military rules lest the villagers were hurt. They thought not a single villager should be hurt under any conditions, therefore when the villagers attempted to arrest these comrades they did not use their arms. They ignored this principle who were well aware of: in early steps of the guerrilla warfare, villagers cannot grasp the purpose of a small guerilla band and therefore they react according to current norms.

The guerrilla's firmness and vigor, instead of tenderness and moderation, guarantees the survival of the guerilla. In early steps, moderation is a weakness. The guerrilla must prove his existence with full power and violence. Afterwards he will be able to carry out operations in the interest of peasantry and against enemies. Only in this way peasants become aware of the guerrilla's power and purpose and would back him.

But, the main cause of the failure of the mountain band was something else. The mountain band should have been self-dependent and continue its movement and struggle only based on its own preparations and logistics without relying on the urban organization. The main cause should be sought in the change of the strategic plan of the mountain band. In last weeks of the reconnaissance, the band came to this conclusion that operations should be planned in such a way that could have an impact on the area of operations.

So, the theory of "locally-impacting operations" was replaced by the "nationwide-impacting operations." The tactical result of this strategic change was that comrades in the mountain band should not leave the area after the first attack and they should remain in the proximity and continue tactical reconnaissance to strike the enemy in the same area so that persistent blows affect the area and encourage the people to involve in the struggle. This change in the strategic plan led to the neglecting of the indispensable principle of "permanent mobility" and remained in the area and planned to continue tactical reconnaissance of the area for 30 days and then quit the area for the east without leaving behind a trace, stay away based on existing logistics and return to the first spot to begin some operations in order to complete the impact of their action in Lahijan area.

Growing disputes between tea raising peasants and the Tea Organization, on the one hand, and between local livestock raisers and Natural Resources Organization, on the other hand, as well as the people's opposition to the bureaucracy and influential local officials heralded favorable conditions.

Furthermore, the commander of the mountain band did not expect that the enemy would send such a great army to destroy an eight-member band. The commander of the band expected the Lahijan company, at maximum, would be sent to suppress the band and never thought the Gilan gendarmerie battalion, as well as the whole police force and army in the region, would be mobilized to find guerrillas with tens of helicopters. Actually, this did happen. General Oveisi, the general commander of Gendarmerie, personally came to Siahkal and formed a headquarters and led counter-insurrection operations. Even Gholamreza, the Shah's brother, was sent to region for inspection and visit. The Gilan gendarmerie battalion brought all routes and communications under its precise control and besieged the area. An extra military unit moved from Manjil garrison to Siahkal.

So, the mountain band, after attacking the Siahkal gendarmerie station, retreated to southern heights and

engaged in reconnaissance and patrolling according to its plan. Normally, for logistics, they depended on the food storages in Kakuh peak that had been built with the assistance of Nayyeri, the captured teacher.

As we knew later, Nayyeri was put under torture and disclosed the location of the food storage. Therefore, the enemy concentrated its forces around the Kakuh and by using all means, especially helicopters, surrounded four comrades of the mountain band who had descended the mountain to take some food. Nature was also unfavorable because trees had shed their leaves in the winter and so being visible was a negative factor for the guerrilla and allowed the enemy to take advantage of helicopters.

Fedayeen[9] of the mountain band fought for 48 hours, and when their ammunition was depleted two of them committed self-sacrifice [suicidal explosion] and killed themselves, as well as enemy stooges. The two of them, extremely weary and almost lifeless, were captured. One of the guerrillas could escape the siege but was found half-dead few days later on February 27. In this way, out of the nine-member mountain band seven were captured and two were killed in the combat. In total, out of the 22 members of the urban

9. Means self-sacrificing militant, originally the name Ismaili assassinates chosen to call themselves.

and mountain organization 17 were arrested out of which 13 were executed by stooges of imperialism on March 1971. Only five members the group survived the massacre and could escape the arrest. Remnants of the group condemned General Farsiu, the chief military prosecutor, in a revolutionary trial and assassinated him in the dawn of April 7, 1971 in revenge for the execution of their comrades.

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