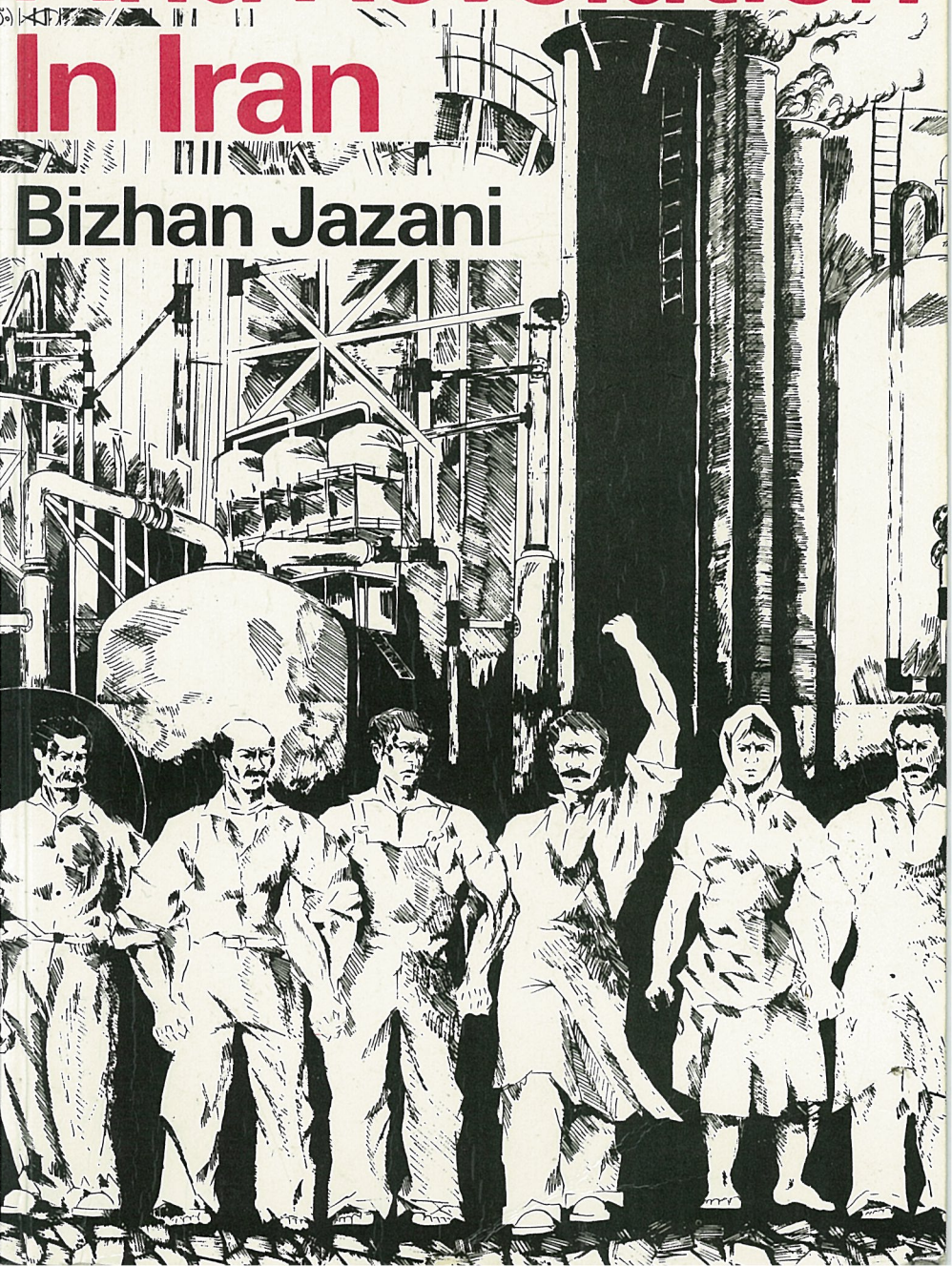


Capitalism And Revolution In Iran



Bizhan Jazani



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**Selected Writings of
Bizhan Jazani**

Bizhan Jazani

Translated by the Iran
Committee



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Preface

That Iran is a crucial country in today's world needs little explanation. Known to people throughout the West as the second largest supplier of Middle East oil, it is equally important for other reasons. With by far the largest population of any Middle East country (except Turkey), it lies at the centre of a geographical nexus between the Soviet Union immediately to its North, the giant Arab oil producers (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait) to its West, and the Indian sub-continent to the East. Buffer of reaction or conveyor belt of revolution — those have been the possible destinies of Iran ever since the October Revolution of 1917. These mutually exclusive alternatives have been all the more pregnant with impact for the Middle East because of Iran's ethnic composition, containing as it does major national minorities who also live in the neighbouring states of Iraq, Turkey, the U.S.S.R., Afghanistan and Pakistan. Little wonder, then, that first Britain and subsequently the U.S.A. have been so assiduous ever since the present Shah's father was foisted on the throne, to ensure that Iran remain a faithful political client (or to use the more modern term, a dependent sub-imperialist centre) on behalf of Western capitalism in the region. Little wonder, too, that the shock to the West of the Shah's overthrow in February 1979 has been as much psychological and political as economic.

Through the long years of repression and autocracy that followed the CIA's successful reinstallation of the Shah in 1953, it seemed to many that a permanent political night had been established in Iran. The combination of ferocious repression (the notorious SAVAK secret police), enormous imperialist assistance to the Shah's regime at every level, and mounting oil revenues seemed to be proving a successful formula for stable dictatorship that could apparently torture or buy its way to permanence for an almost indefinite period of time. The old Left, centred on the Tudeh Party, had been shattered in the aftermath of the 1953 coup. It remained to a reconstituted Left at the end of the 1960s to smash the myth of the Shah's invincibility. And it was the groups and individuals who in 1971 came together in the Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas (O.I.P.F.G.) (alternatively known as the *Fedai e Khalq*) who were at the heart of this new opposition. It was they — amid a welter of their comrades gaoled, tortured and butchered by the regime — who paved the way for the

mass movement that, less than a decade later and under very different leadership, forced the ignominious flight of the 'King of Kings'.

No one was more influential in shaping the O.I.P.F.G.'s understanding of Iranian society and conception of struggle than Bizhan Jazani, the author of this book. Born in Tehran in 1937, he became actively involved in politics even in his childhood. At the age of sixteen, immediately after the 1953 coup, he was imprisoned for the first time. In and out of gaol thereafter, he was frequently tortured by the Shah's police. In 1963, he formed an independent Marxist-Leninist group together with some others who were deeply critical of what they saw as the treachery of the Tudeh Party leadership in the years following the coup. It was this group that was the first to recognise the necessity of armed struggle in Iran, and began the long years of preparation for it. The group was discovered and attacked by the secret police in 1967. Jazani and a few other members were detained. The remaining members carried on with their preparations. Four years later, they started the armed struggle against the Shah with the so-called Siahkal Resurgence of 1971. In this incident, a group of guerrillas attacked a gendarmerie base at Siahkal in the Elburz Mountains north of Tehran. It marked the beginning of serious revolutionary struggle against the Shah's regime. And later in the same year, they came together with other elements to found the O.I.P.F.G. or *Fedai e Khalq*.

As for Jazani, he was condemned to 15 years imprisonment. But this did not stop his political work. He wrote many important treatises while in gaol, including those translated here into English and published in this book. While in prison, he also persevered in his work as an artist; he produced some remarkable pictures in a modern revolutionary tradition of painting, including 'The Prisoner' and 'The Siahkal'. Meanwhile the regime was growing increasingly fearful of him and his fellow revolutionaries, despite the fact that they were behind bars. It now seems clear that the regime became determined to murder them, and eventually it was announced that Jazani and eight other comrades had been killed 'while attempting to escape'.

Jazani's writings on the history of Iran, its configuration of class forces, and the appropriate forms of armed struggle played a leading, possibly dominant, part in shaping the theory and practice of the O.I.P.F.G. And it was the O.I.P.F.G. — through its pioneering attempts at armed struggle — that broke through the pall of the people's political dejection and inactivity, and by example rebuilt the foundations of anti-Shah resistance. The Iranian people owe a great debt today both to Bizhan Jazani and to his fellow comrades in the O.I.P.F.G.

This is the reason for Zed Press publishing this posthumous collection of Jazani's most important writings. We must take this opportunity to thank the Iran Committee in London for having suggested the conception of this book to us, for having undertaken the translation out of Farsi, and for having borne with us so patiently in the process of getting this book published.

But we would be failing in our duty as a socialist publisher if we did not at the same time make clear that there is another, equally important reason why

Bizhan Jazani's work should be made available to a wider audience than just in Iran. Some historians, theorists and political activists disagree with Jazani's analysis of Iranian society and with his views on the armed struggle. But it remains incontrovertible that Bizhan Jazani is one of that growing band of Third World intellectuals who have sought to understand the particular and distorted forms that capitalism takes in their own countries. Jazani has done so for Iran without any mechanistic transplantation of a simplistic Marxism from some other society. Instead he fought politically and intellectually to use Marxism as a *method* which must be applied to the concrete realities of each particular social formation in the Third World, if the impact of imperialism is to be properly understood and the working class, peasantry and revolutionary intelligentsia are correctly to identify who is the enemy, and what are the methods and goals of struggle. It is Bizhan Jazani's contribution in this respect that makes his work important beyond the confines of Iran. We offer it as a memorial to his laying down his life for the Iranian people in their struggle for freedom and socialism, and in the hope that his writings hold lessons for Third World revolutionaries elsewhere.

The Publishers

July 1980

Foreword:

The O.I.P.F.G./Fedaii e Khalq

Publisher's Note: *What follows is a description of the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas (O.I.P.F.G.), or Fedaii e Khalq as it is sometimes known. The description has been written by the O.I.P.F.G. itself. We include it in this volume of Bizhan Jazani's writings because Jazani was not an intellectual labouring away in isolation. He was first and foremost a political activist. He was the founder of a group which later took a leading part in forming the O.I.P.F.G. in 1971. And he not only helped to shape his comrades' views but his own analysis was obviously influenced by the liberation movement of which he was a part. The text below has been compiled from two O.I.P.F.G. documents: an editorial from the Organisation's journal, Nabard-e Khalq, (No. 7, May 1976) and A Short Biographical Note on Comrade Hamid Ashraf (leader of the O.I.P.F.G.).*

History of the O.I.P.F.G.: An Overview

The Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas (O.I.P.F.G.) came into being in April 1971 following the assault by a guerrilla unit on the gendarmerie base at Siakhkal in the Elburz Mountains north of Tehran. The assault, subsequently known as the Siakhkal Resurgence, heralded the start of armed struggle in Iran. Yet, before they joined together to create the O.I.P.F.G., the component parts of the Organisation had a history of struggle. Its eventual establishment was the result of a Marxist-Leninist analysis of socio-economic and political conditions in Iran as well as an assessment of the experiences and forces of revolution and counter-revolution internationally. Armed struggle was then adopted as a method because of its strategic and tactical value.

In the wake of the strategic defeats sustained by the proletariat and the liberation movement in Iran, in the wake of defeatist and conciliationist attitudes adopted by the opportunist leadership of both Left and Right, and following years of underground 'political' activities — all of which had failed seriously to shake the enemy — the start of armed struggle by the O.I.P.F.G. represented a turning point. It ended years of retreat by the movement and the beginning of its advance.

In the years of tireless and determined activities since 1971, the O.I.P.F.G. has amply proved that it has a creative understanding of Marxism-Leninism

and that its members are ever ready to defend it with their lives,

During the whole fifty year history of the proletarian movement in Iran, there has never been a communist organisation like the O.I.P.F.G., one that conducted its affairs on the basis of the laws governing the socio-economic formation and class struggle in our country and which acted correctly as the vanguard of the proletariat. Despite its short history, the organisation is the bearer of the proletarian and revolutionary tradition in Iran. Until such time as it feels able to form a proletarian party with the task of setting up a socialist state (i.e. the initial phase of communism), it will continue to play the limited and relative role of such a party.

During six years of bloody confrontation with the anti-popular, imperialist-orientated and monarcho-fascist regime of Iran, the O.I.P.F.G. has sustained many hundreds of casualties (more than 400 dead and hundreds more imprisoned) fighting for the liberation of the people and the proletariat. But despite this high level of sacrifice, it has managed to attain such a degree of political and organisational stability that it has now been accepted by all as a vanguard organisation that has exposed all the opportunistic tendencies and elements within the liberation movement. All this has become possible because of the widespread support given to the O.I.P.F.G. by the masses and by the employment of tactics suitable to the conditions of fascist suppression in Iran.

Today [1978], the armed struggle in Iran has gone beyond the first strategic phase of the struggle; it has now entered the stage of mass mobilisation. In all these developments the O.I.P.F.G., has played, and continues to play, a strategic rôle in the proletarian as well as the liberation movement in Iran. The revolutionary armed movement, and the O.I.P.F.G. as the vanguard of this movement, has forced the most powerful state in the Middle East to admit that it is unable to suppress the revolutionary movement. Recently, even the Shah himself was obliged to admit, contrary to his earlier claims, that he is powerless in the face of armed struggle.

One of the most important aspects of the Iranian revolutionary movement is the true solidarity that exists between the leadership and the mass of fighters: the leadership is always at the forefront of the struggle to guide and set a practical example to the masses. This is an entirely different picture from the past, when, as soon as the struggle reached critical points in Iran, the leadership of the proletarian and nationalist movements betrayed the masses and sided with the regime; at best they left the country and took up residence abroad 'in expectation of better timing'. The new tradition, by contrast, runs counter to this old opportunistic tendency. During the past six years the O.I.P.F.G. has demonstrated time and again that its leaders are always ready to fight the enemy side by side with their members. Comrades Safai-Farahani, Ahmad-Zadeh, Pouyan and Jazani (the author of this book) are but a few who did not flinch from martyrdom when the struggle reached a critical point. The most prominent example of such martyrs is Comrade Hamid Ashraf, the late leader of the O.I.P.F.G.

The Leadership

Hamid Ashraf was born in 1946. He entered the Technical Faculty of the University of Tehran in 1966. He then became university champion in mountaineering and gymnastics. His political activities in left movements started while still at high school, and at university he was a prominent student activist. His high school days were marked by his organisational activities with a Marxist-Leninist group (the Jazani group) that believed in armed struggle and had been preparing for the political as well as practical aspects of such a struggle. He joined the group in 1964 and took part in the preparation for armed struggle. Comrade Hamid's professional underground revolutionary life began in 1969.

The Jazani Group

The Jazani group was attacked by the secret police in 1967 and its leaders were detained. Following this attack two members of the group, whose activities had been discovered by the police, left the country and joined the forces of the Palestinian revolution in order to acquire military experience. Comrade Hamid and two other comrades, whose activities had not been discovered, set about creating a new group based on the organisational experience of the previous group. On the basis of work undertaken by these three comrades, twenty-two people who believed in the strategy of armed struggle, came together and formed a politico-military group and began preparatory operations.

The Organisation Takes Shape

The return of the two comrades (Safai-Farahani and Ashtiani) improved the quality of the group. It was then that the leading cell assigned tasks to the various members on the basis of which different cells were formed to carry out future tasks. Comrade Hamid Ashraf was assigned the task of co-ordinating the cells and handling communications. Comrade Safai-Farahani, as leader of the mountain guerrilla unit, was dispatched to the northern province to prepare for the start of armed struggle. With the departure of this unit, Comrade Hamid took charge of maintaining communication with another Marxist-Leninist group that was preparing for armed struggle (this was the Ahmad-Zadeh group, which together with the above, formed the O.I.P.F.G. later in 1971).

Hamid Ashraf, Leader of the O.I.P.F.G.

It was during this time that extensive consultations between the two groups, which had differences of approach regarding the tactics of armed struggle, led to closer practical co-operation. At the same time, Comrade Hamid was in constant touch with the mountain guerrilla unit, trying indefatigably to supply their needs for the start of armed struggle. He met the commander of the unit, Safai-Farahani, in the northern mountains three days before the assault on the Siahkal gendarmerie post and gave him the latest information about

general conditions. In this meeting the two comrades reviewed the general plan of assault and the start of armed struggle in Iran:-

After the birth of the armed revolutionary movement, symbolised by the Siahkal Resurgence and the events that followed, the role of Hamid Ashraf assumed more important dimensions. His role in armed operations, the continuing exchange of views with the Ahmad-Zadeh group and the eventual amalgamation of the two groups in the O.I.P.F.G. were his main work during this period.

Hamid Ashraf's phenomenal work in organising the O.I.P.F.G. from the start, particularly after the heavy blows sustained by the Organisation during 1971-72 (and which had drastically reduced its fighters), is specially noteworthy. With rare dexterity he managed to re-form the damaged sections and improve their performance.

During six years of armed struggle Comrade Hamid Ashraf, as a leading cadre of the O.I.P.F.G., successfully led a great many armed operations against the enemy. In many such operations he skilfully and with speed, outwitted the regime's forces, sowed confusion among their ranks and having destroyed their force returned safely to base to plan further attacks against the Shah's regime.

His main qualities were revolutionary patience, decisiveness, and coolness. His attitude towards other comrades was to listen patiently and attentively to their ideas, suggestions and criticism, and then deal with each case according to its merits . . .

'It Is History That Creates Heroes'

The factors contributing to the emergence and development of Comrade Hamid and hundreds of other similar revolutionaries are not inherent in these champions of liberty. They are, rather, the necessary result of the dialectical growth of these fighters inside a developing current which came into being according to the prevailing needs of the society. It is not Hamid Ashrafs who create and develop a movement, rather it is the organisation and revolutionary current that, by adopting a correct strategy during a specific historical phase, bring about the emergence of these champions. It is not heroes that make history, it is history that creates heroes. As long as these individuals' work is in line with the development of history and corresponds with the essentials of the society's economic growth and the needs of the vanguard class, they are bound to become prominent personalities. Conversely, should these individuals move against the historical current, their attempt is doomed to failure and, despite their power and ability, their position becomes untenable, and they themselves become frustrated and objects of ridicule.

This fundamental rule governing the relationship between the conditions of struggle, armed struggle and its cadres holds true in our country. Thus Comrade Hamid Ashraf ranks amongst those remarkable personalities who have correctly diagnosed the conditions under which society will grow and have grasped how to change these conditions. By moving along the path of revolutionary armed struggle, he succeeded in playing a prominent role in the

life of our society. In particular, he had an unshakeable belief in the historical role of the proletariat in leading the revolutionary liberation movement of the peoples of Iran. Hence his indefatigable work in the Organisation expanding the links between the working class and the revolutionary movement. It was in furtherance of this noble aim that in the summer of 1976 Comrad Hamid, the leader of the O.I.P.F.G., together with some other comrades, was involved in a battle with the enemy during which he fought with a decisiveness and resoluteness worthy only of a communist. At the end of the battle he was killed.

The martyrdom of Comrade Hamid, while a great loss for the armed movement and our people, is at the same time indicative of the fact that the guerrilla fighters, irrespective of their position in the Organisation, are always at the forefront of the struggle against the Shah's tyrannical regime and will never flinch from their duties. This is a highly important factor in our country. It is only thus that the bitter memory left by the treacherous opportunists of Left and Right, chiefly those of the leadership of the defunct Tudeh (Communist) Party, who live abroad, can be erased from the minds of our people and especially from the minds of the working class — a memory that had created a lingering pessimism about the leadership of all political organisations.

Comrade Hamid Ashraf was an exemplary Fedaii guerrilla, a creative Marxist-Leninist, and a true communist with a firm belief in socialism and proletarian internationalism.

The Outlook of the O.I.P.F.G.

The Siahkal Resurgence of February 1971 marked the start of the Iranian people's armed movement. The aim was to open the way for the general struggles of the peoples of Iran. The hallmark of the movement was, therefore, not a sudden general uprising by the masses, but a calculated move by a small vanguard force. Armed with a creative Marxism-Leninism, inspired by the will of the people, and grasping the historical necessities and its own mission this small vanguard group was determined to break the political deadlock in Iran. This revolutionary move was welcomed by the masses of the people who had for so many years been deprived of the right to shape their own destiny. For they were trapped by internal exploiters and foreign imperialists, and have had to endure the injustices imposed upon them by the dictatorial system of the dependent bourgeoisie.

Prior to the start of open conflict with the regime, the armed movement went through a phase of clandestine preparation that lasted for years.

The Point of Departure

The point of departure was, on the one hand, the defeat of peaceful political methods of struggle and, on the other hand, the bankruptcy of underground political activities. This form of political activity had, until the Siahkal Resurgence, been the norm among most Marxist forces in the society. But

such methods of work had caused many vanguard forces to assume an inactive posture in the face of the regime's brutal methods and to adopt a policy of waiting for better times. It was in such conditions that the vanguard of the movement began political and practical preparations for the armed struggle.

The vanguards of the armed movement began the work by a scientific analysis of the socio-economic and political state of the country. These analyses are to be found in 'On the Necessity of Armed Struggle and the Refutation of the Theory of Survival', 'Armed Struggle: A Strategy as well as a Tactic', and 'What a Revolutionary Must Know'. They form the theoretical basis of the armed movement in Iran.

On the basis of the political theses put forward by these works, the strategy of the initial phase of the armed movement in Iran and the related tactics within the framework of the revolutionary process in a neo-colonial state have been defined. In addition, and as far as is possible, the subsequent stages of the movement have been discussed and analysed. Nevertheless, a more precise definition of the course to be followed by the revolutionary forces of our society and the discovery of the specific features of the Iranian revolution can only be achieved in the course of practice.

The Role of Bizhan Jazani

The task of collating the past experiences of the armed movement fell chiefly on our martyred comrade, Bizhan Jazani, who accomplished the task in the regime's prison, despite lack of proper facilities. In his treatises, comrade Jazani expanded the theory of armed struggle in Iran and shed light on its future course.

The Strategic Aim

The first strategic aim of the armed movement in Iran was the establishment of armed struggle at the level of progressive forces and politically-conscious strata of the society. To achieve this aim required extensive efforts and an untiring struggle. The movement set about its task at a time when the enemy regime enjoyed a relative stability, and, by drawing on the experiences of the imperialists, was governing the country with complete authority. At that time, it even claimed to have destroyed all its opponents. By relying on world imperialism and its vast counter-revolutionary experience, the Shah was busy exploiting the labour power of the country's proletariat and also its extensive natural resources. Because of its relative economic stability, the regime was able to keep the people's standard of living at a low level. The masses, therefore, were under tremendous pressure. The burden of dual exploitation by the comprador bourgeoisie and the world capitalists had very nearly broken the back of the working class. Even the traditional petty bourgeoisie had been pushed to the verge of destruction by the power of imperialist capital.

In such circumstances the regime's extraordinary political pressure on the people was indicative of great discontent among the various classes even though such discontent had no way of manifesting itself. In this oppressive

atmosphere, the only form of struggle which could end the sense of despair and helplessness that had overcome the people was armed struggle, the anti-thesis of the repressive methods employed by the Shah's fascist dictatorship. The problem was how to find a concrete way to break the government machine, and this could only be by armed struggle.

During the initial phase of the struggle, the armed movement had to attain the following objectives:

(1) The introduction of an armed strategy to counter the regime's fascist methods, and the mobilisation of those forces who, due to the country's political deadlock, were in a state of confusion and at a loss about how to make a constructive move forward.

(2) The ending of the theory of 'inactive survival' or, in other words, the policy of 'wait and see' on the part of the conscious and politically motivated forces of the society. To achieve this aim, an extensive theoretical struggle had to be launched against all forms of opportunists whose policy consisted ultimately of a recommendation in favour of political inactivity. Moreover, through the concrete scientific analysis of the conditions of Iranian society, suitable ways out of the prevailing political deadlock had to be put forward, while the theory of the armed movement had to be introduced on a wider level of society.

(3) The creation of practical possibilities for organising the most advanced forces of society, to start 'armed propaganda' with the initial aim of creating revolutionary fervour and hope amongst the conscious and politically motivated forces, and with the subsequent aim of securing the moral support of these forces for the new popular movement. This would also make it possible for the movement to be introduced to the people.

(4) The training of a new generation of revolutionary cadres, capable of shouldering the responsibilities of struggle under difficult conditions. This could then lay the groundwork for the subjective conditions of revolution. The unity of the various revolutionary forces that had turned towards the armed struggle had also to be secured.

(5) The expansion of armed propaganda activities followed by the expansion of explanatory work. This involved employing various forms of politico-economic struggle around armed propaganda activities, thus expanding the fighting consciousness amongst those classes and strata under oppression. Following these measures would come the creation of a suitable atmosphere for the expansion of armed struggle at the level of the masses, and the start of the second strategic stage of the new popular movement — the stage in which mass struggle will form the new programme of action for the movement.

These aims were the distinguishing features of the first strategic stage of the armed movement. We faced immense difficulties in achieving these aims. We had to fight on several fronts at one and the same time. And the fact that we were very weak obviously did not help matters.

On the one hand, we faced an immensely powerful enemy trying to isolate and destroy us by any means. On the other hand, we had to fight the boundless opportunism that prevailed within a section of the conscious Iranian forces.

This was especially so in the case of some opportunist fronts abroad which, by misusing the help extended to them by socialist states and through the use of these countries' publishing, propaganda and financial facilities, never for one moment relaxed their demagogic, distorted and counter-revolutionary propaganda against our people's new movement in Iran. While sitting comfortably outside the borders and enjoying all the amenities that such an existence brings, they used the dedicated fighters in Iran as the targets of their unjustified accusations. They were all set to corrupt the consciousness of our people and thereby objectively help the regime.

However, despite all the regime's savagery, and despite all the irresponsible propaganda of the opportunists, the fighters held the banner of struggle high. They selflessly sacrificed their lives in the unshakeable belief that their aims were right, thus guarding the young and fragile sapling of our people's new movement. By achieving the aims of the first phase of the armed movement, they stamped the victory of the revolutionary strategy on the annals of our country's history.

What Was Achieved

Now to our achievements:

(1) Following the introduction of armed strategy, a considerable force that had been in a state of political decline was pulled into the struggle, and the active political force of society began to grow in an unprecedented manner. The introduction of the theory of the armed movement and the subsequent practice based on this theory speeded up the radicalisation of the available forces, so much so that, immediately after the start of the Siahkal Resurgence, university students who had always used their sectional demands as a cover for political activities in their various strikes and demonstrations, poured into the streets shouting such slogans as 'Down with the Shah', 'Death to Farsiu' (General Farsiu, the army public prosecutor executed by the movement for his crimes in 1971). Thus, influenced by the armed movement, the conscious forces of society became active with exceptional audacity. This trend played a decisive role in the revival of the political life of Iranian society. These forces that, for years, with pent-up hatred, had endured the political repression, had at last found a way to break the deadlock.

(2) The followers of the 'theory of inactive survival' who had advocated the preservation of inactive political groups and the policy of 'wait and see' felt their permanent state of calm to be in danger after the start of the movement. They, therefore, had to come up with a formula in order to preserve the *status quo*. This time they resorted to so-called 'quiet political' activity amongst the masses. Such quiet political activities were, in fact, so quiet that they were never likely to waken the masses from their political slumber and acted like an opiate to extinguish any revolutionary move or fervour. This still amounted, in effect, to accepting the present state of affairs. The interesting thing is that, while such tasks had previously been undertaken by the reactionary ideologues and metaphysical retainers of the imperialists, they were performed this time by the opportunist petty-bourgeois emigres who,

from their comfortable and secure residences abroad, were doing the same job, but under the guise of revolutionary proletarian ideology, with some meaningless anti-regime slogans thrown in for good measure. The new revolutionary movement of the people, by basing its strategy on creative Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and the experiences of our people's and their vanguard's struggles on the other, proved the incorrectness of these theories put forward by the defeatist and opportunist factions. To a large extent they dispelled the negative effects of such theories.

Parallel with the introduction of the basic theories of the new movement, the most advanced forces of society joined forces with it and enriched its organisational aspects. The enormous number of people that, despite the unparalleled dictatorial methods of the regime, have flocked to the movement is proof of this claim.

(3) Relying on the practical support of the vanguard forces of the people, the movement pressed forward, despite unprecedented waves of arrests, murders and executions by the regime. It was in this phase that the cadres of our people's movement received their revolutionary baptism — cadres who, in order to pursue the struggle in such difficult conditions, had to carry arms in one hand, books in the other, and death pills under their tongues. These experienced and dedicated cadres guided the movement forward with devotion and sacrifice. They paved the way for the growth of the people's struggle, stabilised the movement politically and organisationally, and prepared conditions for its advance to a higher stage.

The noteworthy point about this stage was the lack of unity amongst the various organisations within the armed movement. Had unity existed from inception, it could undoubtedly have played a positive role in shortening the period of this stage. But due to political and ideological short-sightedness within the movement, emanating from the traditional conservatism of our society's middle class, such unity was not achieved.

(4) Armed propaganda activities, together with considerable explanatory propaganda, were spearheaded by the clandestine patriotic Radio Station and by the movement's extensive publications both inside and outside the country. They had marked effects. For example, the Confederation of Iranian Students abroad, which, prior to the Siahkal Resurgence, was basically under the influence of inactive theories, became acquainted with the problems of the revolutionary movement through O.I.P.F.G. publications. Once these students had grasped the essence of armed propaganda in theory as well as practice, they spared no effort in defending the people's new movement. The 17th Congress of the World Confederation of Iranian Students Abroad in the winter of 1976 was a shining example of the victory achieved by the supporters of the Iranian armed movement abroad. Moreover, the sincere and determined help given to the armed movement (e.g. the provision of pro-movement radio stations, and other services) by various progressive Marxist groups abroad has been considerable.

The Concept of Armed Propaganda Operations

Armed propaganda operations have had two distinct phases. During the initial phase (covering the first years) the aims were the introduction of armed strategy in practice; and the provision of arms and finance for the movement.

Armed propaganda operations during these early years were primarily of a general nature and designed to introduce the strategy of the new movement and demonstrate its practicability, thus drawing the vanguard forces of society towards accepting the movement's strategy. During this period there also occurred a series of offensive operations directed towards the provision of arms and finance for the movement. Assaults on the enemy's financial and military centres were all successful, providing both money and arms. Thus, on a basis of self-sufficiency, the primary requirements of the armed movement were satisfied.

The second period of the armed propaganda operation was characterised by the O.I.P.F.G.'s operations during 1975-76. In this period, our Organisation resorted to specific exemplary operations. These operations paved the way for the influence of the armed movement among the people and played a decisive role in laying the groundwork for politico-organisational activity among the masses.

These operations were planned and based on a scientific analysis of the subjective and objective conditions of the masses. Without a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the socio-economic conditions of society and without an awareness of the psychology of the people, it is impossible to employ tactics for the support and subsequent mobilisation of the masses.

Operational Targets and the People's Demands

This theory teaches us that, in order for the movement to influence the masses, the type of operations employed must be such that they are able to illustrate the aims of the armed movement to the people in an objective, practical and tangible manner and thus pave the way for penetration into the masses. Based on this principle, specific operational targets must form part of our programme of action. These specific operations must be compatible with the psychological and material tendencies of the masses and provide an answer to their needs. Frequently, the masses come face to face with the ruling classes. In such conditions the demands the masses make themselves can provide the most suitable indications in the choice of operational targets: these are operations that are popular and understood by the masses because they are related to their demands.

Therefore, the most specific feature of an armed propaganda operation is its popular orientation. If we are to choose our targets correctly and see eye to eye with the masses in the choice of targets, then the content of armed propaganda operations becomes compatible with the content of the people's demands, and these operations and the general struggle will then become one and the same. Of course, armed propaganda operations can have various aims

but the basis must be that the operations are tangible for the masses.

It must be emphasised that if we do not act as suggested above, then the content of military operations will become divorced from the content of the people's struggle. Such operations will then assume a purely military or protest form and will become devoid of any political and popular content. For example, a haphazard assault on enemy establishments, merely because they belong to the enemy, is a purely military operation devoid of any political content and in the present conditions is, where the operations must have a propaganda characteristic, ineffective. Actions like blowing up banks, cinemas, government establishments, etc., that have no specific relation to the masses, do not fit into the framework of propaganda operations and as such are adventuristic.

Armed operations, if approached correctly, will have a popular character. Conversely, if carried out with an adventuristic understanding of the armed struggle, which views such a struggle as divorced from the people, it will naturally lack any popular character and can only be effective for general political objectives, for winning the support of petty-bourgeois sections of society, and drawing the attention of world opinion to the movement.

If we base our operational plans on the latter premise, we shall obviously fail to draw the masses towards the movement and it is possible that the consequences of our actions may even push us into despair and helplessness. In this case there is a possibility that we might revert to the useless theories of 'quiet political work' — theories on whose ruins the armed movement has been solidly built. We strongly recommend all the forces within the armed movement to study the theoretical works of the Iranian armed movement and to pay special attention to the brilliant treatise of the martyred Comrade Bizhan Jazani, entitled 'Armed Struggle in Iran: The Road to Mobilisation of the Masses'.

Foreign Elements or Native Lackeys?

Let us look at the problem from another angle. In a semi-feudal, semi-colonial state where the regime and its apparatuses are organisationally and militarily decrepit, imperialism is forced to intervene militarily in order to safeguard its interests. In such conditions the contradiction between the masses and foreign elements will rapidly reach a state of antagonism, since foreign interference is completely open and blatant. In such situations, therefore, armed propaganda operations are essentially distinguished by assaults on foreign elements. These operations are designed to heighten a spirit of popular patriotism and to encourage popular forces into a fight against the occupying forces, since the latter are directly facing the people and oppressing them. That is why those operations are tangible ones for the mass of the people. The effectiveness of this type of armed propaganda tactics we have already witnessed in Vietnam.

But can we adopt a similar approach in our conditions? Certainly not. Our country is a neo-colonial state in which imperialism has replaced its open and blatant political and military domination by a covert and invisible economic one. In such a state, the plundering and savage countenance of imperialism is

no longer visible to the people. Here the masses have, in the first instance, to confront the native retainers of the imperialists. For this reason, pointing the sharp end of the attack against foreign elements, who are on this occasion ruling and exploiting the masses through their native lackeys, does not represent a tangible target for the majority of the masses. It can only satisfy those sections of society who, because of their political and social base, are better placed to understand the anti-imperialist and progressive connotations of such operations. These sections include liberally-minded intellectuals and that part of the petty bourgeoisie which is being pushed into poverty and class disintegration under the pressure of imperial capital.

Therefore, as long as imperialism has not resorted to direct military intervention and occupation of the country, we cannot base our armed propaganda operations on attacks against foreign elements and their establishments. Such anti-foreign operations do, however, occupy a small place in our movement since they illustrate to the conscious and popular forces the anti-imperialist nature of the armed movement. However, it must be repeated, these operations do not have great value as far as influencing the masses is concerned, and ought not to form the basis of our action.

A word should be said about operations designed to penetrate the masses and defend their struggles. Striking blows against the centres and agents of mass exploitation can form part of the tactics of armed propaganda operations, although one has to be extremely careful and selective. These operations must be carried out in such a way that the people do not suffer or sustain any loss. Therefore, the destruction of the means of production, which will necessarily culminate in the closure of factories and unemployment, will not have any positive repercussions among the masses. By contrast, the destruction of the end product that is placed at the disposal of the capitalists and as such belongs to them, or striking blows against the agents and retainers of capitalists and tyrannical exploiters, will have a far better effect. In addition, striking blows against the agents of the Government and of those establishments that come face to face with the masses, and, in one way or another, trample upon their rights and persecute them, can be regarded as very effective ways to penetrate into the masses. The experience of our Organisation clearly demonstrates that such operations are extensively welcomed by the masses and play a decisive role in drawing their support for the movement.

The popular-exemplary operations carried out by the O.I.P.F.G. during 1975-76, which were based on the above principle, were all highly successful and were received remarkably well by the masses. By carrying out these operations, we managed to secure the broad support of the popular forces. Such operations have, in this new stage, been transformed into popular operations and have put wide possibilities at our disposal in the present, second strategic stage of the armed movement. Today, the masses in many parts of the country are familiar with the popular aims of the movement, whether through the influence of the various armed operations or via a combination of such operations and our explanatory activities.

We have met many workers in the towns of Rasht, Shahie, Mashad, Tabriz and others who, although they had never received any of our explanatory tracts and were constantly exposed to the propaganda of the regime, believed that the guerrillas are fighting and losing their lives for the interests of the workers. They had reached this conclusion merely by hearing about our operations in defence of the people's overall struggle. Some of them even wished that the guerrillas would strike against *their* particular enemies and answer force with force.

Today, as Comrade Pouyan predicted ('On the Necessity of Armed Struggle and the Refutation of the Theory of "Survival"'), the masses have recognised the existence of a source of power that belongs to them and have begun a concerted move in its support — a move that, although sluggish and haphazard to begin with, will in future grow into giant proportions. It is our duty to speed up this move by correct and methodical planning. This is a task which distinguishes the strategic aims of the second stage of the armed movement in Iran. In this stage we must, on the basis of the constructive effects of armed propaganda tactics, expand the influence of the movement amongst the masses and, in short, 'make armed struggle a mass movement'.

For seventeen and a half years, from August 1953 to February 1971, politico-organisational work among the masses was at a standstill and all attempts to break the deadlock by the old method of *political work* among the people were defeated. The theory of the armed movement in Iran was essentially put forward as a constructive and progressive alternative to end this black and protracted recession in the political life of our country. Today, now that the armed movement has succeeded in placing itself amongst the masses, there are naturally suitable grounds for the development of politico-organisational work inside the people. Nevertheless, this is only a beginning. With continuous efforts and sustained tactics the armed movement must get even closer to the masses and by adopting a popular programme of action as well as taking direct part in the struggle of the people, move step by step forward with them and shoulder the leadership of their struggles.

1. The History of Contemporary Iran

British and Russian Imperialism in Iran

When Europe entered the capitalist era, Iran was in the grip of feudalism and its long-standing commercial class was not very active, unlike the case in Europe. It is not within the bounds of this article to deal with the factors that caused the continuation of feudalism and therefore backwardness in Iran; or to deal with the fact that, although in some periods feudalism showed signs of decline, a bourgeoisie failed to develop in Iran as it did in Europe during the Middle Ages. What may categorically be said is that, with the growth of capitalism in some parts of the world and the appearance of exploitation of one country by another, the other now dominated societies underwent profound changes. From then on, socio-economic changes can only be analysed in their relation to this international exploitation and its effects.

At the start of the 19th Century, the feudal-monarchic state of Iran found itself next to two exploitative European empires — Czarist Russia in the North and the British Empire in the South and East. The British had already swallowed up the Indian sub-continent and were busy strengthening their position. Czarist Russia, which combined the features of a feudalist empire with that of capitalist expansionism, attacked the Iranian feudalists who had joined together to create the Qajar dynasty. During its history the feudal monarchy of Iran had engaged in wars to capture fertile agricultural lands and enslave the peasants living there as well as to acquire more income, either through plundering the public treasury and levying tribute, or by exploiting the peasants and captured farmlands. However, when faced with the aggression of the Czarist army, the feudal system resisted: the result was that its army engaged in two series of wars with the Russian aggressors. The Iranian army decisively defeated in 1828 and the Treaty of Turkomanchei was signed. As a result of this treaty the feudalists ended up losing enormous amounts of valuable land and the peasants working on them, as well as accepting Russian domination over their own economic and political life. The Czar was given the right to interfere in Iranian court matters under the pretext of protecting the Crown Prince and the reigning Sultan; at the same time, Russian businessmen acquired considerable commercial concessions. The commercial protocol of the Turkomanchei Treaty formed the basis for the concessions imposed by

the Russians after these wars.

The British, in turn, surreptitiously expanded their commercial and political influence in Iran over several decades (they did not, incidentally, meet any resistance from the feudalist monarchy). They eventually began to adopt an aggressive stand when faced with Iran's insistence on retaining its power over an important portion of Afghanistan. The result of this prolonged dispute (during which Russia supported Iran, thereby trying to get closer to the position of Britain, her rival) was the Treaty of Paris of 1857. In signing this treaty, Iran renounced her sovereignty over Herat in Afghanistan and accepted various other capitulations. The Treaty put Britain on a par with Russia in regard to domination over Iranian affairs. In subsequent periods, with the growth of capitalism in Europe and the dawn of the age of imperialism, Iran entered the era of foreign concessions. This was also the start of the age of foreign investment, i.e. the export of capital by imperialist countries.

This, then, is a brief account of the manner in which two exploiting powers came to dominate Iran. Other states had also been trying to demand as their inalienable right concessions equal to those obtained by these two powers. However, until the downfall of Czarism in 1917 Russia and Britain managed, at the same time or alternately, to preserve their exclusive domination over Iran.

As we have said, the feudalist monarchy did try to defend the integrity of Iran against the expansionist designs of foreign exploiters. They were not prepared to relinquish their rule over their estates or even part of their domain easily. Hence, as in other feudal states of that period, they stubbornly resisted colonial aggression. But provided the aggressors stopped short of taking over feudal lands and did not insist on exercising direct political rule over feudal territories, then their economic influence and indirect political influence (for economic ends, of course) was not opposed by the feudalists. This was especially so if the exploiting powers learned from the experience they had acquired in their first period of aggression and did not try to set up minority Christian enclaves. The British and the Russians had no such religious designs. Religious missions in Iran were mainly French and subsequently North American. The two powerful rivals in Iran (the British and the Russians) preferred instead to exploit the existing religious differences in Iran and to use pre-existing religious minorities in the country for their own ends. Thus they neither entered into serious conflict with the monarchy nor with their system of ideology, i.e. the local religion. The lamentably backward mass of the urban and rural population was neither aroused by the feudalists against the exploiters, nor did the clergy issue orders for a *jihad* (holy war) against the alien forces. Thus there did not exist a real contradiction between feudalism and colonialism, and indeed the expansion of colonialism actually provided an income for the monarchs and feudal rulers in the form of the import and excise duties, royalties, fabulous presents and bribes. Despite religious differences, the colonial powers maintained good relations with the upper strata of the clergy and put this to good use in times of contradiction amongst themselves. Therefore, until the appearance and growth of the

bourgeoisie in Iran, the people remained passive in the face of colonialism. Except in cases where there were internal conflicts within the system of feudalism, or rivalries amongst the colonial powers, the feudal rulers and high-ranking mullahs did not attempt to mobilise the people against the foreign powers and their local allies.

The expansion of foreign capitalist activities in Iran, which was the means by which foreign influence spread, speeded up the growth of the Iranian bourgeoisie and greatly affected its development as well as its social and economic characteristics. At the beginning, or even before the bourgeoisie assumed a definitive class character, some elements in the feudal aristocracy were beginning to get acquainted with the system of capitalism in the West. They were influenced by it and this encouraged reformist tendencies on their part. Amir Kabir¹ was a perfect example of this type of aristocrat. Moreover, under the influence of West European bourgeois democratic systems, a progressive political trend was paving the way for a bourgeois movement in Iran. Because of the increasing commercial relationships with capitalist countries, the commercial bourgeoisie had also grown. The import and marketing of foreign goods, as well as the production and distribution of exportable domestic products, provided the main context for the growth of a bourgeoisie. During this period, industrial goods were imported, while exports consisted mainly of farm produce and traditional luxury items (e.g. carpets) made in poorly equipped and backward workshops. Furthermore, foreign businessmen distributed locally-made products amongst the various foreign communities, now living in Iran, thereby adding another highly profitable line to their business — in fact they had an insatiable appetite for grabbing local markets, and the very first rivalries between these foreign exploiters and the indigenous bourgeoisie were over the control of these local markets. To grant concessions to foreigners in effect meant the implantation of capitalism in the country resulting in the growth of a bourgeoisie, thereby increasing the contradiction between the latter and the holders of the concessions. Having grown to a relatively strong position during the last decades of the 19th Century, the Iranian bourgeoisie demanded the curtailment of foreign business activities in the country. Equally, their tendency to invest in industrial and mineral projects as well as to take part in development programmes increased. Moreover, this tendency was at odds not only with the dominant and competing foreign exploiters; *rather it was the feudalist super-structure of Iran that was regarded as the main obstacle to the growth of a local bourgeoisie.*

Feeling no danger from the colonialists, the monarchy in Iran became increasingly dependent on income from foreign capitalists and was ready to offer them a free rein wherever they wanted it. It was only the bitter rivalry between the two major powers (Britain and Russia) that saved the country from being swallowed up by one or other of them. Eventually the time was ripe for the bourgeoisie to enter the scene and lead the masses in a struggle against the economic domination of foreign capitalists as well as against the monarchy which had put the country up for auction. That section of the

clergy which had grown dependent on the bourgeoisie supported this struggle. The movement that had been organised to force the repeal of the Tobacco Monopoly concession granted to a British company is a perfect example of the contradiction between foreign capital and the Iranian Court on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and the masses on the other. At the same time this incident brought to the fore the contradictions between the Russians and the British.

During the two decades prior to the Constitutional Iranian Revolution (1906-09), Russian imperialism had the upper hand in Iran. The Russian Bank in Iran undertook to pay off all outstanding Iranian debts to the British Bank in return for control over the collection of the very profitable customs duties. Russian businessmen expanded their activities greatly and the level of commercial transactions between Iran and Russia far exceeded that between Iran and Britain. Russian investment in roads, railways and telegraph lines increased, thus putting Russian influence in Iran at least on a par with that of Britain. Moreover, from 1879 Russian officers organised and commanded the only regular modern military force, i.e. the Cossacks, in Iran; its main task consisted of protecting the Court and the interests of the foreigners, particularly the Russians. (This same force of Cossacks, however, managed to forget their most important task of protecting the royal palaces when they were attacked by rioters during the Tobacco Concession protests.) Nevertheless, it was not merely the superior economic position of the Russians over the British which made them a target for the people's struggle led by the bourgeoisie. There were other more important factors, such as Czarism's political identification with the dictatorial Qajar Court, the serious threat posed by the Russians' military power, and Czarism's readiness to use its military force to crush any serious opposition in Iran. The Qajar Court, too, regarded the Russian Czar as its protector, The Russian officers and Iranian Cossacks under their command were in fact in the pay of the Russian Government. And this was a constant reminder of Russian military power to those who opposed her presence in Iran.

The situation that finally provoked social changes in Iran arose when the successful Russian encroachment on Manchuria at the start of the present century was halted by the appearance of the newly-arrived Japanese imperialists. In 1904 Russia, the biggest military power in Asia, but with its heart in Europe, suffered an unexpected defeat. This broke the deadlock facing the people of Iran. Soon after this Russia was submerged in the 1905-07 Revolution; but this, instead of just helping the Iranian people to rise against the despotic rule of the Qajars, also offered the British the opportunity to increase their influence in Iran and push their old rival back. Therefore, in the context of the then prevailing principal contradiction between the despotic feudal monarchy of Iran (with its protector the Russians) on the one hand and the people led by the bourgeoisie (demanding constitutional government, i.e. participation of the bourgeoisie in the government) on the other, the British sided with the latter. However, this state of affairs did not last long, since the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia was defeated, and the growth of imperialist

contradictions in Europe brought about an alliance between Russia and Britain against Germany. In this way the rivalry between the British and the Russians in Iran was temporarily overshadowed by the contradiction between Britain and Germany, resulting in the signing of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention. In this treaty Britain officially recognised the superior position of Russia in Iran and its domination over the most important (northern) parts of the country.

The Iranian commercial bourgeoisie achieved unprecedented growth at the beginning of this century. On the whole, this bourgeoisie had a nationalist character, albeit with comprador elements in it. A financial bourgeoisie was emerging from this class and showed tendencies towards investment. At the same time the absence of security for capital, which was an effect of continuing political domination by feudalism, as well as the influence of, and competition by, foreign capital, had blocked the bourgeoisie's advance towards an industrial sector, thus inevitably pushing the commercial bourgeoisie towards the ownership of land. The comprador aspects of the bourgeoisie derived from the fact that with the import and sale of industrial goods it had amassed huge profits, and this provided it with the greater part of its capital. On the other hand, in the export of Iranian goods, this bourgeoisie played an important role, either independently or as an agent of foreign companies. Up until the end of the 19th Century, shawls were one of the most important items for export. At the start of the present century this product faced stiff competition from Britain and her Indian colony and lost its foreign market. Inside the country the shawl industry was capable of developing and becoming machine-intensive, thus playing an important role in the development of the bourgeoisie. However, carpet weaving was condemned to remain labour-intensive. This type of dual relationship between the bourgeoisie and foreign capital was bound to open this class to comprador influence. The tendency towards the ownership of land and the failure to invest in industry were powerful objective factors favouring the growth of such a comprador character. In spite of this the bourgeoisie did have important contradictions with foreign capital. As well as commerce, the twentieth-century bourgeoisie tried its hand at mining and, in some cases, even built private roads and railways to facilitate the export of goods. It imported factories. It competed with foreign banks, including the British-owned Shahi Bank, which had acquired the right to issue bank notes; and, by speculation and the use of bills of exchange, it even undermined the notes issued by the Bank. The bourgeoisie had reached such a stage of development that, by acquiring (from the Court) the concession to mint coins, it managed to add millions to its wealth. This bourgeoisie was, therefore, unwilling to allow foreign businessmen to control home markets. It demanded the curtailment of concessions to foreign companies and was willing to invest big capital in rail and road building projects with technical help from European countries other than Britain and Russia. In the whole subsequent period, the Iranian bourgeoisie had never had so much economic power *vis-a-vis* foreign governments and capital. These factors far outweighed the bourgeoisie's dependence on foreign capital and

gave it a nationalist character.

But the bourgeoisie's contradiction with the feudalists in turn intensified its contradiction with colonialism. The feudal system of government, together with the Khans and the feudalists in general, opened the way to colonialism within their respective areas of rule. The colonial powers exercised influence over the Court and over the Government, and the vehicle for this influence was the financial advantage of the ruling cliques. Excise and customs were controlled by them or their agents. Tax rates were variable. As well as the Central Government, the princes and an assortment of Emirs would, in their own areas, milk businessmen arbitrarily and in accordance with the needs of their aristocratic interests. Sometimes the whole of a businessman's movable assets were confiscated by a prince. There was no real security for capital, and real wealth was often represented only by large inherited property. Therefore, not only was the bourgeoisie unable to use public resources for its own benefit, but the self-seeking manner in which the feudalists behaved was a constant threat to its very existence. In order to capture the home market, the bourgeoisie was intent on capturing the Government and using it for its own growth and the growth of capitalist relationships in the society. At the same time, the lack of growth on the part of the industrial bourgeoisie prevented the full development of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the feudal system of production. The bourgeoisie was not in need of either a plentiful supply of labour or the lands owned by the feudalists to produce the raw materials which would otherwise have been needed by industry; indeed the bourgeoisie itself was deeply involved in land ownership. It was precisely because of this weakness that it did not seriously oppose the continuation of commercial exploitation by the colonial powers. Therefore, at that stage of its development, the bourgeoisie's contradiction was merely with the *political superstructure* of feudalism and its allies.

It was this contradiction that was the cause of the Constitutional Revolution, in which the urban masses and the bourgeoisie initiated a fight against colonialism. But the principal feature of the contradiction was such that the main brunt of the attack was directed at the dictatorial rule of the Qajars and at Russian imperialism. The Revolution lasted from 1906 to 1909 and had a bourgeois-democratic character. The weakness of the bourgeoisie in tackling the bases of feudalism and its lack of decisiveness in facing colonialism, the absence of a properly formed working class movement as well as the absence of the peasants in the Revolution, do not exclude it from being regarded as a bourgeois-democratic revolution, albeit in its elementary form — as indeed was the case with the Turkish Revolution of 1908 and the Chinese Revolution of 1911. The bourgeois-democratic revolutions of this era were beset with similar shortcomings. In essence, these derived from the particular character of the bourgeoisies in these societies. In these revolutions the aim of the bourgeoisie was to fight colonialism and destroy the political superstructure. For this reason the revolutions met with failure or achieved only a partial success. Complete victory was only to be achieved with subsequent revolution, as happened later in China.

What were the effects of the Constitutional Revolution? The Revolution succeeded in destroying the dictatorial rule of the Qajars and secured a share for the bourgeoisie in the Government. The feudal aristocracy no longer had total domination over the bourgeoisie; capital received some sort of guarantee and tax collection began to be based on a proper system; above all, the bourgeoisie acquired a lever by which to secure its rights. Once it secured these advantages for itself, the bourgeoisie turned its back on the Revolution. In conditions where the Revolution should have been continued in order to safeguard its victories and should have carried on the struggle against imperialism (particularly the Russian imperialists), the bourgeoisie, framed by its fundamental weaknesses, settled for compromise. Here one can safely claim that the bourgeoisie achieved its 'Constitution'. The compromise, which resulted in a feudal-comprador Government, divided the bourgeoisie right down the middle; that section of it that was in favour of continuing the Revolution remained within the ranks of the people, assumed leadership over them, and preserved a nationalist character; but the comprador section of the bourgeoisie (which consisted mainly of comparatively larger bourgeois elements) created the nucleus of a comprador class co-operating with the foreign capitalists and the feudalists, having first ensured a firm guarantee for its capital and having managed to rob the aristocratic feudalists of some of their lands. This division occurred after the Revolution and during its decline. However, some changes had to take place before an open rift, and before the appearance of contradictions between them, became apparent.

The feudalists, who were defeated together with the Qajar Court, accepted the new arrangements and tried to grab as many seats in the newly-formed Majlis (Parliament) as they could. The British, who had temporarily suspended their belligerent stand against the Russians, were in fact the main instigators of the compromise. Their previous position in support of the demands for constitutional reforms paved the way for their role as the new intermediaries. While not forgetting the usefulness of many of their positions for future use (the impending Great War), the British temporarily conceded superiority to the Russians while making sure that the Iranian aristocracy under its protection was treated leniently in the Russian spheres of influence.² Therefore, even from the British point of view 'constitutional struggle' no longer served any useful purpose.

Having suppressed the revolution in Russia, the Czarists began to do the same in Iran. The revolutionaries of the Caucasus who had rushed to the aid of the revolution in Iran were pursued by the Russians, and the Russian army even occupied Tabriz in North-west Iran — the focus of the Constitutional Revolution. The Russians tried to counteract the admittedly partial achievements of the Revolution. As a result of a Russian ultimatum together with the collusion and compromise of the aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie, the Majlis was closed. The inner contradictions of the feudal system that had previously worked to the benefit of the Revolution, as had the imperialists' contradictions, began to subside. The Sepah-Dars and the Sam-Sums³ turned against the Revolution; the urban petty bourgeoisie who were in favour

of continuing the Revolution were suppressed; the Mujaheds (freedom fighters) of Tabriz and revolutionary elements everywhere came under severe pressure. The big bourgeoisie no longer needed the support of the revolutionary masses.

The Revolution was left without hope or leadership. The bourgeois-orientated clergy and the intellectuals who were the representatives of the bourgeoisie (this latter category had filled the vacuum left by the clergy) had passed from the scene. There was as yet no clearly defined division between the national bourgeoisie and its opportunist (comprador) counterpart. This separation took place during the First World War, a conflict in which some parts of Iran were also involved. The struggle against the occupying forces, including the Czarist army, provided fresh grounds for the continuation of the movement. The petty bourgeoisie, together with the urban proletariat led by the national bourgeoisie, fought against the Russians and the British during the War. Thus a new phase of struggle began which was a natural sequel to the Constitutional Revolution.

From the end of the 19th Century, German imperialism began competing with the British and Russian imperialists. The Germans had set their eyes on the Ottoman Empire — their future semi-colony. German capital turned in this direction and the Kaiser claimed to be the protector of the Moslems. The Constitutional Revolution in Iran, which had provided an ideal setting for the growth of contradictions between the other two Empires prior to the 1907 Treaty, had left no room for manoeuvre for the Germans or their agents, the Turks. After the 1907 Agreement between the Russians and the British, the Ottoman Government began to play a more active role in Iran. However, the 1908 Revolution in Turkey and the ensuing internal problems there prevented the Turks from filling the vacuum in Iran left by the British. The start of the World War between the Germans, Austrians and Turks on the one hand, and the British, French and Russians on the other, prompted the Iranian national bourgeoisie to exploit the prevailing world contradictions which had reached a new high point of antagonism.

At the start of the War the Czarist army occupied its sphere of influence as designated under the 1907 Treaty. Although the Russians and the British were allies, the special role of the Russians, and the importance of their occupied zone, nevertheless meant that it was Czarism which became the main target of the Iranian anti-imperialist movement. The nationalists⁴ demanded that the Government, which had adopted a soft attitude towards the occupying forces, should mobilise the people against the aggression and even that it should transfer the capital to Qom — a small town 120 miles south of Tehran. The Government vacillated and eventually rejected this demand. The nationalists, therefore, left the capital, Tehran, together with elements connected with Germany and Turkey, and began military preparations. However, the nationalists' provisional government and its military force were extremely weak and the Germans and Turks were unable to support them. Consequently, the nationalist government in Qom fled first to Kermanshah (the provincial capital of Kurdistan in the west of Iran) and

then to Ottoman territory. The Russians and the Turks were then fighting in Western Azerbaijan (North-west Iran) and in Northern Kurdistan.

The main characteristic of the movement in this period was that it stood in direct confrontation with the imperialist aggressors. The measures supported by the nationalists represented that section of the bourgeoisie which supported the continuation of the struggle against imperialism. But the national bourgeoisie, which was in the process of breaking off from the comprador bourgeoisie, was unable to assume full leadership of the movement. The movement in the northern province of Gilan, led by Mirza Kuchek Khan and supported by the nationalist bourgeoisie, was yet another anti-imperialist manifestation. To begin with, it was a purely anti-Russian movement and was in practice supported not merely by the petty bourgeoisie but also by elements of the national bourgeoisie and even by some landlords. The Russians tried to enlist the support of the feudalists and reactionary state functionaries to suppress Mirza Kuchek Khan's movement.⁵ The Jangal Movement began to draw on the support of the Germans and Turks, and some of the latter's officers went to help train the Movement's army. The main force consisted of petty-bourgeois elements, but its ideology was anti-imperialist and bourgeois nationalist. A tendency towards armed struggle was prominent in this period. Direct aggression by the imperialists had mobilised the masses against them. However, in spite of this favourable objective condition, the leadership of the Movement was too weak to organise a revolutionary movement throughout the country. The Movement's sympathy for the Germans and the Turks was a sign of its immaturity.

The October Revolution was a turning point for the Movement. One of the first effects of this Revolution was to end Russian colonialism in Iran. The people were relieved of the chains of Czarism and the principal contradiction changed. Britain then tried to fill the vacuum left by Czarist Russia. New opportunities presented themselves to the nationalists and their attack was soon directed at British colonialism. The army in the south of the country (in the British sphere of influence), commanded jointly by British and Indian officers and known as the South Persia Rifles, advanced to the northernmost parts of Iran and, with the conclusion of the War in favour of the allies, invaded the Caucasus. In this way the British managed to extend their empire to the Caucasus and Central Asia. Iran was conveniently placed in the middle of this. Hatred of the British, which had started with the 1907 Treaty, now reached its zenith. The ultimate designs of the British were revealed in the Treaty of 1919 in which Britain tried to turn Iran into a protectorate. It was never implemented because of popular opposition. The people who had thrown off the yoke of Czarism were not prepared to replace it with a British one. The urban population led by the national bourgeoisie began a determined fight against the Treaty and Vosooq-Al-Doleh.⁶ Meanwhile, with the roar of the October Revolution in its ears, the Jangal Movement assumed a more revolutionary character. Social democratic elements, who were regarded as the elementary manifestation of a working class movement, joined the Movement and the struggle against the British became the primary task of the

Jangal Movement. In 1920 the Soviet Navy chased the White Russians and their British allies out of the Caucasus to Enzali on the Caspian Coast, and eventually pushed them right out of Gilan Province. Mirza Kuchek Khan then captured Rasht (in the north) and the coalition between the Mirza and representatives of the working class movement acquired a more democratic character. During this period the working class in Iran was in the process of formation, and the elements attached to this class were devoid of any revolutionary experience: it therefore lacked the prerequisites for forming a communist party. These elements were mainly active amongst the Iranian workers in the Caucasus and were, as a result, greatly influenced by the Bolshevik Party. The setting up of the Communist Party of Iran in Enzali, after the landing of the Bolsheviks, was therefore carried out in haste. The leadership of this Party had no clear understanding of the conditions in Iran; neither did they clearly assess what phase the Iranian revolution was in. They therefore proposed a revolutionary programme to the Jangal Movement, even though this was regarded as far ahead of its time. On the other hand the national bourgeoisie, satisfied with the British retreat, was frightened by the formation of the Soviet Republic of Gilan and demanded an end to the Movement. The Tehran nationalists caused difficulties for the Gilan coalition and invited Mirza Kuchek Khan to disown the communists.

To understand the role of the newly-formed Russian Government in this period is possible only through an understanding of its general strategy: Lenin was concerned to defend the newly acquired victory of the Bolsheviks and was in favour of secure borders between Russia and its neighbours. The Civil War initiated by the interventionists was being concluded in Russia's favour; the Russians were demanding an end to the British military presence in Iran; they also wanted secure borders with Iran and the latter's recognition of the new Russian Government. The Russians had already refused to support the German Revolution with material help in 1919, and so they clearly could not extend such help to the Jangal Movement. Therefore, they invited Mirza Kuchek Khan to come to some sort of compromise with the Central Government in Iran and at the same time explained their position to him. The provisions of the 1921 Treaty between Iran and Russia were drafted some time before the *coup d'état* of March 1921. According to this Treaty the Russian and the British forces were to leave the country, while Iran, for its part, would not allow any foreign forces on its soil. Other articles in the Treaty concerned the securing of the position of the newly-formed Russian state and the neutrality of Iran. The Jangal Movement was at this time split, and after the departure of the Russians the Movement became increasingly weak. In the end, in the face of Reza Khan's various military adventures, it was destroyed.

The ultimate fate of the Jangal Movement teaches us that a revolutionary movement can decide its future *only* by depending on the power of the masses and by mobilising the widest possible spectrum of the revolutionary sections of society. Otherwise, dependence on foreign support, even if provided by a revolutionary power, can lead a movement to disillusion. This

will be reflected in weakness in the face of enemy aggression or will result in factionalism. During its second phase of struggle (i.e. after 1917) the Jangal Movement had, to a great extent, become democratic. However, the Movement never went beyond the bourgeois-democratic phase.

With the capture of the Caucasus and Central Asia by the Red Army, the old frontiers between Russia and Iran were re-established. Inevitably, the British reverted to their old strategy: Iran was to be a protective barrier to stem the tide of revolutionary ideas, especially Bolshevism. In this situation the 1919 Treaty lost its *raison d'être* and, as far as the position of the nationalist movement and tendencies augmented by the October Revolution was concerned, the time was ripe for the creation of a powerful central government which claimed it would carry out social and economic reforms. Feudalism and its main protagonists, namely the Khans and princes, were not able to meet this historical necessity. The colluding comprador bourgeoisie, with its economic dependence on colonialism, was the main instrument of the reforms. It was thus that Seiyid Zia-Al-Din Tabatabai adopted a revolutionary mask and abrogated the 1919 Treaty in his first Government.

The Dictatorship of Reza Khan, 1921-41

Although the comprador bourgeoisie was regarded as an ally of imperialism, it could no longer accept its pre-revolutionary status of subjection to the absolute rule of the feudalists. Therefore, the petty and the nationalist bourgeoisies as well as the big bourgeoisie needed a new regime under which they could thrive. Under such a regime feudalism would continue to exist as a productive form, but without presenting any problems for the colonialists or comprador bourgeoisie. Moreover, provided the feudalists accepted the new system, they could even play a significant role in the Government. However, the important thing was that the economic, political and administrative reforms were to be handled by the expanding forces of the comprador bourgeoisie. This was the main political and economic feature of the system, which gradually established itself in Iran after the *coup d'état* of 1921: a feudal-comprador system under the indirect control of the colonialists (in the form of a semi-colonial relationship.)

The government born out of the *coup d'état* had two major tasks:

1. To smash the national democratic movement which was the manifestation of a petty-bourgeois revolutionary tendency. At a time when the October Revolution had shaken the world, and the Iranian national bourgeoisie had proved incompetent in leading the revolution, the petty bourgeoisie together with the as yet not too experienced working class movement began to show revolutionary tendencies. The second phase of the Jangal Movement, the rebellion in Azerbaijan led by Khiabani and the one in the north-east led by Colonel Taghi Khan, were the most prominent instances of this new development. This, together with the bourgeois nationalist movement and

the more conservative petty bourgeois movements in Tehran and the provincial towns, had to be smashed.

2. The rule of the local Khans had to be ended and the political superstructure of feudalism, which had sustained such a heavy blow during the Constitutional Revolution, had to be replaced by a feudal-bourgeois superstructure. The suppression of the Khans, the setting up of a modern army, and the educational and administrative reorganisation were all designed to serve this end. In other words, what would otherwise have come about in a bourgeois democratic society if the Constitutional Revolution had triumphed was now being introduced in a deformed shape by the comprador bourgeoisie. It was this same characteristic of Reza Khan's rule that initially managed to deceive the petty bourgeoisie and even some leaders of the national bourgeoisie, as well as causing the Soviet Government to fall for Reza Khan's reform measures and to fail to recognize the nature of his rule.

Britain managed to find suitable characters for the 1921 *coup d'état* — a pretentious and pseudo-revolutionary journalist, Seiyid Zia-Al-Din Tabatabai, who had previously 'co-operated' with the British, and a Cossack brigadier, Reza Khan, without any aristocratic connexions. This choice was made at a time when numerous Qajar princes and aristocrats had volunteered to direct the coup. Immediately after the coup, the Qajar aristocracy were either detained or dismissed from their official positions by Seiyid-Zia-Al-Din. He also declared the 1919 Treaty null and void and managed to manipulate the urban masses by the clever use of revolutionary slogans. With the collapse of Seiyid's 'hundred days rule', his ostentatious leftish policies were moderated and the way paved for the establishment of policies advocated by the comprador bourgeoisie and the British imperialists. The Soviet Union's misunderstanding of the nature of events in Iran compelled the Iranian communists (whose choice of the name 'communist' was extremely facile) also to be confused and deceived by Reza Khan.

We are unable here to deal with the political events and military operations of the *coup d'état* which resulted in the establishment of a monarchical dictatorship. Having first suppressed all revolutionary movements, Reza Khan and his henchmen turned on the Khans and suppressed their feudal rule. They replaced it by a centralised military and administrative system. The British, who had until then been perfectly happy to support the tribalism of the Khans to achieve their aims, now began to support the new regime against the Khans. The surrender to Reza Khan of the Arab and pro-British Sheikh Khazal in the oil-producing areas of the south was a clear indication of Britain's physical and moral support for the regime. In conditions where the revolutionary movement had been smashed and petty-bourgeois as well as working-class movements confused, the leaders of the national bourgeoisie woke up with a start and began to sense the danger of a military dictatorship. This section of the national bourgeoisie, having carefully studied Reza Khan's background, thought he was no more than a bullying clown and hence attempted to get rid of him by diplomatic means. However, the force behind Reza Khan's ascent to power was a past master of dirty tricks. Consequently,

Reza Khan was not deceived nor did he slow down his advance. He acquired more power day by day and became ever more rough and brutal towards his adversaries; eventually he suppressed all liberal elements, as well as the political representatives of the national bourgeoisie and of the petty bourgeoisie.

The function of the ruling class in this period was threefold: 1) it was the ally of imperialism and the guardian of the latter's interests; 2) it represented the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie; and 3) it represented the interests of the feudalists. The colonialists plundered the country's most important primary commodity, i.e. oil, at the cheapest possible price, sold their own consumer products in the Iranian market, and used the regime for the suppression of all internal progressive movements and as a barrier against the penetration of revolutionary ideas from outside.

Surplus capacity during this period was limited. As a result the bulk of the oil revenue was used on armaments, paying the armed forces, the import of some factories for the production of ammunition, military hardware and consumer goods, and on building up the railway system. Foreign currency from the export of traditional goods (e.g. carpets) played the main role in financing the import of consumer goods. During the first decade of this period foreign companies were very active in Iran, but the Great Depression of 1932-33 led to the flight of foreign capitalists out of the country, except for those in the oil industry. As a result, foreign consumer goods were not imported into Iran at the same rate as previously. Therefore, the more backward and traditional system of production assumed a renewed significant role in the internal market; the export of traditional commodities also once again became more important than oil exports (from which at this time a relatively negligible amount of income was accruing to Iran). Thus the import of foreign consumer goods failed to destroy the traditional system of production and the growth of the financial sector of the comprador bourgeoisie slowed down. The Depression initially halted, and even at a later stage held back the growth of this bourgeoisie and deprived it of any significant role in foreign trade. However, the establishment of the new administrative and military system together with the government monopoly of public resources helped to accelerate the growth of a *new class* of bureaucrats and a military hierarchy. This class increasingly assumed a comprador character.

Why is the administrative and military system of this period characterised as bourgeois? Because the elements who were running the system were devoid of any connections with either the large feudal elements or the Khans and the Qajar dynasty, but instead rose from amongst the petty bourgeois or bourgeois sections of society. The new class of bureaucrats accumulated fabulous wealth by plundering the public revenues (i.e. taxes and oil revenue), by confiscating lands from various landowners, by sponsoring state and monarchical enterprises, and by supervising development programmes. It is therefore not surprising that this new bourgeoisie, like the financial bourgeoisie before it, started to scramble for the accumulation of immovable property and

combined the feature of being a bourgeois with that of being a landowner. The Pahlavi Court, and Reza Khan in particular, are clear examples of these dual tendencies. The reorganisation of the administrative system, the creation of a new standing army, the expansion of education, an attempt to 'Europeanise' people's behaviour, a hostile stand towards the clergy, the setting up of Chambers of Commerce, the introduction of a Western system of commercial law, and the creation of some industries were all measures which explain the bourgeois character of the regime. There is, however, no dispute about its comprador nature as well, since it had been brought into existence and supported by British imperialism, whose political and economic interests were looked after by the regime — the 1933 Oil Treaty being only one example of this. When in the late 1930s Reza Khan and a few of his associates turned their backs on the British, they still relied on an external patron, this time a new and harsher one — Hitlerite Germany.

During this period the feudalists lost their independence of action: their lands were confiscated by Reza Khan and they themselves exiled. The Pahlavi Foundation collected a fixed rent from tenants on the land, and throughout the feudalist system of production money relationships expanded. Nevertheless the basic system of large-scale land ownership and the landlord-serf relationship continued to exist, and feudalism remained the main form of agricultural production. The feudalists also had a right to share in government through the new political apparatus — the Majlis (Parliament), and the administrative and military systems. In this way the infrastructure of society consisted of the two systems — feudalism and capitalism (national and comprador) — existing side by side (with an increasing emphasis on the growth of capitalism), while the superstructure consisted of the feudalists and compradors who shared power within the context of imperialist domination.

The slowing down of foreign investment in Iran, coupled with the limited capacity of internal markets to absorb consumer goods — something which had been exacerbated by the world economic depression — had the advantage of stopping the fragmentation of the bourgeoisie. In fact, conditions were ripe for its growth. The national bourgeoisie was fundamentally dependent on traditional and small-scale production and had an important role in exporting home-made goods and controlling the internal markets. As a result of the Great Depression, foreign trade was brought under a state monopoly in an attempt to stabilise the economy. By setting up consumer goods industries and expanding trade with Russia, the Government also tried to protect Iran from the effects of the Depression. All these measures worked to the advantage of the national bourgeoisie. The balance of payments was in better shape than at any time previously; the tendency amongst the national bourgeoisie to industrialise was given freer rein and a series of consumer goods industries — weaving, textiles, matches, soap and glass — were set up. Thus, despite being devoid of political power, the national bourgeoisie managed to grow (as had been the case earlier when historical necessities had caused the bourgeoisie to grow under the rule, and indeed in the very womb, of feudalism).

In this period the system that faced the progressive forces, was a combination

of three distinct factors — imperialism, the regime itself, and the exploiting classes. These elements influenced one another. The imperialists were co-operating with the regime and secured their domination through it. The feudalists and compradors provided the social base for foreign monopolies and imperialist powers. At the same time the imperialists were trying to harmonise the activities of the other two elements with their own interests. The ruling group looked after the interests of the local governing classes on the one hand and the imperialists on the other, while enjoying the support of both. Notwithstanding this, each element also had its own particular interests which created a conflict with the other two. These conflicts were — compared to that between the system and the progressive forces (i.e. the people) — of a secondary nature and hence were overshadowed by the main contradiction. However, there were cases where these secondary conflicts intensified and became the principal contradiction. In no circumstances did the three elements have an equal role to play; in other words, one of them always played the principal role. For example, when imperialism encroached directly upon the land under its domination or tried to exert direct influence, it thereby assumed the principal role and became the target for the liberation movement. Such was Britain's position during the First World War and up until 1921, particularly after the October Revolution. There were other times when imperialism did not enjoy such a position nor was there a powerful Central Government directed against the people. In such a case the ruling classes could take a direct hand in organising political and even military forces and confront the movement either as part of the regime or independent of it. The third alternative was when the actual regime wielded tremendous power and, by resorting to dictatorship, became the principal means of suppressing and confronting the liberation movement. In this way it took over the principal role from the other two elements. Such a regime would acquire increasing power and ultimately reach a point where it employs the dictatorship exclusively for its own special interests. When the system in its totality feels no danger from the liberation movement, this form of dictatorship then forces the other two elements to stand against the regime.

The political changes that took place during Reza Khan's rule can only be assessed in the light of such an analysis. In this period the principal contradiction in our society was that between the people (the national bourgeoisie, the workers, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and the tribal masses) and reaction (imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism). This meant that a single economic formation (e.g. feudalism or capitalism) did not rule over the whole of society. Here feudalism continued to exist side by side with capitalism, and foreign capital played an important direct and indirect role. In such a situation the principal contradiction could not be a unitary and simple one like that between capital and labour. In the Iranian case at this stage all the exploiters were at one end of the contradiction and at the other end the national bourgeoisie could be regarded as part of the people. Therefore, the principal contradiction was that between the people and imperialism together with internal reaction (feudalism and the comprador

bourgeoisie). But in certain conditions this fundamental contradiction is not also the principal contradiction.

As we have shown earlier, at the start of the Constitutional Revolution the people's contradiction with the Qajar Court and its main supporter, the Russian imperialists, became the principal contradiction and even forced Britain to adopt a stand against it. Later on, during the second decade of Reza Khan's rule, the Court and the regime headed by the Shah assumed the principal role with regard to the other two elements and achieved such prominence that not only did the people become one of its targets, but it even antagonised some elements of the comprador bourgeoisie and the feudalists, and ultimately the British imperialists. The military dictatorship and its police apparatus was constantly expanding its operations — the suppression of the people and the control of anti-popular elements. This dictatorship was first and foremost at the service of Reza Khan and his associates who used it to bring under their personal ownership vast expanses of farming land, to plunder the national revenues and to extort protection money from the national and comprador bourgeoisies. The Majlis was no longer a platform for the feudalists and compradors; it simply became a facade. Having sensed the imminent danger, the aristocratic feudalists and comprador bourgeoisie began a fruitless struggle to defend their position against the dictatorial regime of the monarchy: Davar, Teimour-Tash,⁷ and numerous other people sacrificed their lives in the attempt. The comprador bourgeoisie and aristocrats who had initially used the dictatorship to suppress the people and feather their own nests were themselves now slaughtered by it. The most desirable properties of the feudalists had to be surrendered to Reza Khan. The Shah's military cronies copied the Court's action, albeit on a smaller scale; secret or at least semi-clandestine gangs of the regime threatened businessmen, and protection money demanded by this dictatorship went far beyond that extorted by the Qajar dictatorship. The country was governed by an advanced form of police system. In such circumstances the progressive forces were utterly suppressed and lost all means of continuing the political struggle. The position of ordinary people was perfectly clear: their personal honour, reputation and principles were being trampled upon by the dictatorship.

The growth of a monarchical autocracy also had some other results. With the establishment of the Nazi regime in Germany and the intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions, Germany returned to its former interest in Iran. This coincided with the end of the Great Depression. Foreign capital, including capital invested in the carpet industries had long since left Iran. British economic policy towards the country during the Depression had been based on the premiss that Iran should increase production at home and expand trade with Russia so that she should become economically stable and not a burden on Britain at a difficult time. Iran's role as a regional buffer for the British Empire necessitated such a policy. It was precisely at this point that the more aggressive Germany turned to Iran and offered better economic terms to Reza Khan. Several factors swayed him towards acceptance:

1. Being a newcomer on the world scene, Nazi Germany had to offer better

economic terms to the regime. These terms would stabilise the economy and benefit the Shah and his henchmen personally.

2. German imperialism had no previous social base in Iran, whereas Britain had many supporters amongst the feudal aristocracy, comprador bourgeoisie, administrative bureaucrats and military and political personalities — all of whom could help her control the regime. Having been installed by the British, Reza Khan was always afraid of falling victim to their conspiracies, whereas Germany had to depend on Reza Khan alone, and the latter's downfall would have seriously endangered her position in Iran. Therefore, in the eyes of Reza Khan, Germany was more reliable, the lesser of the two evils. Furthermore, the relationship between the Shah and Britain had, from the very beginning, been that which exists between a master and his valet; the Shah and his group had started their co-operation with Britain from a weak position. Now, however, Reza Khan could enter negotiations with Germany as a powerful Shah and as the head of a government already in power.

3. The monarchical dictatorship and anti-communist stand of the Shah was politically closer to Nazi Germany than to the bourgeois democracy found in Britain. His Government could point to a powerful 'advanced' Germany where absolute personal rule achieved much. This provided an ideological model for the Shah's own superficial nationalism.

4. With Hitler's initial successes in his European adventures, the Shah and his henchmen felt more and more confident of Germany's ultimate victory. They considered that their affinity with the *Herrenvolk* was a guarantee of continuous rule on their own part.

One other advantage of this new foreign policy was its capacity to deceive the bulk of the credulous urban masses. A tendency amongst the petty bourgeoisie favourable to the Germans coupled with their hatred of the British (a pattern already seen during the First World War) made Reza Khan and his new policies popular amongst the people. Anti-British feeling reached a point where the Court felt obliged to provide police protection for British nationals, and many Britons preferred to stay at home than venture out. Britain regarded these developments and the Government's policies with serious displeasure. Here we can see clearly how Britain and those Iranian reactionaries who depended on her support, such as the feudalists who had lost their lands and the bourgeois elements who lived in fear of the dictatorship, were, like the people at large, in conflict with the regime. This represented a division within the ranks of the people's enemies and a sign of the emergence of the principal contradiction which caused this fragmentation in the enemy's ranks. The regime's violent clash with the clergy was more than a reflection of the contradiction between the people and the dictatorship: it was a reflection of the emergence of the principal contradiction, that between the regime and the ruling classes. Although at this time a small section of the clergy were in alliance with the national bourgeoisie and as such their resistance against the dictatorship was a popular-based move, the great bulk of the clergy was dependent on the feudal and comprador bourgeoisie and, in fact, as a social and economic entity, enjoyed a privileged position in society.

The popularisation of Western culture (wearing suits, preventing women from wearing veils, the expansion of state education as against a religious one, and so on) and the absolute power of the Court and its Government were seriously damaging to the power and position of the clergy. Therefore, not only the progressive elements of the clergy, but also its reactionary sections, confronted the regime and were then smashed by it. Another result of this clash was the strengthening of the clergy's standing in the eyes of the urban masses; and this popularity paved the way for the spread of religious reaction after the downfall of the dictatorship. This in itself reveals the negative result of a superficial approach to the influence of the clergy in society run by an autocratic regime.

This was the situation in which one of the three socio-political elements, the Reza Khan regime supported by Hitler's Germany, became the main target of the progressive movement. But what were the capabilities of the movement and the forces at its disposal?

In its battle with the regime the national bourgeoisie was destroyed. The nationalist front which led the movement was dispersed; all the disjointed struggles and forms of resistance were silenced. Having recognised the nature of the regime, the Communist Party, which in the prevailing conditions was regarded as the vanguard of the working class, also began a struggle against the regime. However, the tactics employed in the struggle were unsuitable and were not able to match the forces and the tactics employed by the regime. Eventually, in 1931, the Party and all communist tendencies were declared illegal. The Party's various organisations and cells were broken up and all members, barring a handful of *émigrés*, were immobilised. A number of Party activists were tried and imprisoned. Anti-communist hysteria became the order of the day, and relations between Russia and Iran turned cool for a time. But economic necessity soon brought relations back to normal and in subsequent years they even expanded. Thus the people were left without any kind of vanguard organisation. In the middle of 1932 a number of graduates with Marxist tendencies returned from abroad. It was these graduates who organised a group for the study of Marxism — not, it must be noted, as an entity to fight the dictatorship. Taqi Arani⁸ was the founder of this group. But it was eventually betrayed to the police and all its 53 members detained. In any case, they had no clear understanding of the conditions of Iranian society; neither did they have any first-hand experience of liberation movements nor of struggle under difficult conditions. Despite these shortcomings, a good many members of the group together with the activists of the Communist Party later set up the Tudeh Party after the downfall of the dictatorship.

During the twenty-year period of Reza Khan's dictatorship, particularly in the second half of it, the economic importance of the working class expanded. Its growth coincided with the growth of the bourgeoisie and the expansion of the oil sector. However, this working class was devoid of any proletarian culture and consciousness. Under the domination of the dictatorship and in the absence of a revolutionary vanguard, it undertook no significant economic

or political struggles. At the end of the first decade of Reza Khan's rule the oil and printing workers did take some strike action and a few other small incidents occurred. However, in the second decade, even small actions of this kind ceased to occur. Thus the working class, in a political sense, was very weak. As for the national bourgeoisie, despite its economic growth, it remained deprived of any political organisation because of the dictatorship, and its leadership was either killed, imprisoned or placed under house arrest. Finally, in the absence of a revolutionary and working class vanguard organisation, the petty bourgeoisie had to content itself with diversions. Opium smoking, sufism, dabbling in dervish-type behaviour, and a tendency towards fascist ideas were the stock in trade of these sections of society.

In this period, therefore, the progressive forces failed to destroy the dictatorship. In 1941 the dictatorship was solid as a rock and faced no challenge from any progressive political movement. The regime had been transformed into an absolute power. It seemed to be eternal. In the absence of any form of movement, all sections of the proletariat had surrendered to their fate and accepted exploitation and tyranny with forbearance. The police system had sown the seeds of distrust amongst the people, so much so that they dared not talk against the Shah's regime even within the confines of their houses. Arbitrary arrest and detention, unexplained disappearances and encroachment upon people's honour and reputation had completely cowed the masses. A comparative economic prosperity was being replaced by inflation brought about by the Second World War. Suddenly, an incident occurred that exceeded anybody's expectations: as a result of the growth of imperialist contradictions, ones that had also pushed the Soviets into the War, an excuse was ultimately found to dispatch troops to Iran to fulfil the Allies' strategic aims. The pretext for the Allied invasion of the country was the German influence in Iran and the regime's friendly relations with Nazi Germany. As a matter of fact, the Germans had no real forces in Iran and their material presence was confined to a handful of military and industrial advisers together with a number of spies and political cadres. In reality, the occupation of Iran was essential for securing a supply line for the Allied forces. Furthermore, the British were anxious to settle accounts with Reza Khan, and the Soviet Union would benefit from a secure behind-the-lines area as well as from an ideological penetration of Iran with its ensuing economic advantages. Thus Reza Khan's regime of dictatorship was toppled in a matter of a few days, not by the rise of the revolutionary forces in society, but by the military incursion of the British and the Soviets. And Reza Khan, who had always lived in fear of a British conspiracy against himself, was exiled by them to Johannesburg. There he died in misery and degradation.

The Failure of the Tudeh Party, 1941-53

The dictatorial regime that had shown great efficiency in suppressing the people and silencing the opposition turned out to be a complete coward in

the face of foreign invasion. An army, gendarmerie and police that had been reorganised, modernised and re-equipped at the cost of mass poverty and had, under the direct command of Reza Khan and his cronies, been very efficient in stamping out internal dissent, revealed themselves to be weaker and far less capable than the worst kind of army in the era of Fath-Ali Shah.⁹ The higher ranking officers of Reza Khan's army are said to have deserted their military posts in veils in the face of the Allied invasion of the country. The Russian army occupied the whole of the north (Khorasan, Gilan, Azerbaijan and the northern part of Kurdistan) and the south was taken over by a British colonial army; they were subsequently joined by the U.S. army. The Iranian army in the Russian sector was disarmed, although the gendarmerie and the constabularies were allowed later on to undertake normal police duties. The administrative and military headquarters of the Russian army were in charge of practically the whole of the occupied areas, and throughout the duration of the occupation the Government was unable to take any effective public measures without first consulting the occupying forces. The areas held by the British and Americans were more or less governed on similar lines. Tehran, being the seat of the Government, was not occupied, although all three powers had garrisons stationed in the vicinity of the capital. Thus the Central Government was devoid of the necessary power to enforce its rule and the people were confronted with two other political factors – the direct role of the colonialists and the power of internal reaction. The arrival of the imperialist armies increased the impact of direct colonial rule, while at the same time the demise of the dictatorship facilitated the return of the Khans and feudalists to their respective seats of power, where they found the opportunity to reopen relations with the colonialists. On the other hand, in this situation the progressive forces were also able to grow at an unprecedented pace.

With the arrival of foreign armies the economic effects of the War became increasingly apparent in Iranian society. Within a matter of months an unprecedented inflation hit the economy, foodstuffs and other necessities became scarce and a near famine hit both towns and countryside; and wholesale emigration from rural areas to urban centres and from small to big towns (including Tehran) – which had previously been under control and concealed as disguised unemployment – became the order of the day. Exiles and the political personalities who had previously been under house arrest, whether nationalist or pro-British, entered the political arena; social and political groups mushroomed overnight; and political detainees, the majority of whom had been accused of communist tendencies, were escorted out of prison with great pomp and ceremony. Only a few weeks after the collapse of the dictatorship, the Tudeh Party declared its existence. The founding members of the Party included some of the group of 53 detained in 1937, as well as activists of the old Communist Party and a number of liberal democrats who had been under surveillance during the old regime. From the very beginning, both the Soviet Government and its Communist Party kept an eye on the organisation and programme of the Tudeh Party; and given the lack of experience of the founding members and Russia's extraordinary position in Iran, Soviet

recommendations and advice played a decisive role in shaping the Tudeh Party. The Party's initial position can be summed up as follows:

1. The Party had not come into being as a result of a period of sustained struggle by the working class against the people's enemy. The activities of the old Communist Party had fizzled out during the second decade of Reza Khan's rule: during the political vacuum that followed no fighting group existed that could have accumulated experience and revolutionary character in a struggle against the dictatorship. In other words, not only the people but also the vanguard left wing vacated the scene of struggle. Now that conditions were ripe for the masses to be mobilised in a short space of time, the movement lacked a revolutionary vanguard. The important fact that the regime's downfall was due not to a struggle by the people but to an outside factor clearly demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the leading forces and their organisations. Those who founded the Tudeh Party and those who joined it during its first months were neither class conscious revolutionary workers nor intellectuals who had been trained in a revolutionary working class ideology and tested in the fire of real struggle. Therefore, whereas sections of the petty bourgeoisie were rapidly becoming mobilised, the Tudeh Party was undergoing a growth that was more quantitative than qualitative.

2. During this period relations between the Russian Government and Party and other communist parties were one-sided: communist parties around the world and their leaderships regarded Russia as an infallible source of advice, and the latter's approval of any party was a guarantee of that party's genuineness. In the case of our country, due to the old position of the Russian Government and Party, as well as the present dominant position of the Russian army, it was doubly so, and the inexperience and unoriginality of the leadership of the working class movement in Iran made the effects of such a one-sided relationship far worse. In fact, it took the form of the Tudeh Party's blind following of the policy of the Russian Communist Party and Government.

3. Considering the experience of the old Communist Party in Iran, whose former members regarded the re-establishment of such a party as an ultra-leftist act, and also because of the importance of good relations between the Russians and other Allied Powers in 1941-42, the Tudeh's founding members decided against the choice of the name 'Communist Party', and they did not reveal their long-term programme. Instead they settled for establishing a 'democratic party'. The existence of the 1931 law prohibiting communist tendencies was no longer regarded as a serious impediment, so much so that no attempt was made by the Party to repeal it. Given the country's deplorable economy, the slogans adopted by the Tudeh Party attracted the mass of the proletariat. Intellectuals were also rapidly attracted to it. In a matter of two years, the Party and unions affiliated to it represented a colossal force and played an important part in areas occupied by the Red Army.

Despite this great advantage, the Party failed to embark on a serious struggle against colonialism and internal reaction in the period 1941-44. It neither demanded land reform nor began a struggle against British

colonialism. The political slogans of the Party in these years were directed against dictatorship, although with the downfall of the old regime and the new occupation of the country, the return of the Reza Khan dictatorship was not considered a serious possibility. It also expended some energy making propaganda against fascism although, despite some pro-German groups in Iran, this too had not been a major problem. The plain fact is that the Party felt obliged to accept the existing *international* contradiction as a guide to action *inside* Iran: hence its refusal to initiate a serious fight against Britain and those who supported her in Iranian society. Instead the Party waited for the outcome of the War. Such a timetable robbed the Party of a very suitable opportunity to assume leadership of the whole people. Moreover, the Party's flirtation during these years with elements dependent on Britain remained a blot on its record. At this stage the national bourgeoisie had no serious political power; it was only after the re-establishment of the Majlis that Mossadeq and his friends began their certain, rather unco-ordinated activities

What was the principal contradiction during this period of foreign occupation of the country? It was that between the people on the one hand and imperialism, for whom feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie provided a social base in Iran, on the other. This was also the *fundamental* contradiction of our society throughout the whole process of the dictatorship which ended with the Allied intervention. Therefore, an all-out struggle against imperialism, which had a direct political and military stake in Iran, should have assumed paramount importance. The main force of the fight should particularly have been directed against British influence and in favour of oil nationalisation, as well as social and land reforms. For the oil workers could have exploited world contradictions to further their political and economic aims. Moreover, being an ally of Britain, the Soviet Union was in a position to bring pressure to bear on the British to make concessions in Iran.

However, as we all know, the Tudeh Party assumed that the principal prevailing world contradiction was also the main contradiction of our own society and pursued a policy in accordance with this until the end of the War. Even in the second stage, from the time when the Soviet Union demanded an oil concession from Iran till the collapse of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Azerbaijan in October 1946, the Tudeh Party's ongoing blind acceptance of Soviet strategy in Iran lost the Party the chance to assume the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. *The Party was oblivious of the fact that a proletarian victory in dominated countries depends on the working class assuming the leadership of the liberation movement.*

In the closing stages of the War, it is true the Tudeh Party and the Soviet Government did take up a joint stand against the British and their reactionary allies, the Iranian aristocracy. The bulk of the petty and national bourgeoisies remained spectators in this confrontation. The great majority of the urban proletariat and intellectuals were led by the Tudeh Party, as were the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan Democratic Movements (the Party's two affiliated political organisations in these regions). Peasant movements had begun to take shape

in Gilan and Azerbaijan, and to some extent in Kurdistan. Thus a considerable proportion of the people of Iran were fighting for the programmes put forward by the Soviet Union through these three organisations.

The Red Army was playing an important role in expanding the activities of these organisations by providing suitable facilities as well as by publicly refusing Iranian military expeditions the right of access to areas under its occupation, and by supporting the Tudeh Party's general strategy in the capital and other parts of the country. The role of the Soviet Army and Government does not exactly fit in the formula that outside factors can only influence a phenomenon through the internal dynamism of that phenomenon. With the occupation of Iran, the Red Army had penetrated inside the process and must therefore be regarded as a material force within the domestic process. The Russians also had a decisive role in shaping the policy of the movement and its leadership. The shortcomings and weakness of the Tudeh Party and its two affiliated organisations were perfectly apparent in their leadership. Despite five years of occupation by the Red Army and despite unprecedentedly suitable conditions, these organisations failed to acquire a revolutionary character and were not transformed into a truly independent force enabling them to embark on a decisive struggle against exploitation and internal reaction without the help of the Red Army. Needless to say, this same fundamental weakness was carried forward, in one form or another, into the subsequent phases of proletarian movement, ending in the movement's protracted and decisive defeat after the *coup d'état* of 1953.

The role of the Soviet Union during this period can be summarised as follows:

1. Given the general strategy of the Soviet Government in the Second World War, the presence of the Red Army in Iran was understandable and cannot be regarded as an anti-popular policy. Although some units of the Red Army did, on rare occasions, encroach upon the rights of our citizens, this was not a general pattern, since the commanders and those responsible for the Red Army did their utmost to keep it from assuming the features of an anti-popular army of occupation.
2. The Russians' direct intervention in organising working class and leftist movements, as well as in determining those movements' general strategy, was incorrect, far exceeding the limits of the fraternal relationship which should exist between the world's communist parties. They ought to have encouraged the movements to stand on their own feet and adopt their own political strategy. The Russians could then have critically analysed these movements' programmes and accordingly have given their advice. Such a policy would, sooner or later, have compelled the movements to appraise their position in the light of prevailing *internal* rather than *global* contradictions. Failure to pursue this policy produced the division of the progressive movement into two distinct sections that subsequently opposed one another. In addition, the Russians' demand for oil exploration concessions in the north, their botching up of the Azerbaijan Democratic Movement and pushing it towards assuming power in the region when it had no real social base, their delay in evacuating

the Red Army simply for the sake of creating political organisations to fill the vacuum caused by their imminent departure, their negotiations with the then Prime Minister, Qavam, and the unsatisfactory result of these negotiations, and lastly their preventing the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan Democratic Movements from having a military confrontation with the Central Government — these were all irremediable errors committed by the Russians due to the deviationist policies of the Soviet Government and the Soviet Communist Party during this period.

It is truly astonishing to see some apparently Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organisations, which have since the 1960s regarded the Russians as 'social imperialists' preferring to close their eyes to such errors committed not only in Iran but in many other parts of the world in the 1940s: they have no criticisms to make about the policies adopted by the Russians under Stalin's leadership. We believe that the Soviets should have adopted policies during the occupation that would have speeded up their departure from Iran and thus avoided an adverse public reaction. We further believe that they should have avoided any attempt to get financial profit in Iran: instead of demanding oil concessions, they should have concentrated on guiding the Iranian struggles against British influence in the country. If this had been done, then the presence of the Red Army would have resulted in the growth of self-reliant and deep-rooted working class movements capable of assuming the leadership of our people's national liberation struggle. Without intending to minimise the weaknesses of the Iranian organisations which paved the way for, and were compounded by, Russian errors, we believe the latter's internationalist duties were those we have already mentioned.

The defeatism and ultimate collapse of the movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan led to the failure of the whole working class movement in Iran. The Tudeh Party, having agreed to participate in the Qavam Cabinet of 1945-46 as a result of bilateral negotiations between the Qavam administration and the Soviet Government, came under pressure from the regime, and this rapidly reduced the Party's support in the country. The petty bourgeoisie, having only recently turned to the Party, now abandoned it on the assumption that victory was now impossible. The weakness of the Tudeh Party's leadership brought waves of protest from within, causing the Party to split into factions. Although the Party was characterised by serious political shortcomings, and although some of these were rightly evoked by Khalil Malaki (a leading member who split with the Party) and others involved in the inner-Party squabbles, the nature of their criticism can only be assessed in the light of the position these factions took after leaving the Party. In the event, they veered towards the right. Unfortunately despite their departure, petty bourgeois tendencies persisted in the Party. Subsequent developments prove that deep-rooted opportunism was firmly embedded in the Party's leadership as well as in its rank and file. With the defeat of 1947 in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan the young proletarian movement in Iran suffered a serious blow and was therefore unable to rectify its precarious position during the following two years. Nevertheless, internal reaction, spurred on by the

imperialists, tried to uproot the movement with a final blow in the shape of a mini *coup d'état* in February 1949,¹⁰ obliging the Tudeh Party to go underground. As a result of this harsh experience, the Party's performance improved by comparison with the phase of open struggle.

The economic effects of the War were two-fold: first, it caused mass deprivation; and second, it paved the way for the growth of the bourgeoisie, who accumulated a great amount of wealth through hoarding foodstuffs, providing for the needs of the occupying armies, black market dealings in industrial goods, and even other less overt means that would, in common law, be regarded as robbery.¹¹ The War years laid the ground for the growth of both sections of the bourgeoisie. As in many other dominated societies, this was particularly true of the national bourgeoisie. In Europe the production of consumer goods for export was practically at a standstill and U.S. industries were primarily concerned with the production of armaments and war material in general. Foreign capital in the dominated countries concentrated on producing primary and secondary materials [for export]. Consequently the internal market remained free of foreign competition and this encouraged the growth of a national bourgeoisie. Hence, despite the backward system of production, there did occur a degree of industrial growth. This process can easily be seen in India and the Latin American countries.

In our country, foreign capital was mainly invested in oil production. With a scarcity of foreign industrial goods, traditional and local industrial production increased in volume and this helped the growth of the national bourgeoisie. A year or two after the War, however, waves of foreign goods again began to enter the home market and U.S. monopolies succeeded in capturing markets in various countries. During these years a firm link was established between the commercial comprador bourgeoisie in Iran and North American imperialism. A clear example of this close link was the market for vehicles (cars, buses, lorries, etc.) which was wholly under the control of North Americans. Second-hand U.S. clothes as well as armaments and surplus army outfits also found a lucrative market in Iran. The British and other Europeans, having first restored their positions at home, turned their attention to Iran. The consequent flood of foreign goods presented a serious threat to domestic industries and the old system of production. The national bourgeoisie, having achieved economic growth and social status, was now ready to initiate a political struggle. The suppression of the proletarian movement had not damaged the position of the national bourgeoisie; in fact it had cleared the ground for it to assume leadership.

Although Britain lost the Iranian market during the War years, the superior position of this imperialist power nevertheless remained intact. Oil, the chief source of revenue for the country, was completely controlled by the British, who increased production to an unprecedented degree during the War. And because of their influence amongst the feudalists as well as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie (especially after the downfall of Reza Khan, this section of the pro-German bourgeoisie turned towards British imperialism), the British played the main role in shaping the Iranian Government's political strategy.

The task of dealing with the left-wing movement in Iran was undertaken by the British with North American assistance — and without which the Russian retreat from Iran would have been unthinkable. The British planned and supervised everything — the organisation of the reactionary forces, formulating Government policies to deal with opposition elements, and even enlisting the help of the feudalists and Khans — who had never played a significant role independent of the regime during the previous twenty years. At the same time, U.S. imperialism acquired increasing economic influence in Iran as a result of the occupation of the country and the departure of the Red Army, although there still existed a wide gap between her position and that of the British. After the suppression of the left movement (the mini-coup of 1949) and the enactment of a law prohibiting political activities, the North Americans demanded a new status in Iran commensurate with the changing conditions in the country. They reminded the regime not to forget the American share in the oil industry. Thus with the weakness of the working class movement and in conditions where the bourgeois nationalist movement was only just stirring, British imperialism played a crucial role in Iran. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company gave Britain not only an economic, but also a political hold over Iran, enabling it to intervene in the country's affairs in a direct manner. Therefore, in this period the principal contradiction in Iran was that between the people and British and North American imperialism. The comprador bourgeoisie was also part of this principal contradiction during the oil dispute. It was against this background that a new phase in our liberation struggle was initiated under the banner of the oil nationalisation movement.

During 1949-50 the Tudeh Party established various local and provincial organisations and underground cells consisting of its old members as well as members of the Democratic Youth Movement. The first collective actions by the workers took place in early 1950, with the onset of the campaign against election irregularities mounted by Mossadeq and his associates in the 15th Majlis. However, the restrictions imposed by working in clandestine conditions coupled with the political immaturity of the Tudeh Party prevented it from playing an important role in the political events of the day.

It is true that in the mid-1950s the Party still lacked a broad organisational base, but then so did the bourgeois nationalists. It is impossible to justify the Tudeh Party's irretrievable error of underestimating the importance of the anti-colonial struggle, its inability to establish what the social priorities were, and its failure to pinpoint the principal contradiction. In this period, too, the Party was oblivious of domestic realities and still assumed that world contradictions were simply reproduced in our society.

In the course of the Second World War, American imperialism became dominant generally and at the end of the War assumed the leadership of the advanced capitalist countries. The economic and military might of the U.S. enabled her to launch an anti-communist crusade immediately after the War. When the oil nationalisation movement in Iran reached its height at the end of 1950, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation had already been in existence

for a year. The U.S. was leading the fight against the world liberation movement and was backed by an assortment of reactionary forces. The Korean War began in June 1950 and demonstrated that the principal world contradiction was now that between the two world camps headed respectively by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. During these years the liberation movements in the dominated countries (excepting those in South East Asia and China which were led by the communists) had not developed sufficiently to justify regarding the contradiction between them and imperialism as a world-wide contradiction; thus the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camps could still be channelled through it (as is the case today). Under these circumstances the Soviet Union and other socialist states regarded the U.S. as the main enemy, seeing it as the beneficiary of colonialism and a rapacious enemy of the world's nations, and intent on preparing for war against socialism. The Tudeh Party automatically assumed that the U.S. was the main adversary in Iran and regarded the superior position of the British in the country as well as the long-standing contradiction between our people and the latter as overshadowed by the arrival of U.S. interests. During the months when the oil nationalisation movement led by Mossadeq was taking shape, the Tudeh Party was preoccupied by an international peace campaign against the imperialists, and particularly against the U.S.

Mossadeq, as the unchallenged leader of the National Front,¹² regarded the struggle against the British as the main goal and fully exploited the contradiction between the latter and the North Americans. Being familiar with the methods of the big powers, Mossadeq attached special significance to this contradiction; but, while his patriotism cannot be doubted, he nonetheless attached little importance to the role of the masses *vis-a-vis* the foreign powers. Indeed it was largely the support given to Mossadeq by the U.S. and its allies inside Iran which helped bring about the nationalisation of oil and in a relatively short time eliminated direct British control over Iranian oil. The Tudeh Party, having failed to identify the main contradiction in Iran, also failed to understand Mossadeq's relationship with the U.S. and simply regarded him as the latter's ally. Thus the Party felt it necessary to fight 'the main enemy and his agents'. The increasing U.S. influence in Iran reflected the concessions it was granted during the first period of Mossadeq's premiership, especially in the form of administrative involvement based on President Truman's Four Point programme. The participation of some pro-U.S. elements such as Amini and General Zahedi¹³ in Mossadeq's Cabinet was seen as evidence by the Tudeh Party of this interpretation. The Party persisted in its policy of confrontation with Mossadeq until the beginning of 1952, and events such as his rejection of the proposals concerning the oil industry put forward by Averell Harriman in July 1951 were regarded as a reflection of Mossadeq's fear of the people rather than of his patriotism and that of many of his colleagues. Yet despite this fundamental error of judgement, the Tudeh Party managed to increase its influence amongst the workers and intellectuals; in fact the Party and its various affiliated organisations grew with amazing speed. Such a phenomenon, which seems strange considering

the Party's erroneous stand on the most important current political question, can only be explained in terms of the Soviet Union's ideological predominance as the unchallenged leader of the world proletarian movement. This, in turn, had its effect on the Iranian masses and led them to support the Tudeh Party.

During the oil nationalisation movement, Mossadeq assumed the leadership of the national bourgeoisie, sections of the petty bourgeoisie (tradesmen and small shopkeepers), half of the intellectuals (professionals), and a minority of the workers. The commercial and bureaucratic sections of the comprador bourgeoisie, dependent on the North Americans, as well as the conservative and opportunistic sections of the bourgeoisie, also supported Mossadeq. It was, however, natural that they should swing away from him after his turn against the North Americans, and this they did a few months after the definitive end of the British position of dominance in the Iranian oil industry. However, the total withdrawal of support by members of the vacillating sections of the bourgeoisie did not come about until after the events of 21 July 1952, when social contradictions in Iran became more acute.

Having been effectively excluded from Iran the British now felt ready to make concessions to the North Americans — and Harriman's proposal¹⁴ to Mossadeq embodied this British compromise. However, with the rejection of these proposals by Iran on 14 July 1952, the British resumed their belligerent stand against the Iranian national movement. Mossadeq tried to placate the North Americans and to lessen their enmity towards himself by dwelling on the communists' bitter opposition to the U.S., although this was hardly a situation that could last indefinitely. Nevertheless, Truman and his ambassador in Iran, Grady, believed that Mossadeq's departure would create a vacuum that could only be filled by the communists. The Americans believed that Mossadeq was still a better guarantee against communism than anyone else. With the end of British influence in the oil industry, the anti-imperialist struggle against their remaining bases in Iran continued. The country was facing economic blockade and in order to preserve the newly-won victory, Mossadeq had to have a bigger share in governing the country. This inevitably meant conflict with the position of the Court, the military and the reactionaries generally. Mossadeq's break with the North Americans and their proteges in Iran exacerbated this contradiction. Hence internal reaction — the feudalists and compradors represented by the Court, the military, the higher echelons of the clergy and the local Khans — were united under the British imperialists and with the consent of the North Americans to topple Mossadeq. Had the conspiracy succeeded, the Americans would have been happy to receive their share of the loot. Thus the contradiction between the people on the one hand and imperialism, feudalism and compradorism on the other became the principal contradiction, and replaced that between the people and the British. This principal contradiction was crystallised in the bloody confrontation of 21 July 1952. This produced a new alignment, changed the principal contradiction and had the following results:

1. It caused the North Americans to side with the British and fight against

the national movement, first in a subordinate capacity and subsequently with all the resources they could muster.

2. It caused the Tudeh Party to revise its hostile position *vis-a-vis* the National Front and Mossadeq, thus enabling the whole population to close their ranks against the common enemy.

3. It forced conservative and vacillating elements to leave the ranks of the people and join the enemy. Baqai, Makki and Kashani (three members of the Majlis), plus others who had altered their course, were all remnants of the comprador and opportunistic national bourgeoisies in the National Front who now went over to the Court and imperialism.

4. It caused the Soviet Union, which had hitherto followed an erroneous line opposing Mossadeq and the National Front, to change its policy (as did the Tudeh Party) and to support Mossadeq. Thus during the second phase, the movement rapidly expanded and assumed vast popular dimensions. Initially, Mossadeq came to power as a result of the prevailing contradiction between Britain and the U.S.A., but this time he was brought back (after resigning as a protest against the Court's interference in politics) with the support of the Tudeh Party, the Soviet Union and above all as a result of a spontaneous uprising by the whole people of Iran on 21 July 1952. Let us analyse the position and role of each of these factors.

The North Americans, who had played their last card and had now lost all hopes in Mossadeq, acquiesced to his being ousted in 1952, but because they feared a possible popular uprising or an army revolt they subsequently changed their position. At this stage, Truman was not prepared to go any further, but a few months after July 21 the Republican Administration of Eisenhower came to power; it began to co-operate closely with the British in order to end Mossadeq's rule. The new U.S. Ambassador, Louis Henderson, was charged with this task. The North Americans were now so hostile towards the national liberation movement that they regarded the toppling of Mossadeq as one of their proudest moments: they had 'saved' Iran from the precipice of communism. Their role in defeating the liberation movement gave them the position they wanted in Iran, as was confirmed after the C.I.A.-directed coup of 19 August 1953 when they received lucrative concessions at the expense of their rivals, the British whose position, though shaky was fairly intact after the coup.

Simultaneously, at the instigation of the Russians, the Tudeh Party — as we have already noted — revised its position towards the National Front and Mossadeq, and began supporting them. Prior to this change of policy the Party had vigorously attacked Mossadeq, including organising various rough and even bloody demonstrations. However, having altered its position, the Party failed to pursue an active role. Having relinquished its leftist position, it now fell into a rightist trap; by supporting the government (of course a government with only partial power) it lost its former fighting quality and confined itself to merely criticising Mossadeq. The Party was so busy dwelling on Mossadeq's conservatism, uncertainty and accommodating attitudes, that it forgot to prepare its forces for an attack on reaction which was daily conspiring to strike against the liberation movement. In other words,

the Tudeh Party was following the lead shown by the national bourgeoisie and Mossadeq; it failed to take seriously the danger of the now wounded enemy and refrained from performing its revolutionary task of filling the vacuum left by the national bourgeoisie. During the crucial months after July 1952 that should have been used for invaluable preparation by our people, the Party was sunk in procrastination, prevarication, an assortment of festivals and the running of day-to-day business. Whereas it could have trained an efficient military force from amongst its vast membership (considering the extraordinary facilities at the disposal of the Party's Military Organisation in the Iranian army) in readiness for the fight against the enemy, it arrogantly relied on its own gigantic numerical strength and failed to take necessary precautions even *after* the coup of 19 August 1953.

This deviation from revolutionary tasks, this change from leftism to rightism indicated how deeply opportunism had penetrated the Tudeh Party. This took the form of a boundless opportunism that soon led the Iranian proletarian movement to deep and protracted defeat.

Although the Soviet Union recognised Mossadeq as the leader of the national bourgeoisie, it refused to send material help to his Government, and Persian oil remained without a buyer. Only during the final few months of Mossadeq's rule did the Soviet Government attempt to play a more positive role in supporting Mossadeq, but by then it was too late.

For their part, Mossadeq and the National Front were suspicious, as ever, of the Tudeh Party and they refused to mobilise and arm the people's forces: they felt this might anger the enemy. Mossadeq also failed to exploit such opportune moments as 21 July 1952 and 12 March 1953¹⁵ to rout the enemy. He was accommodating, trying to achieve victory through diplomacy and with a minimum of confrontation. The National Front was lacking any serious organisation or even ability to organise effectively, and was thus unable to sustain the enemy's onslaught for even a short period. The parties affiliated to the National Front played no role in mobilising and leading the masses; and the relationship linking Mossadeq and his immediate colleagues like Fatemi, Shayeghan and Razavi to their staunch and often non-Party supporters was a paternalistic one. Moreover, Mossadeq's understanding of the American imperialists and their role was deeply erroneous and, by the time he had reassessed the deceitful role of these first degree criminals in the oil dispute, it was too late. Therefore, the political organisations of the national bourgeoisie failed to lead the movement on a revolutionary path; the masses who had been mobilised during the preceding years had now to accept an unexpected defeat at the very height of the liberation movement's power. The *coup d'état* of 19 August 1953 was a turning point in our history at which the people surrendered their superior position to their reactionary enemy.

During the years of the liberation movement's growth and as a result of political and economic changes, important economic transformations took place. The partial rule of Mossadeq's Government and the National Front did not only represent a political victory for the national bourgeoisie, it also

marked the beginning of the real growth of this class. The inevitable halting of oil revenues, which continued till 1954, all but stopped the import of foreign goods. There was an equilibrium in the balance of payments, and imports were confined to capital goods and the most essential industrial goods that presented no competitive threat to the national bourgeoisie. In fact, Mossadeq's 'economy without oil' policy paved the way for an unprecedented growth of the national bourgeoisie. In this period the rate of production in Iranian industry increased tremendously — as for example with the enormous growth of woollen production where previously imports from Britain had dominated. Workshop production and traditional industries also grew at an extraordinary rate. Foreign trade was another factor now working directly to the benefit of the national bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the comprador bourgeoisie suffered seriously. The end of the old Anglo-Persian Oil Company put a temporary stop to relations between the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and imperialism and this damaged the position of this class. At the same time the economic position of the State *vis-a-vis* private capital was generally weakened. These were all signs of the growth of the national bourgeoisie and the decline of the comprador bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie as well as the petty bourgeois sections demonstrated their financial support for Mossadeq by purchasing a special issue of Government bonds, and they showed a remarkable willingness to hold the cost of living steady by co-operating with the Government. The coup of 19 August reversed both the trend towards the growth of the national bourgeoisie and the permanent decline of the comprador bourgeoisie in that, after the coup, and even prior to the resumption of oil income, the position of the comprador bourgeoisie was drastically improved by U.S. aid and the new regime's economic policies.

The coup represented the strategic defeat of the movement during one phase of its existence. The most important cause of defeat was the absence of the subjective factor, i.e. of a people's revolutionary vanguard, both in the ranks of the national bourgeoisie and in the working class movement. The relatively weak position of the peasants in the movement, who had only just begun to fight for their rights against feudalism, cannot be regarded as a fundamental shortcoming of the movement and therefore a weakness in its objective condition. If the Tudeh Party and/or the National Front (although because of the nature of the latter, less was to be expected of it) had performed their revolutionary task of preparing the extensive forces of the masses who had come to the aid of the movement to take up arms against reaction and its imperialist patrons, then the onslaught of 19 August 1953 could have become a progressive turning point by intensifying the general struggle and marking the start of the movement's transition from a political to a military phase. Even if the Tudeh Party had deployed its own unprepared forces between 17 and 21 August and resisted the enemy's *putsch*, there was a good chance that it could have defeated the *coup d'état*. The resistance could have marked the beginning of a revolutionary move towards the mobilisation of the masses and total war against the enemy. However, the opportunism that had taken root in the working class movement pushed

the Party into a defeatist attitude and led to the irretrievable defeat of our people.

As we have said, the 19th of August destroyed the Tudeh Party. Its underground organisations and Military Organisation within the Iranian army could have provided protection and enabled it to confront the enemy. But its inability to understand the new situation, its underestimation of the new and superior position of the enemy, and its failure to adopt revolutionary methods in order to fight the enemy destroyed the Party within two years of the coup. During twelve years of political activity, the Party and its various affiliated organisations had managed to mobilise militant revolutionary forces, which had achieved a qualitative growth, particularly in the phase of the Party's underground struggle. However, these valuable forces were spread over all the various cells, hence they were not distinguishable from ordinary elements till the very day of defeat. They also had not as yet achieved a degree of organisational development which would have enabled them to initiate an ideological stand against the opportunism which had overtaken the leadership of the Party. These forces lacked the necessary organisation and had not, as yet, created a revolutionary wing within the Party. The end result of all these factors was that, when the Party cells were defeated and dispersed, these forces put up a hard resistance, despite the weakness of the Party's leadership, and subsequently, after the destruction of the Party, they set about organising the dispersed elements inside the country and continued the struggle.

There was another problem — factionalism within the leadership and amongst the Party's cadres. One main faction, adopting a 'left-wing' stand, was against Mossadeq's policy while the other faction advocated a policy of only passive support for Mossadeq and virtual defeatism during the second phase of the oil nationalisation movement. An analysis of this tendency towards factionalism within the Party would show that the factor sustaining this trend was an ambitious and petty bourgeois inclination towards 'gang warfare' found among many members of the Party's leadership. The general policy of both these factions after the defeat involved a failure to suggest revolutionary answers, a superficial approach to solving problems; and the weakness and treason exhibited by important members of both factions after their arrest by the regime are ample proof of the above analysis.

Here a word should be said about the position of the peasants during this period. After the suppression of the peasant movement in Azerbaijan and Gilan in 1946, all such movements died down. While the national and proletarian movements were reaching new heights in the cities, there was no general movement in the rural areas. Later, after acquainting itself with the result of the Chinese Revolution, the Tudeh Party began to pay more attention to the peasant question. However, this attempt bore fruit only in areas that were ripe for political activity. The impact of the bloody repression of 1946 in Azerbaijan, for example, and the migration of 10,000 people to the Soviet Union or other parts of Iran, was so great that peasant movements failed to materialise in that region, even during the period 1951-53. This obviously deprived the anti-imperialist movements in the urban areas of

valuable support. The one exception was Gilan. Because of favourable conditions for the organisation of conscious peasant elements there and also because of easy communications between urban and rural areas, the peasants in the province of Gilan began to show some interest in action, although this was still small and insignificant in comparison with what an all-out peasant movement might have been. The continuation and expansion of these very important actions could have resulted in mass mobilisation of the peasantry.

The Triumph of the Comprador Bourgeoisie, 1953-63

The regime established by the 1953 *coup d'état* had two fundamentally important tasks: first to suppress the anti-imperialist movement and to consolidate the regime's political position; and secondly, to find the right solution to the oil question, since oil had become the cornerstone of the regime's economic recovery. General Zahedi, as Prime Minister, and Ali Amini, as oil negotiator, (both having previously served in Mossadeq's first Cabinet) undertook these tasks respectively. The pro-British and pro-American elements within the Cabinet immediately after the coup were actually co-operating with each other, although the U.S. supporters like Zahedi and Amini were, albeit temporarily, playing a more important role.

From the very beginning the post-coup regime treated the Tudeh Party as the main danger. The National Front lacked any underground cells or serious organisation, whereas the regime was aware of the Tudeh Party's real strength. The truth is that during the two years after the coup the Party was the main, and sometimes the only, target of the regime. The prisons were full of Party members; a few months after the coup all prisoners were released except for members of the Tudeh Party. The aim was to destroy the Party completely, and to achieve this the regime used the barracks of the Second Armoured Brigade commanded by General Bakhtiar (subsequently killed by the Shah's secret police in Iraq in 1970 for having attempted a coup) to inflict horrific tortures on Party members from 1953 onwards. The leadership cadres and important members of the Party had to choose between death and surrender. As for the National Front, except for Dr. Fatemi (Mossadeq's Foreign Secretary), who was executed, and Karim Pour Shirazi (a famous Iranian journalist), who became a target of the Shah's personal wrath and died under torture, the rest of the National Front's prominent members escaped even long-term prison sentences. In contrast forty prominent members of the Tudeh Party were executed, half a dozen or so died under torture, and hundreds were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In analysing the nature of the 1953-55 suppression and the special features of the Tudeh Party, the above facts ought to be taken into account.

The weakness of the Party was not that the bulk of its membership was not prepared for any sacrifice; the resistance and steadfastness of many of the rank and file and some prominent members in the face of extreme pressure is a source of pride for our people and especially the Iranian proletariat

class even today. There were those who lost their lives under torture without betraying a word of their organisational secrets. There were many who held their heads high while roped to the gallows. At least 20% of the Party members and Tudeh Youth Organisation members were ready to take part in an armed struggle and, if need be, lose their lives. This was no inconsiderable force for the start of a revolutionary initiative. There is no doubt that in subsequent stages of the struggle thousands and tens of thousands of militants from the proletariat and the people in general, who were in a state of general mobilisation, would have joined the armed struggle and fought the regime. The fundamental weakness of the Tudeh Party was that it failed to prepare this available force for an armed confrontation a year before the coup of 1953, i.e. after the confrontation of 21 July 1952. On the contrary, the Party believed that, as in the period after the mini-coup of 1949, things would automatically resume their normal course and that political and social trends would once more pave the way for the resumption of activities, with the Party playing no fundamental role in effecting such a change. Consequently, the Party completely failed to recognise that the *coup d'état* of 1953 had undermined the foundations of the whole anti-imperialist movement and that it could not count on any other force, including that behind Mossadeq, to alter the new situation. Lastly, the fatal error of the Party was that it did not undertake a complete reorganisation after the coup. This would have meant a purge of some elements, a change in organisational forms, a fundamental review of Party policy and a change of both strategy and tactics to suit the new conditions. The movement should have adopted armed struggle, and on the basis of this new strategy various organisations ought to have been purged and reorganised. Without a change of policy and with no correct strategic and tactical programme of action, reorganisation does not lead to any useful result. The Martial Law Administration (named SAVAK after 1957) was the enemy's main instrument for silencing the opposition, and it managed to exploit the Party's vacillating policy as well as the opportunist positions of the leadership: it was thus able to crush the most organised forces of the people in a long and sustained battle. The ultimate weakness of the Party was that, having been defeated politically and having sustained serious organisational blows, the leadership, instead of showing self-sacrifice in defending the ideals of the working class and the people, abjectly surrendered to the enemy and faced with the choice between martyrdom and life, opted for the latter at any price. Amongst other things, this also confirmed the Party's ideological defeat.

The second task of the new regime was accomplished a year after the general repression began when a treaty, known as the 'Ammini-Peech' Treaty, was signed in 1954 in terms of which an international consortium took possession of Iranian oil. The Treaty was in fact based on the 50-50 proposal put forward by British Petroleum in the last days of Razmara's rule (an army officer who was Premier immediately before Mossadeq in 1951) and which also formed the basis of Harriman's proposal in July 1951. The Treaty was accepted by the Government without much ado. The consortium contained

45% British capital, 40% American, 8.6% Dutch and 6% French capital. Thus the U.S. achieved its long-held aim of gaining access to Iranian oil. By 1955 the two basic tasks of the *coup d'état* regime had been achieved. It was therefore dissolved and replaced by a Cabinet wholly committed to British interests.

American aid to Iran, the resumption of oil production, and the disequilibrium in the balance of payments in favour of imported goods had a decisive effect on the economic situation, and it led after a time to a major economic crisis. After the coup there began a constant flow of foreign consumer goods into Iranian markets, and this produced a rapid growth of the comprador bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie lost its political predominance and, under unprecedented economic pressure, had to choose between being destroyed or accepting comprador dependence. This, in effect, involved the gradual absorption of the Iranian bourgeoisie by the comprador bourgeoisie. This trend was decisively helped by an increase in the production and export of oil, and 1,000 million dollars of U.S. aid and loans spread over six years, together with the regime's open-door policies towards the import of foreign goods. In a matter of a few years, hundreds of previously modest shopkeepers were transformed into large capitalist importers. Those with a shop or two became commercial agents of big British and North American monopolies, and the old-established importers managed to increase their wealth tenfold. The only businessmen to enjoy super-profits were those who were co-operating closely with foreign monopolies. Commercial firms were happy to act as agents for the many commodities belonging to foreign monopolies. Banks, mushrooming all over the place, provided easy credit for small businessmen with little capital. And the profit from the sale of foreign goods became concentrated in the hands of a relative minority. Part of this accumulated wealth was invested from 1959 onwards in factories for assembling imported industrial components, in huge buildings used for real estate speculation, and in stocks and shares speculation — the latter phenomenon being a disorder which attracts those elements of the comprador bourgeoisie who have been deflected from their natural course of development. During the latter years of this phase the production and export of oil increased rapidly and the foreign aid programme came to an end. However, the ultimate factor causing the appearance of the general economic crisis was the unprecedented way in which credit facilities were provided by the multitude of banks. This increased the level of business activity and produced what is known as 'credit inflation'.

Commodities that had been imported on the strength of bank credits and/or bills of exchange remained unsold due to the lack of sufficient buying power, and this led to bankruptcy and business stagnation. Money that had been provided by the banks and used in property speculation could not be used for any other purpose because of falling demand and therefore got tied down, unable to come to the aid of the bazaar and general commercial dealings. This proved to be the symptom of the prevailing economic malaise: the comprador bourgeoisie had reached the end of its growth and could go no

further. To develop in other fields (industrial, monetary, etc.), the path had to be cleared of all impediments and the ingredients for new growth prepared. Legal obstacles and administrative shortcomings had to be dealt with in order that currency reserves (in dollars, etc.) and foreign aid could be used for the growth of the comprador bourgeoisie. Production of minerals had to be increased considerably so that this, coupled with the exploitation of labour power, would provide the necessary profit for foreign capital and the comprador bourgeoisie. Moreover, the market for consumer goods had to be expanded. Finally, the feudal system of production, which had co-existed with the comprador bourgeoisie and often in partnership with it, had now become a social as well as an economic obstacle blocking the bourgeoisie's progress. However, before tackling this and the land question, we propose to study some other processes.

The rapid growth of the comprador bourgeoisie had its effect on the national bourgeoisie, its first victim being the industrialising component of the national bourgeoisie. Many factories dependent on local sources of raw materials, capital and markets, went bankrupt (e.g. textile factories in Isfahan). The same fate befell similar state-run factories, although in many cases the government intervened with state subsidies to prevent further unemployment. Traditional workshops also were falling by the wayside in the face of better quality foreign goods — as for example when in 1954 German buses captured the Iranian market and the local coach-building industry died a gradual death, or, with the arrival of Pepsi-Cola factories, lemonade workshops went out of business. There was only one option open to the large national producers: to accept the fundamentals of industrial dependence with the accompanying huge profits. Small traditional producers had two options; the great majority of them joined the work force, and a smaller section of them searched for areas of work which either had not as yet been exposed to an all-out commercial assault or were under the domination of the comprador bourgeoisie.

Turning to the commercial bourgeoisie, who worked with their own capital, they were not dependent on any foreign monopoly and were nationalist in orientation. For them the only motive for importing from a particular country was profit. They were also extremely interested in the export of locally made goods. But they attached special importance to internal markets. Hence they put up some resistance in the face of the comprador bourgeoisie's onslaught and, having felt their own inadequacies, they replaced the commercial activities of the 'bazaar' with those of the 'high street'. They were ready to act as agents for foreign companies; they agreed to leave exports alone or at least not to rely on them; they offered to set up banks in partnership with foreign capital; and they agreed to co-operate with the comprador bourgeoisie in its development towards dependent capitalism. During these years we witnessed the expansion of medium-size workshops into big industrial factories (e.g. the Azemayesh Workshop producing coaches and household chairs; similar changes took place in the Khoram, Arj and Kaveh metal workshops and they became large factories). Small-time usurers and pawnshops

transformed themselves into banks. And lastly, there were growing tendencies amongst the feudalists to invest in urban properties, import firms and banks. This channelling of the national bourgeoisie and, to a lesser extent, of the feudalists towards comprador activities pushed the comprador bourgeoisie to the height of its growth and gave it a kind of social standing.

As we have already mentioned, a comprador bourgeoisie developed not merely in the field of commerce. A financial comprador bourgeoisie also emerged during this period. In a matter of a few years, more than ten banks were established either with Iranian or joint Iranian-foreign capital. The capital and credit of these banks were mainly employed in commerce. Whether Iranian or jointly owned, they helped foreign capital considerably to capture the home market. At the same time the activities of Iranian and foreign insurance companies increased. The growth of this financial bourgeoisie was a sign of a general growth in capitalist relations in society. The seeds of a consumer industry were sown only at the end of this period, and there was also a growth of mechanised farming on suitable agricultural lands. Thus as well as commercial and bureaucratic bourgeoisies, there also emerged financial, industrial and agricultural bourgeoisies. This phenomenon, together with the channelling of the larger national bourgeoisie towards comprador activities, helped to overcome the rivalries between these two sections and gave them a class unity. Without intending to deny the existence of the national bourgeoisie in this period, or the existence of its remnants today, one can safely claim that its existence in no way, either then or now, stopped the comprador bourgeoisie from assuming the features of an independent class and enjoying the fruits of such a distinction. The growth of the comprador bourgeoisie in turn signalled the growth of a contradiction between this class and feudalism. Of course the feudal-comprador system had from the start contained this contradiction. Indeed its growth occurred as early as Reza Khan's rule. But with the qualitative and quantitative expansion of the comprador bourgeoisie (and the emergence of its various sections), the contradiction grew to an unprecedented degree. In confronting the people, the comprador bourgeoisie had always been an ally of feudalism. However, as a result of the suppression of the national liberation movement culminating in a reduction of the contradiction between the people and the enemy, the contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism had become the principal contradiction of society.

What was the position of feudalism during these years? The danger posed to the old ruling class by the activities of the Tudeh Party amongst the peasants and the attention that was being paid to the land question by Mossadeq (he had reduced the share of the crop taken by the landlord by 15%) had now been dispelled with the suppression of the liberation movement. But this counter-revolutionary policy could no longer save a decadent feudalism from annihilation. In the course of a few decades feudalism had been seriously weakened by the people and the comprador bourgeoisie. With the emergence and growth of a comprador bourgeoisie the interests of imperialism could be preserved far better by it than by the feudalists. This

new class was a direct descendant of a colonial relationship and, as such, better able automatically to look after the long-term interests of imperialism. Nevertheless, as long as the comprador bourgeoisie lacked suitable economic and social standing, there was no glaring antagonistic contradiction between the feudal system of production on the one hand and the interests of imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie on the other. Moreover, it was absolutely essential to preserve the social and political position of feudalism in order to perpetuate exploitation and to prevent the growth of the national bourgeoisie and the liberation movement. However, the feudalists were no longer the best available customers for foreign goods; from a quantitative point of view, this class was extremely limited and it was unable to provide an adequate response to the needs of a neo-colonialist market. The feudalists spent their money on building luxury apartments or on investment in property; part of the income from oil was salted away in foreign banks and the rest was spent on luxury goods. This form of consumption based on feudal exploitation and a colonial relationship was perfectly compatible with the interests of imperialism in an era when the world monopolies required only a limited market in Iran. However, if the income from oil was to increase, say, twentyfold, then it was essential to have a much bigger consumer market in Iran for sophisticated foreign products. For in a country like Iran it would have been impossible to store in foreign banks the huge income derived from the export of raw material, as was the case with some small Arab sheikdoms. If Iran's oil and other mineral wealth, together with its vast reserves of cheap labour, were to be increasingly exploited, and if world monopolies were to invest capital and profit from this exploitation, then feudalism had to be exchanged for a system that had a vested interest in these various processes and was able to turn the wheels of such a big and complex system. In such a situation, feudalism can only preserve its superior position of exploitation if, when necessary, it turns towards the comprador bourgeoisie.

This economic necessity coincided with the unprecedented decline of feudalism: Iranian villages were heading towards ruin, there was no increase in agricultural production; and the feudalists were making no attempt to plough back some of the agricultural income into new or even old irrigation systems; and there was no mechanisation. The attitude of most large feudalists towards their villages in this period can be likened to a highwayman who, at the last moments of his raid, takes anything that is going. The feudalists were failing to discharge their conventional financial and administrative responsibilities to the peasants. They were also failing to take steps in times of drought or calamity and offered no support to the peasants. In some important parts of the country, peasants who had lost their crop left the land and became vagrants. A section of the large feudalists found new financial interests outside agriculture: they entered commerce, built large urban properties to let, constructed hotels and cinemas, entered into partnership with banks and of course salted away cash in foreign banks. This was the general policy of privately-owned villages, crown lands and religious endowments. The situation was no better in the small-holdings which comprised

25% of all agricultural land. As a direct consequence of the lack of irrigation systems and the poor quality of the soil, these lands remained in the form of small-holdings. In some of these villages the system of production had not even reached the stage of feudalist development, so that even ploughs and draught animals were not available for ploughing the land. As a result, peasants from these villages were rapidly migrating to the towns. Moreover, drought had affected the land to such an extent that even subsequent wet seasons were not enough to restore it. The Court had already sold off nearly all its lands, and large landowners like Alam (the Minister of Court at the time of writing) managed to sell and divide their land before the land reform. Other feudalists, having received advance warning of the coming land reform, deprived their peasants of all their rights, turned their lands into mechanised or semi-mechanised farms, put an end to the share-cropping system, and did away with the *wasagh* (land-title) of the farmers.¹⁶ These were all important signs signifying the final moments of feudalism in Iran. It was in this situation that the contradiction between the feudalists and the bourgeoisie (with comprador features as we have noted, now dominating all its sections) grew to such a degree that for a few years it displaced the main contradiction between the people and the enemy.

With the success of the 1953 *coup d'état* the people at large did not give up the political scene immediately; during the remaining months of 1953 and throughout the whole of 1954 political protests continued. On election day, 12 November 1953, (now of course banned) and during the process of negotiation between the regime and the oil consortium, people poured on to the streets in response to the call of the National Resistance Movement (which had been formed by those parties and organisations supporting Mossadeq) and the Tudeh Party. But with the breaking up of the Tudeh Party's cells and the inactivity of pro-Mossadeq elements, these protests petered out. The political police and the army occupied the important work centres, as well as the bazaar and the intellectual centres (like the University). Economic and trade union protests were also suppressed. This situation persisted until 1959 when the economic crisis once again produced discontent amongst the proletariat. In this year, brick-kiln workers and taxi drivers came out on strike, and street protests by high school students, which were not devoid of political overtones, broke the long silence. Although underground political organisations tried to expand them and give them political direction, these were mainly spontaneous actions.

After the destruction of the Tudeh Party's organisations, a few new cells were formed by former members with a view to continuing the fight against the regime. Until 1958 these cells concentrated on bringing together the old members of the Party and its Youth Organisation in order to revive the Party. According to the dogmatic view found in all Marxist-Leninist groups, it was impossible to fight the enemy without a party. Most of these cells, however, were infiltrated by the police and their members lost their lives in pursuit of this idea. Indeed the attempt to *unify* these cells only increased the possibilities for enemy surveillance over them all.

The overthrow of the monarchical regime in Iraq in July 1958 was the most important foreign event to impinge on Iran for many years. From our people's point of view the Iraqi regime had been the twin brother of the regime in Iran, and the subsequent propaganda war between the Iranian and Iraqi governments had a catalytic effect on both the Iranian regime and the Iranian people — in fact more than that, between Moscow and Tehran too. The regime felt that it faced a real threat, while the changes in Iraq also had a stimulating effect on the underground organisations in Iran. Almost overnight, various cells and anti-regime groups began activity. New cells, concealed from the regime, were also set up and these mingled with the spontaneous actions that occurred during 1959. As a result, the regime began an all-out attack, although on a smaller scale than in the years immediately after the 1953 coup. A few cells were uncovered and hundreds were arrested. Torture, which had ceased to be used against detainees due to the absence of serious struggle and the surrender and betrayal of important Tudeh Party cadres, was re-started. The majority of the underground organisations were betrayed and their members sent before military tribunals. Executions and heavy sentences put an end to their activities. Thus the inadequate attempts of the proletarian movement failed to develop and it was suppressed once more. The fundamental weakness of these organisations was that they failed to adopt a correct policy for the struggle against the regime and consequently failed to find the correct organisational form. As well as being under dogmatic pressure to build 'a party', these organisations were seriously hampered by the strong influence which the Tudeh Party's past political tactics had had on them. It was only after the repression of 1963 that the remaining organisations began to think of new methods of struggle.

The parties and organisations of the National Front gave the appearance of staying in existence by keeping the name of the National Resistance Movement (N.R.M.) until 1957. But the truth is that their activities only amounted to holding innocuous meetings and issuing occasional tracts. In fact, between 1954 and 1960 the National Front engaged in no activities at all, whereas its constituent parties such as The Iranian Party, The Iranian People's Party (Pan-Iranist) and the nationalist religious organisations, which were the non-party arms of the N.R.M. did continue their existence but only as 'friendly associations'. Some of the more conservative ones were even ignored by the regime. After the declaration of the 'Eisenhower Doctrine' in 1957, some of these conservative associations, noticing the intensification of the contradiction between the Americans and the British, tried to exploit the situation. The approval of the 'Eisenhower Doctrine' by Alah-yar Saleh (a prominent bourgeois nationalist) reflected the attempt to move in this direction.

This then was the general state of the people's movement, dominated by the contradiction between the people and their enemies. Its rapid decline was indicative of the inactivity of this contradiction. Thus, a contradiction which during 1952-57 was at the height of its intensity, and which for a few years after the initial suppression was still regarded as the principal

contradiction, became merely a basic contradiction of our society and unable to play the *principal* role. But as this contradiction weakened, another contradiction within the feudal-comprador system developed. On the eve of the reforms it became the principal contradiction.

Let us now consider the changes that occurred in the position of the imperialists. By means of the coup of 19 August 1953 the American imperialists managed to lessen the gap between themselves and the British; they received 'their' share of the oil and acquired a more important role in the Iranian consumer market than the British. Both Iran's vote at the United Nations and the reorganisation and rearming of the Iranian army were in the hands of the Americans. Notwithstanding these considerable U.S. privileges in Iran, the British, because of their long-standing relationship with the Iranian bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the feudalists and the upper crust of the clergy, nevertheless still enjoyed a superior position. As a result of negotiation between these two colonial powers in 1955, the Americans recognised Britain's pre-eminent position in its previous sphere of influence. The setting up of the Baghdad Pact military organisation (later renamed CENTO) headed by Britain to the exclusion of the U.S. was proof of this recognition. The Cabinet changes in Iran and the country's signing of the Baghdad Treaty were also related to this recognition.

Nevertheless, such agreements could not stop the increasing influence of the Americans in Iran. They had a close relationship with the comprador bourgeoisie and were instrumental in its growth and ultimate development into a financial, industrial and agricultural comprador bourgeoisie. As will be made clear in the following pages, the special features of U.S. imperialism, its power and superiority over the British and other imperialists, had made it the standard-bearer of the neo-colonialist relationship in the world. The growth of comprador bourgeoisies was the prerequisite of this relationship. Thus the U.S. was profiting from the rapid growth of this bourgeoisie, as it became her social base in Iran. The American political onslaught, together with U.S. economic pressure on our society, started to gain momentum after the previous agreement with Britain had been set aside. The attack on the Suez Canal in 1956 was a turning point in Anglo-American relationships in the region. From then on, the Americans adopted an independent policy based on the 'Eisenhower Doctrine', i.e. they felt free to grab as many British and French areas of influence as they could. The Doctrine proposed to give military support to any country 'threatened' by communism. Following the publication of the Doctrine, U.S. marines were sent to Lebanon in 1958 and the Americans openly interfered in Jordan's internal affairs in the same year.

In the case of Iran, U.S. aggression began with their *de facto* membership of the Baghdad (later CENTO) military alliance and subsequently with their bilateral military agreement with Iran. The coup plotted by General Gharani (Chief of the Second Bureau of the Persian Army) in 1958 was part of the new U.S. strategy. With the intensification of internal contradictions and the appearance of yet another economic crisis, the Americans revealed their

support for the comprador bourgeoisie, and by cutting economic as well as military aid they put the regime under pressure. The importance of this aid was so great that the clique then in power tried in various ways to please the Americans; they even despatched the Shah himself to Washington to plead their cause. The attitude of the ruling clique towards U.S. aid was reminiscent of the Court of Mozafar-Aldin Shah's pathetic entreaties for foreign loans in 1904-08. The North Americans used this weapon far more effectively than the attempted coup by Gharni to bolster their position in Iran. The condition they laid down for the continuation of aid was that there should be a land reform and an administrative purge. This reflected in a practical form the Americans' open defence of the comprador bourgeoisie and their stand against feudalism. It was also a signal designed to draw the hitherto largely British-orientated ruling clique towards themselves.

Britain was well aware of the fact that the projected land reform would pave the way for a renewed surge of foreign investment and the further growth of the comprador bourgeoisie in Iran. She also knew that in any future economic expansion the Americans would have extensive opportunities for commercial activities and that British capital would be unable to compete with U.S. capital. Britain, therefore, preferred the land reform to be carried out in such a way that would make it possible for weaker British capital to take advantage of it.

It was in such conditions that the initial draft bill for land reform was presented to the Majlis in the first months of 1960. Compared with subsequent proposals, this bill was quite definitive. But the problem was that the Eqbal Government had no intention of implementing it; it was designed merely to mollify the Americans into re-starting their aid programme. The U.S. wanted a land reform coupled with an acknowledgement of its superiority in Iran. Thus the rivalries between the two imperialist powers continued. Britain had a long-established relationship with feudalism and a great many political personalities; high-ranking army officers were connected to the feudalists on the one hand and Britain on the other; the clergy had similar connections. That section of the comprador bourgeoisie which had links with Britain and which was in favour of land reform and the destruction of feudalism formed a small reformist and Court-orientated faction. These elements initially co-operated with the representatives of the U.S.-orientated comprador bourgeoisie. The 1960 coalition, formed against Eqbal and Sharif Emami, between Ali Amini and his friends on the one hand and the Rashidian-Behbahani faction on the other, was a reflection of this co-operation.

The Court was the point at which feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie combined. The feudalists had played as big a part as the comprador bourgeoisie in bringing the Shah back after his flight from the country in mid-August 1953 and re-establishing monarchy. Moreover, the Court had long-established connections with the British. This last consideration put the Court in a quandary as regards the land reform proposal and the U.S. The position had become so critical that the Shah felt obliged to raise a sensitive

question, one that was very important to the Americans, i.e. the Iranian army. The Shah began to insist that Iran did not need a large standing army. He talked about setting a limit on Persian armaments and limiting national service. He also embarked on a programme of normalising and improving relations with the Soviet Union, who were apprehensive of U.S. influence in Iran. Attempts by the State Department to bring home the danger of the Soviet Union and communism were brushed aside by the ruling cliques who denied the existence of such a threat. These were the reactions of the regime to the cutting of U.S. aid on the one hand and increasing British pressure on the other. The Court did not easily reduce its ties with Britain. Neither was its sacrifice of the feudalists at the altar of the comprador bourgeoisie an action that was taken lightly: it was only done at the behest of a comprador bourgeoisie supported by the Americans in circumstances where the liberation movement had directed its struggle against the Pahlavi Court. This was precisely the point at which the feudalists realised that the Shah had committed treason against them. The Shah's change of policy, internally as well as externally, was no independent personal act; rather the bureaucratic bourgeoisie generally had changed its position. Thus the Shah first became a reluctant supporter of the land reform and then, by kicking Amini and his colleagues out of office *en bloc*, became its standard-bearer.

What was the position of the Soviet Union during this period? After the 19th Congress of the Communist Party, and particularly after the death of Stalin, there occurred a fundamental reappraisal in Russian foreign policy. The most important change was towards the various anti-imperialist movements led by communist parties. Although the Russians did not officially accept that the principal world contradiction was now that between the liberation movements and imperialism, nevertheless from then on the Russian as well as the other socialist states' anti-imperialist struggle was channelled through these movements. It was on the basis of this new policy that the Russians began to foster closer ties with countries which had emerged from colonial rule or were still under colonial domination. A clear example of this change was demonstrated by the Russian attitude towards Egypt during the Suez Canal crisis of 1956.

The *coup d'état* of 19 August 1953 put a temporary stop to this new policy towards Iran. But in 1955 while the national liberation movement, and the Tudeh Party in particular, were under severe pressure, the Russians established close contact with the regime. This move was a great blow to the Iranian masses and to Iranian militants in particular. The Soviet Government managed to solve its financial and border differences with Iran and started to expand its economic relations with her. However, Iran's decision to join the Baghdad Pact, which was an obviously anti-Russian treaty, damaged this new relationship. Nevertheless, because of the formal absence of the North Americans from the Pact, the Russians in the end relented and Iran's membership of the Pact did not stop the Shah's trip to the Soviet Union in 1956. After the declaration of the 'Eisenhower Doctrine' and the American entry into the Baghdad Pact as well as the conclusion of the U.S.-Iran bilateral

military treaty, relations between Russia and Iran again deteriorated. Immediately prior to these developments, the Russian diplomatic and commercial missions to Iran failed to achieve any results. The Russians started a strong propaganda campaign against Iran which was intensified greatly after the downfall of the monarchy in Iraq in 1958. But this Russian move was in no way related to the position of the Iranian progressive movement and was purely motivated by Soviet strategic and other interests. The Soviets regarded the North Americans as the 'Number One' enemy and were concerned therefore about the U.S.A.'s military position in Iran. Attempts by the Government of Sharif-Emami to solve the differences with the Russians failed to achieve results. The subsequent administration formed by Ali Amini also failed in this matter despite Amini's reformist slogans. Because of persistent Russian criticism of the regime, they felt unable to support Amini and his programme of reform. Hence the Russian propaganda campaign reached its height during Amini's premiership when they strongly supported the National Front campaign against the regime. With the downfall of Amini, negotiations were resumed by Alam, and the differences between the two countries were resolved with incredible speed.

In the new circumstances the Soviet Union approved of the land reform programme and, following this approval, economic relations between the two countries improved rapidly. Once more, the new changes took effect without any regard for the popular movement. Indeed the honeymoon between Russia and Iran started precisely at a time when the regime was using all its resources to suppress the movement and consolidate its dictatorship. This development finally proved that the Iranian revolutionary movement has to continue the struggle independent of Russia or any other foreign power and that it must depend solely on the force of the people.

Notes

1. Appointed Prime Minister by Naser-Al-Deen Shah in the 1840s, he attempted to effect administrative and educational reforms. In a highly-organised court conspiracy led by the Shah's mother, the Shah was persuaded to dispense with his services after only two years in office. Eventually he was executed on the Shah's orders.
2. For example, Zel-Al-Sutan (a son of Naser-Al-Deen Shah), whose wealth and position in Isfahan were threatened by the Russians. [Author's note]
3. The Sepah-Dar and the Sam-Sum were two of the aristocratic families who had initially supported the revolution and fought alongside the people.
4. A loose term applied to all those taking part in this anti-imperialist movement.
5. This movement, also known as the Jangal Movement, took place in the northern province of Gilan employing essentially guerrilla tactics against the Russian occupying forces and subsequently — after the success of the Russian October Revolution — against the British Army.

6. The then Premier who, in return for personal financial gains, helped to draw up the treaty and subsequently put his signature to it.
7. Two bureaucratic compradors who, as Reza Khan's celebrated associates, helped to administer the latter's newly established ministries and organisations.
8. Taqi Arani was eventually killed in prison.
9. The Treaty of Turkomanchei was signed during this Shah's reign after his army had been defeated by the Czarist army.
10. An attempt on the life of the Shah in 1949 by a lone individual was used as an excuse to declare martial law and a state of emergency. It was followed by an attempt to decimate the opposition, particularly the Tudeh Party.
11. Adulteration of foodstuffs, forging of ration coupons, purchasing of ration coupons and hoarding of rations thus acquired.
12. A loose grouping of various nationalist parties and organisations fighting for the nationalisation of oil. [Author's note]
13. Two of those who joined the Government after the coup of 1953.
14. Based on a 50-50 share in the oil industry. [Author's note]
15. On this day the Shah tried to topple Mossadeq's Government by a direct order and also authorised an attempt on Mossadeq's life.
16. See *Land Reform & Its Direct Effects in Iran* by the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas, translated and published by the Iran Committee.

2. Land Reform in Modern Iran

Introduction

In analysing the present socio-economic system in Iran some individuals and Marxist-Leninist currents face an intractable dilemma. The analysis of the land reform and its effects seems to be the core of this problem. The upshot of their analysis can be summed up as follows:

Feudalism is the governing system in Iran and feudal relations of production form part of the society's infrastructure. A fundamental transformation of the society capable of destroying the system and doing away with the old infrastructure can only be achieved in a revolution. If we accept that the land reform has succeeded in abolishing feudalism, then we must also accept that a revolution has taken place. And since no revolution can come about without a revolutionary force and revolutionary leadership, then we are inevitably led to believe that the [Shah's] regime in Iran has a revolutionary character. However, since it is abundantly clear that the regime does not possess such a character, then feudalism, with some minor changes, is still the ruling system and the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system of government is, as previously, still dominant.

On the basis of such arguments, they proceed to prove the objective presence of feudalism in Iran in the following manner:

In so far as capitalist relations of production have not established themselves in important sections of the rural areas after the land reform, feudalism is the governing system. Furthermore, since some stages of the land reform laws have not been carried out in several areas (e.g. Iranian Kurdistan), then this is held to be further proof of the continuation of the feudal system.

Some even go further:

Since in Iran there is an absence of the kind of capitalist system prevailing in Europe and North America, then the industrial, commercial and financial phenomena (the constituent elements of the Iranian system of dependent

capitalism) are semi-feudal. It therefore follows that the owners of factories (such as Iran National) are the same feudalists as before and the workers are the same old peasants: farms have merely been replaced by factories and agricultural products by industrial ones.

We are completely at a loss when faced with such sophistry. We extend our greetings to these 'dialecticians' who have so 'dialectically' succeeded in understanding our society. We remind the reader that it is a great pity that some representatives¹ of this type of logic will only abandon their dogmatism when it is far too late, when in fact they face the glare of television cameras, where they embarrassedly admit their errors and announce with an uneasy 'conscience' the abolition of feudalism, the progressive nature of the regime and the achievements of 'the white revolution', supporting their declarations with the same logic that had led them to the aforementioned theses. We do not intend to wash our hands of the problem by merely dwelling on such weaknesses. But we do suggest to these political currents that they should have a more serious approach to the problem and not look upon such weaknesses as isolated and unrelated incidents.

The fundamental flaws in this type of approach are: (1) Apparently general Marxist-Leninist formulae form the basis of such syllogisms. But unfortunately the formulae employed by these people and treated by them as sacrosanct are scanty and based on an incomplete understanding of certain texts in which Marxism has supposedly been abridged. Therefore, the general theory invoked by them is not based on a wider comprehension of Marxism-Leninism, and even less on practical experiences of this ideology. It is thus rendered ineffectual. (2) This method lacks the dialectical understanding that ought to emerge from the particular to the general and from the general to the particular. These comrades ignore the fact that theory ought to be the expression of objective reality, rather than reality being the slave of formulae determined by this or that specific socio-economic historical condition. Their method of employing theory is bound to lead Marxism-Leninism to metaphysical thought and condemns us to a perpetual retrogression as regards understanding history and objective reality. At the start of the land reform, the progressive currents were unable to offer a scientific analysis of it or to forecast its effects. However, with the appearance of the special features of this transformation in our society, the Marxists, armed with the wealth of Marxist-Leninist knowledge, should by now have offered a scientific analysis of the land reform. However, before proceeding to analyse the reform, the following notes should be added in order to show the weakness of the above argument.

At the time of the land reform, feudalism in Iran was not an intact socio-economic formation. In fact, since capitalism had developed a few decades previously and because of the progress of various movements and some other general changes, the two systems began to co-exist not only in the infrastructure, but also at the political level. (This happened when the bourgeoisie, whether before its division or subsequently in its comprador form and during

its short-lived nationalist phase, acquired an increasing share in the government.) The feudal-comprador system was the result of the growth of a bourgeoisie under imperialist domination. The bourgeoisie's target as early as the Constitutional Revolution was the superstructure of feudalism. After the division of the bourgeoisie during Reza Khan's rule, the comprador section acquired an important share in government and achieved an unprecedented growth and position after the 1953 *coup d'état*. However, the overall domination of imperialism, with its influence over government, must also be remembered. As we have seen, despite their initial disagreements on the advisability of the land reform, the imperialists consented to it. Hence feudalism could not have been a complete formation in sole charge of both super- and infrastructures. Neither was the comprador bourgeoisie an oppressed class lying in wait to attack feudalism from below. A revolution does not only replace one system with another; during it the oppressed class or strata of society also achieve political power. In the case of Iran neither has one system been replaced by another, nor have the oppressed achieved power.

The contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie supported by imperialism on the one hand and feudalism (which had lost such support) on the other was peacefully resolved because the comprador bourgeoisie and its benefactors controlled a substantial part of the government. When the dominant section of the comprador bourgeoisie, together with British imperialism, consented to the demise of feudalism, the whole of the comprador bourgeoisie regained its unity and the peaceful abolition of feudalism was carried out in three stages.

Is it not the case that a people's democracy, where the proletariat holds an important share of power, behaves in like manner to end the dual nature of the existing system? Is it not true that the contradiction between the proletariat with its allies, the toiling masses, and the national bourgeoisie is also resolved peacefully over a relatively long period of time? It may be said: Ah, but here a revolutionary class holds power! Yes, this is true, but then the end-result of this peaceful contradiction is the establishment of socialism, whereas the end-result of domination by the comprador bourgeoisie is a new system of colonialism with an ongoing policy of exploiting the people. What do these two cases have in common? The contradictions in both cases are resolved peacefully because the growing aspects of these contradictions have achieved political power: in a people's democracy this power and preponderance are achieved by the proletariat in the course of a people's democratic revolution, while in our country the comprador bourgeoisie supported by imperialism achieves superiority over the feudalists in stages. In the original classical socio-economic formations the bourgeoisie develops inside feudalism. Having attained social status and strengthened its position, the bourgeoisie then mobilises the masses and attacks the political superstructure of feudalism. However, in our country the comprador bourgeoisie (whether before its break-up into various sections or afterwards) had developed over a span of a hundred years during which it acquired an increasing share in the government. And when feudalism ceased to play a dominant role in the ruling apparatus,

and became also a declining system in the infrastructure, the comprador bourgeoisie succeeded in finally eliminating it in the course of several stages. Therefore, a class that itself was in fundamental contradiction with the masses managed to replace the system with a more advanced one, achieving this by effecting changes from above, i.e. by reform. This process of reform neither proves this class to be revolutionary nor that what has taken place can be regarded as a revolution. While what has been substituted for the feudal-comprador system is the result of the development of this system and the expression of the requirements of continuing colonial exploitation in the society, it remains nevertheless a reactionary system which, during its growth, is bound to intensify the contradiction between the people and their enemy — ultimately, in turn, resulting in its annihilation. It is therefore not for nothing that we are witnessing a decisive and uncompromising struggle waged by the various currents and a movement that has, above all, become aware of the real nature of the reforms and has a true and palpable understanding of the people's enemy.

Today those who are closely observing social processes in Iran — not those who try to have a hand in events from afar and whose knowledge of the country is about the same as their knowledge of Burma or Nepal — do not find it difficult to understand the effects of the reforms of the last decade. There are various social and economic phenomena that prove the existence of a system of dependent capitalism. However, the political currents which obstinately deny the reality of the situation have, quite apart from their lack of direct experience of social realities in Iran, pledged themselves to a dogma — although this of course they attempt to conceal. They feel obliged to assess the system in Iran as semi-feudal and semi-colonial, simply because Mao Tse-Tung in one of his books dating back a few decades classified societies in three groups: socialist, capitalist and semi-feudal/semi-colonial. Now we ask these comrades: what was the system of government in China after the revolution? Into which group do Vietnam and Cuba fit today? Which classification embraces the prevailing systems in Egypt, Algeria and Syria?

Thus we can clearly see that reality does not fit into this formula. We have already said that we have to deal with a variety of socio-economic formations in exploited countries that are different from the basic formations (i.e. feudalism, capitalism and socialism). What we have to deal with are *semi-formations* in development processes around the world. These semi-formations are: the *feudal-comprador* system ('semi-feudal, semi-colonial', according to Mao's definition); *dependent capitalism* which is what is being established and developed in Iran and several other dominated countries; *national democracy*, the result of a bourgeois democratic revolution in countries which have won independence; and lastly *people's democracy*, achieved through the victory of a people's democratic revolution. The comrades in question deny these realities in the world and even the reality of the system right under their noses in Iran. They are obstinately determined to concoct reasons why the 'semi-feudal, semi-colonial' concept is a permanent formula and therefore applicable to all exploited societies that have not yet

achieved socialism.

If we accept that the liberation movement in Iran must tread its path consciously and adopt a correct strategy, we must from the beginning attempt to characterise correctly the realities of our society which is in the process of movement and growth. For this task, creative Marxism-Leninism will be our guide. To embrace this scientific and revolutionary ideology, it is essential to have an all-round understanding of it and particularly to grasp the dialectical relationship between reality and the process of growth. Otherwise, obstinately advocating this or that formula devised by a revolutionary leader in a particular historical period and for a particular concrete situation will not only fail to help us find our own way, but will also mean that we fail to be good protagonists of proletarian ideology.

The Rationale of the Land Reform

At the end of the preceding chapter we discussed the conditions that resulted in the land reform. Here we shall merely summarise those conditions. The feudal-comprador system, like any other system, contained certain contradictions. The fundamental one, i.e. the one directly related to the system of exploitative relationships, was that between the people, the national bourgeoisie, working class, petty bourgeoisie, and peasants) and the enemy of the people (the feudalists, compradors and imperialists). The other secondary contradictions of the system included: those between feudalists and compradors; among the imperialists themselves; between imperialism and feudalism; between imperialism and compradorism; the contradiction within various sections of compradorism (e.g. the contradiction between the bureaucratic compradors and non-Government sections); the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie; and other secondary contradictions. The classes and strata of society that comprise the people come into contradiction with reactionary strata through the operation of the fundamental contradiction. For example, because of the interdependence of feudal relations of production and the capitalist system, the peasants are in contradiction with the feudalists through the fundamental contradiction since there exists a unity or relationship between feudalism, imperialism and compradorism. Or to take two other examples: because the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and feudalism is part of the texture of the basic contradiction; or because the contradiction between the people and British imperialism was also part of the basic contradiction which had become at one stage the principal contradiction, even though these two contradictions had temporarily become intermingled.

In circumstances where a fundamental contradiction is not at the same time the principal one, we must expect another of the system's contradictions to become the principal one, since there is always one principal contradiction which overshadows other contradictions. At a certain point in Iran the specific conditions led to the contradiction between the feudalists and the comprador

bourgeoisie becoming the principal contradiction.

This occurred as a result of the defeat sustained by the people and their subsequent suppression after 1953, which in turn led to a relaxation in the principal contradiction between the people and their enemies. This took place in the wake of several periods of historical changes, once the comprador bourgeoisie had achieved an unprecedented quantitative as well as qualitative growth thereby increasing its share of political power, and feudalism had declined in strength and become moribund, and North American imperialism, in order to establish its superiority, had embarked on a fresh attack against British imperialism. Only then did the contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism, being one of the contradictions of the feudal-comprador system, become the principal contradiction. In such circumstances other contradictions had to determine their position *vis-a-vis* this principal contradiction. The popular forces, albeit in a state of relative weakness and decline, felt they had to side with that wing of the enemy which was demanding land reform and other related changes, while the North Americans, under the slogan of this principal contradiction, began attacking their rival, the British. These phenomena would be inexplicable unless we accept that the contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism had become the principal contradiction in Iran. Let us not forget that during the period of the oil nationalisation movement, which was the manifestation of the principal contradiction between the people led by the national bourgeoisie and British imperialism, the North American imperialists attacked the position of their rival under the umbrella of this contradiction; in other words, the contradiction between the two rivals developed through this principal contradiction.

At that time the situation temporarily manifested itself in the form of an economic crisis followed by new political alignments within the ruling apparatus, differences within the imperialists' ranks, and the North Americans' differences with the ruling clique in Iran. On the other hand, the prevailing conditions encouraged the renewed growth of the popular forces, presenting them with rare opportunities. And despite efforts to resolve the contradiction peacefully, it ended up in some bloody clashes. Only after these contradictions lost their intensity with the start of the reform, did the system of dependent capitalism begin to establish itself. The regime then felt able to resolve its internal contradictions and, by embarking on a fresh onslaught against the people, it transformed its contradiction with the people into the principal contradiction — a contradiction which began to grow and has by now reached a state of considerable intensity.

The main factors that led to the land reform have already been discussed. However, there also existed factors that helped to intensify the contradiction and its eventual and conscious resolution. The comprador bourgeoisie and the North American imperialists — the twin defenders of the reform — could foresee the economic and social effects of the reform, not only because of the socio-economic conditions of Iran that provided the objective grounds as well as historical necessity for the reform, but also because of their ability to draw

on their relevant global experience. Indeed in analysing the factors that led to the land reform, one occasionally hears of the 'preventive effect' of such a reform.

One effect of the reform was the possibly retrogressive influence it might have on the position and consciousness of the popular forces. This was the preventive dimension of the reform. But if we are going to regard consciousness of the principal aspect of a contradiction as a cause, and the main cause for that matter, then we are subordinating the objective factors (i.e. economic necessities) behind the implementation of the land reform to a factor that merely had an accelerating and therefore subsidiary role. North American imperialism had already presided over the establishment of dependent capitalism in Latin America, and the Iranian comprador bourgeoisie could palpably feel the advantages of such a system in their country too. However, in order for such a transformation to take place in Iran, it was essential that the objective conditions for it should be prepared so that the global experience could usefully be employed. Thus the awareness by imperialism and its principal local ally of the manner in which the reform was to be carried out and its effects is the factor which has been particularly helpful in securing the peaceful resolution of the contradiction. Concerning the 'preventive effect' of the land reform, we must not forget that in previous eras feudalism had never been seriously threatened by its inner contradiction, i.e. by peasant movements, and even in conditions where the people enjoyed unprecedented possibilities this contradiction never really became important. During the years after the 1953 coup and at the time when the land reform had become a current topic, the danger of a peasant movement was in fact more remote than ever before. One should not, therefore, be deceived by the slogans put out by the North Americans and Amini.² These were simply designed to frighten and disarm the feudalists, since the most important consequence of the continuation of the feudal system appeared not in the rural areas, but in the towns in the form of economic crises and their resulting political upheavals. Therefore, while we regard the conscious motives of the land reform administrators as only an accelerating factor, we shall nevertheless study the preventive character of the reform for the effects it has had on the popular forces.

It will be useful at this point to summarise the factors which enabled these contradictions between the comprador bourgeoisie and the feudalists to be resolved peacefully:

1. The rise to power of the comprador bourgeoisie had been the result of a long process containing several stages. This bourgeoisie had participated in government alongside the feudalists and had secured a major share in the state during the period leading up to the land reform. Nevertheless, the emergence of various factions within the comprador bourgeoisie and their allegiance to the two rival imperialist powers had created an obstacle in resolving their contradiction with the feudalists. However, immediately after the establishment of unity within the comprador bourgeoisie (entailing the acceptance of the superior position of the North American imperialists on the part of the

bureaucratic stratum of the comprador bourgeoisie), this obstacle was swept away.

2. Imperialism's domination of Iran had secured for them a considerable political say and given them the opportunity to play a powerful role in determining the course of events in the country. The North Americans' insistence on carrying out the land reform tilted the balance in favour of the comprador bourgeoisie, thus helping to resolve the contradiction peacefully.

3. The non-existence of a peasant movement meant that there was no danger of the fundamental contradiction of the feudal system (that between peasants and feudalists) becoming antagonistic. Thus the struggle within the ruling strata was not likely to culminate in a mass uprising endangering the reactionary forces as a whole in Iran. Had the society been exposed to peasant uprisings, the peaceful resolving of the contradiction and a protracted land reform spread over several stages would not have been possible.

4. The weakness of the liberation movement in general made it possible for the comprador bourgeoisie to assume the leadership of the fight against feudalism and to advance suitable slogans for the land reform. The programme was therefore carried out within the framework of comprador and imperialist interests. Once again, if the contradiction between the people and their enemies had been intense and played the principal role, it would have forcibly overshadowed the contradiction between the feudalists and compradors.

5. The global experience of Yankee imperialism and the awareness of the comprador bourgeoisie that feudalism had to be abolished not only blunted the impact of the contradiction, but actually helped solve it in several planned stages. It also helped to propel the feudalists towards comprador activities.

The cumulative effect of these factors enabled the defenders and administrators of the reform to block the strong reaction of the feudalists and avoid a violent confrontation with them. It is therefore essential that we say just a word about these two features of the land reform.

The Impact of Land Reform

The Transformation of the Feudalists

The fact that the land reform was carried out in several stages helped to conceal from the feudalists the ultimate effects of the reform. The draft plan put forward in 1959 failed to envisage its application in stages, and consequently no-one paid any serious attention to it. According to that plan, ownership of relatively fertile land was to be limited to 60 hectares, which in effect meant the ending of large-scale land ownership. As it turned out, the first stage of the implementation of the land reform in 1962 permitted a landlord to retain one whole *shesh-dang* of a village.³ When the regime faced some resistance regarding this, it retreated even from this position and allowed the feudalists to register some of their villages in their wives' and children's names. However, once this initial resistance was crushed, the second stage of the land reform took an important step forward and subjected

all the feudalists' large landholdings to the reform in terms of a so-called five-stage solution. Even then the regime did not push matters too far in politically sensitive areas like Kurdistan: it wanted to avoid violent clashes and get the question settled peacefully. Ultimately, in the subsequent stages of the reform, the last of which in our opinion was carried out by 1971 (the ending of share-cropping in respect of orchards and woodlands along various rivers), the system of feudalism was abolished in the rural areas.⁴ The fact that the land reform was implemented in stages was a scheme to pull the wool over the feudalists' eyes so as to lessen the traumatic effect of the reform on them. Moreover, it also enabled the feudalists to be channelled towards a comprador existence, while at the same time allowing the substitution of capitalist for feudal relations and the establishment of dependent capitalism.⁵

The channelling of the feudalists towards capitalist relations and into comprador activities began some years prior to the land reform. On suitable farmlands (e.g. in the Gorgan plateau in the north) mechanised farms were established. Courtiers, the military and other big feudalists started to set up mechanised and other farms, based on methods of capitalist production. This, in fact, was the beginning of the formation of an agricultural bourgeoisie. (We have already mentioned capital investment by feudalists in the commercial and financial sectors.) These were natural developments that helped promote the growth of a bourgeoisie generally, and particularly of a comprador bourgeoisie. However, the approach adopted by the land reform towards these phenomena was a conscious one. From the very beginning, when mechanised farms were exempted from the provisions of the land reform, very flimsy principles were established as to what actually represented a 'mechanised farm'. This helped those feudalists bent on mechanisation to make up their minds and move towards capitalist relations. The land reform law did not set any final limitation on this kind of transformation and, in fact, considerable procrastination in enforcing the law could be detected. This tactic, therefore, enabled an important proportion of the country's farmlands to be retained by existing landlords in the form of mechanised farms. This was one method of repositioning the feudalists.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the vast estates owned by the Court had been divided up and sold prior to the land reform. Some feudalists who had early on shown an interest in, and tendency to join, the bureaucratic and commercial bourgeoisie then followed in the Court's footsteps, dividing their estates and selling them off to the peasants. The fact that landlords were able to receive the market price for their land (notwithstanding the fact that land owned by uninfluential landlords was often distributed on the cheap) was in itself a device for preserving their position on the higher rungs of Iranian society. They were able to invest the money derived from the sale of land in comprador activities. The draft plan of the land reform had envisaged the sale of state-owned factories in return for the sale of land to the peasants, and in this way several factories were sold. This was yet another method of channelling the feudalists towards comprador activities. The aims

of this tactic were, first, to preserve the position of the feudalists at the top of the social pyramid and enable them to continue their existence as an exploiting class, and secondly, in this way, to promote the growth of a comprador bourgeoisie and the establishment of the system of dependent capitalism. Both these policies made it possible for the contradiction to be resolved peacefully. It must also be said that, having overcome the differences between the various wings of the comprador bourgeoisie, the regime was prepared to use violence, if necessary, to suppress the feudalists and any other political force that opposed the land reform. The suppression of the uprising in Fars province (south-central) and the severe treatment of opposition clergy were examples of this willingness. Of course, to dispel any misunderstanding it should be mentioned that the clergy's quarrel with the regime was not merely due to their opposition to the land reform. Their resistance against the growing dictatorial character of the regime was another factor gaining momentum at this time.

The Comprador Bourgeoisie

The section of the comprador bourgeoisie that was the rival of the ruling faction (i.e. the main stratum of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie) was the first group to demand land reform. At the height of the conflict between the comprador bourgeoisie and the feudalists, the problems between them were as follows:

1. The comprador bourgeoisie demanded the right to dominate all agricultural and mineral resources for the purpose of facilitating capital investment in these sectors by internal and foreign capitalists and an all-round increase in the export of raw materials and semi-finished goods. For the feudalists lacked the capacity to absorb foreign currency beyond the 1959 level and showed no interest in developing agricultural lands and mineral resources.
2. The comprador bourgeoisie demanded domination over all sources of public income in order to ensure its own growth. The feudalists were spending an important part of their income on unnecessary (in the opinion of the compradors) luxuries or merely piling money up in foreign banks.
3. By a complete domination over the political and judicial apparatus of society, the comprador bourgeoisie intended to sweep away all previous impediments blocking its development and to secure its all-embracing growth by decreeing rules and regulations covering such matters as commerce, taxation, customs and excise and even penal laws.
4. Despite the fact that its industries had intrinsically dependent characteristics and as such did not require a great deal of labour power, the comprador bourgeoisie would nevertheless benefit from released labour supply. However, due to these same dependent characteristics, the release of labour power was the least important factor as far as the comprador bourgeoisie's land reform was concerned, whereas this same factor was the most important element that brought the classical (i.e. European) bourgeoisie into conflict with the feudalists.
5. The contradiction within the comprador bourgeoisie between the ruling

bureaucratic and other sections, and the close links between the non-bureaucratic sections and the Americans, caused the U.S. to bring pressure to bear on the ruling wing of the comprador bourgeoisie. However, American support was not in itself sufficient to save the ruling wing. Therefore, in order to secure the necessary support to form a government, Amini and his friends put forward social and political slogans like the land reform and administrative reforms; at the same time they raised banners in defence of the rights of the toiling strata such as teachers and even some segments of workers.

This wing of the comprador bourgeoisie turned to its advantage the struggles waged by the popular forces such as the students, teachers, bazaar merchants and, to a lesser extent, workers led either by the national bourgeoisie or by the comprador bourgeoisie itself against the regime. Eqbal and Emami⁶ retreated in the face of these forces. Of course, the pressures brought to bear by the North American imperialists and their approval of Amini and his weak faction was the key factor that enabled the latter to form a government. As had been the case during the oil nationalisation movement, this group was not powerful enough at the beginning to impose its will. This was why the support of the North Americans for Mossadeq, together with the support given him by their Iranian friends, had helped secure the government for the national bourgeoisie. This time, however, the movement and its North American supporters secured the government for the comprador bourgeoisie. Facing this force were the feudalists, the main wing of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie (the Court), and British imperialism. The struggle continued after the assumption of power by Amini. In the face of these pressures, the Court relented and changed its position: it accepted the land reform, so to speak. Thus on the eve of the land reform the comprador bourgeoisie at last achieved unity on the question of the dissolution of feudalism. The Shah in his trip to North America at this time offered the Americans the necessary guarantees in this respect and sealed his ascendancy in Iran. It was after this that Amini and his faction left the scene so as to avoid any factionalism and instability at the start of the system, and so that the masses could not continue their political growth. After Amini's resignation the Shah became the standard-bearer of the land reform and by means of a referendum and adding a few minor amendments to the land reform bill, consolidated his newly acquired position.

The Court of the Shah

The Court, and particularly the Shah himself, saw the feudalists as the staunch supporters of monarchy, especially since this support had been proved several times in the past in the reactionary role they had played. Feudalism in other words was regarded as a strong base for the Court. Its abolition, therefore, at the behest of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, seemed liable to damage the Court's position. As mentioned before, the Court and some feudalists connected closely to it, had already sold their lands or turned them into mechanised farms. This element was not likely, therefore, to sustain any loss as a result of land reform. On the other hand, the Court's dependence on British imperialism dictated its resistance to the reform since, in the system

that would inevitably follow, the British would be unable to maintain their dominant position in the face of North American imperialists. Thus the British were obliged to use their influence and encourage the Court to resist the Americans and the comprador bourgeoisie. However, when the Court eventually realised that its resistance was liable to cost it its very position in society, it washed its hands of the feudalists and of traditional British hegemony and switched its power base. After doing this the Shah was accused of treason to the feudalists as well as betrayal of the British. The accusation was on the whole justified. It ought, however, to be pointed out that one particular faction of the comprador bourgeoisie that believed in some kind of reform was also connected with the British. This faction first supported Amini but subsequently fell out with him in an attempt to secure a dominant position at the Court. From then on this faction played only a secondary role in the regime, although it never gave up entirely. Rashidian, Behbahani and some elements in the Mardom Party were manifestations of this pro-British faction.

Confusion on the Left

The repression that lasted from 1953 to 1960 greatly weakened all the progressive political organisations — both nationalist and proletarian — of the liberation movement. By 1960 the proletarian movement was limited to a few underground political groups plus a cell outside the country calling itself the Tudeh Party. There was no or at best negligible contact between the groups inside and the Tudeh Party in exile. As for the national bourgeois wing of the movement, this was also in a disorganised state with its various parties having merely become unofficial social clubs. While during this period the working class and the various intellectual strata were continuing to grow economically, the national bourgeoisie was rapidly losing ground and being absorbed into the comprador stratum. Notwithstanding its deteriorating position in the social structure, the vanguard of the national bourgeoisie was in a rather better position than its counterpart in the proletarian movement. The growth of contradiction between certain wings of the ruling class and the imperialists in Iran did give the people some new breathing space; circles and clubs affiliated to the National Front emerged from their shells and began fighting for political rights. These activities continued from 1960 til 1963 and were known as the Second National Front.

When the contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism became the principal contradiction, it inevitably affected other contradictions and overshadowed their growth and movement. The fact that this principal contradiction was within the anti-popular front cannot be a reason for not regarding it as a principal one. We must remember that the people too were facing feudalism — a contradiction which could have become the principal contradiction in various forms (a contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and feudalism, the proletariat and feudalism, or even in the form of a contradiction between a spontaneous peasant uprising and feudalism). But because of the weakness of the liberation movement, it did not achieve the necessary growth. In such circumstances the people, while accepting the

leadership of the anti-popular wing, would have to clarify their position regarding this contradiction. Furthermore, the growth of contradiction during this short period between the people and its enemies would not have continued without a direct link with the principal contradiction. The forces that rallied around the people at the end of this period (1963) were considerably bigger than in 1960. Such a growth was only secured through the medium of the principal contradiction of this period, namely that between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism, parallel with the contradiction between the British and the North American imperialists.

The limited number of circles, groups and currents connected with the proletarian movement was active in this period within the framework of the National Front (N.F.) or its associates. Those with closer connection with it inevitably had a part in the N.F.'s internal organisation. The weakness of the national bourgeoisie was revealed in this period in a manner not seen before. The bankruptcy of this stratum became transparently clear in that the N.F. leadership was hopelessly behind the social and political events of the day. The principle that the people's struggle should have been directed mainly towards extracting political rights from the most reactionary wing of the ruling cliques was not of course an incorrect principle. Nevertheless, the N.F. ought to have put forward a *revolutionary* land reform programme and paid serious attention to the economic problems and difficulties faced by the masses. Right up to the end of this period the N.F. leadership failed to adopt a correct position on the land question. The struggle waged by the national bourgeoisie was really a purely political one unrelated to the day-to-day lives of the masses. The left wing of the N.F., representing the lower section of the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, did have a critical approach towards the N.F. leadership although even this wing lacked any revolutionary policy in political struggle. Notwithstanding this, it would be wrong to assume that the people and their various political vanguards had no role in resolving the principal contradiction. At the beginning, the N.F. and other opponents of the Eqbal Cabinet engaged in fighting against it. These activities increased considerably during Emami's premiership. Strikes and sit-ins by university students in February 1960 coincided with the sit-in by some members of the N.F. leadership at the Senate building. These actions, as well as the ensuing continuous demonstrations in protest against the [rigged] elections for the 20th Majlis were all part of the N.F. activities against the Government that helped Amini and his faction to form the subsequent Cabinet. Quite apart from the demonstrations and strikes launched by teachers in April 1961, which were under the direct leadership of the Amini faction, the latter did not enjoy the direct support of the masses, whereas from the summer of 1960 to April 1961 university and high school students, the bazaar elements and to a lesser extent, the workers and other urban population were actively involved in demonstrations against the Government. These were all used by the Amini faction to further their own cause.

The formation of the Amini Cabinet did not represent the complete

victory of the Amini wing since the courtiers, military commanders and feudalists were still putting up resistance. Amini's Cabinet was threatened by *coups d'état* by his opponents. The fundamental shortcomings of the N.F. were revealed during this phase of the quarrel between the two wings of the comprador bourgeoisie: on the one hand, it accepted Amini's recommendations not to resort to excessive demonstrations since, in his opinion, these could provoke the courtiers, and on the other hand it failed to wrest any political concessions from Amini despite his need for the support of the forces led by the N.F. Those members of the N.F. leadership who were still committed to North American policies felt obliged to keep silent in the face of U.S. support for Amini, while the others were prepared to co-operate, and even conspire with, pro-Court factions to topple him. These latter elements, who were acting from the safety of the umbrella provided by the bankrupt N.F. leadership, fostered incidents like the one on 21 January 1961⁸ that worked to the advantage of the Court and the anti-Amini faction of the comprador bourgeoisie. The shortcoming of the N.F. leadership was that it showed weakness before Amini in two ways: first, it failed to exploit to the people's advantage the contradiction within the ranks of the comprador bourgeoisie; and secondly, in its struggle against the Court, the N.F. failed to support that wing of the comprador bourgeoisie that was opposed to the Court. This made the N.F. and the people generally appear to be of secondary importance — and this in turn meant that the masses failed to mobilise even when circumstances were favourable, or to put any serious obstacle in the way of the brutal dictatorial regime's return to power.

Should there still be sceptics who doubt that the contradiction between the people and those allied against them (imperialism and its internal reactionary supporters) was bound to take heed of the principal contradiction of the time (that between feudalists and compradors), or who still refuse to accept that this contradiction had become the principal contradiction in a relatively short space of time, then the following facts may make it easier to understand the matter better. Amini, having assumed power, not only dissolved the Majlis which due to rigged elections had been the target of protest by both the Amini faction and the N.F., but he also dissolved the Senate. To start with, the N.F. demanded immediate and free elections (in a huge meeting at the Jalaliah Stadium in January 1961 attended by tens of thousands of people. However, in the subsequent quarrels between the Court and Amini, the N.F. leadership was forced to relax its pressure on Amini and to drop its ultimatum. This tactic showed that the N.F. differentiated between Amini on the one hand and Eqbal and Emami on the other, and that in the conflict between the two sides it clearly supported Amini. Derakhshesh, the Minister of Education in Amini's Cabinet, put forward the slogan of a 'Fight against Illiteracy'. Student organisations immediately accepted the slogan and more than 1,000 students announced their readiness to teach these classes. This response together with the move by the students to help in the flood disaster in Javadiah (south of Tehran) were all indicative of a special relationship with the Amini Government. The 21 January 1961 episode provided the

most significant point of clash between the various wings of the N.F. Amini used these demonstrations as an excuse to suppress his right-wing opponents: Bakhtiar was exiled and a number of others were detained, and the conspiracy by the courtiers and military commanders was uncovered. And all these things happened during the first stage of the land reform. Eventually, even after Amini's downfall, when the Shah and his faction had switched to support of the land reform, the student organisation, followed by the vacillating N.F. leadership, advanced the January 1961 slogan of 'Yes to the Land Reform! — No to the Shah's Dictatorship!' This slogan in itself demonstrated that the people could not keep aloof from the question of 'Land reform'.

Let us see when the contradiction between the feudalists and the comprador bourgeoisie was resolved and what replaced it as the principal contradiction. We believe that, when the Court, as the principal component of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, changed its position and following this change the British imperialists, too, consented to the demise of feudalism, it was in fact the turning point for resolving the contradiction. Amini's quiet and unpublished resignation in July 1962 and the start of the Shah's activities under the banner of 'reforms' were the political reflection of this turning point. From then on, the relatively small resistance of some feudalists had to be crushed and feudal relationships dissolved in stages. It was at this point that the conflicts between the various wings of the ruling apparatus began to die down and the people, having developed considerably, confronted the regime.

The resolving of the ruling classes' most important internal contradiction had significant economic and social consequences. The ruling apparatus was able to face the masses with unity and single-minded energy. The regime not only used the military to suppress the revolts and protests led by certain Khans, it also adopted brutal and fascist methods to contain the growing popular movements. Another turning point at this juncture was, of course, the wholesale massacre of 5 June 1963.⁹ While the downfall of Amini represented the political solution of the previous principal contradiction, the 5th of June represented the point at which the next contradiction — between the people and the monarchical dictatorship — became the principal contradiction. Here the anti-popular aspect of the contradiction is undoubtedly one of the three elements of the fundamental contradictions between the people — comprising the proletariat, and the remnants of the national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry — and their enemies — the imperialists, the regime, and the ruling class. (These divisions manifested themselves in the national liberation movement in the form of the political wings of the proletarian movement and the nationalist movement respectively.) Since this contradiction between the people and their enemies has continued ever since and is at the present time the principal contradiction of our society, we shall deal with it in another pamphlet.¹⁰ What concerns us here is that, faced with the dictatorial regime, the N.F. flinched from its duty and abandoned the field to it. This marked the end of the national bourgeoisie's mission in the liberation movement, even though it did not represent the taking up of this mission by the proletarian class. For the proletariat at this time lacked a

really unified vanguard. The various existing groups and circles had undergone some growth during these years, but they had a long way to go before they could assume the leadership of the movement. The most progressive of these currents were in the throes of tackling seriously the problems of the movement and could, therefore, be regarded as the first rudiments for the creation of such a vanguard. These currents had a more fundamental and correct approach to political events and this enabled them to have a better understanding of the realities and possibilities of a move forward during the subsequent stage. Nevertheless, no current, whether proletarian or nationalist, had as yet reached a correct analysis of the changes that had taken place.

Let us have a brief look at the position of two left currents during this time. First, the stand adopted by the 'American Marxists' *vis-a-vis* these changes. This current was an organised splinter group from another current called 'The Process' which itself had been an offshoot of the Tudeh Party. The 'American Marxists' were inspired by a series of articles written by Khalil Maleki¹¹ in the magazine *Elm-va-Zendagi* (Science and Life) during the years following the 1953 coup. They offered an analysis of the contradiction between the Iranian comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism and, parallel to this, the contradiction between the Americans and the British in Iran, in which they concluded that the comprador bourgeoisie and the Americans must be regarded as 'progressive' forces. Since this apparently 'Marxist-Leninist' current tended to credit American imperialism with some 'generous traits' and believed it to possess some positive characteristics, and also believed that, compared with the 'cunning and sly' British, the Americans were really 'rough diamonds', they were rightly dubbed 'American Marxists'! In 1960 this current believed that if the people were reluctant to advance the slogan 'Long Live the Comprador Bourgeoisie; Long Live the Americans', then they should at least raise the banner of 'Victory to the Compradors and Victory to the Americans'!

This underground ostensibly Marxist current suffered from two fundamental shortcomings. First, it was unable to understand the reactionary character of the comprador bourgeoisie; they assessed this bourgeoisie in exactly the same way as one would assess the classical European bourgeoisie or the Iranian *national* bourgeoisie. Therefore, it was very well disposed towards the comprador bourgeoisie. In addition, their assessment of American imperialism was truly catastrophic. Secondly, this group had essentially devoted itself to theory and had a rather mediocre approach to objective realities; they were therefore prone to commit the most ludicrous mistakes. When Amini and his faction of the comprador bourgeoisie (supported by the Americans) were fighting the opposing wing of the comprador bourgeoisie, the 'American Marxists', having an incorrect understanding of the political representatives of this bourgeoisie, began to attack Amini and his slogans vehemently on the grounds that he represented British policies, that he was 'the biggest British bluff against the Americans' and that therefore the land reform and other measures taken by Amini were all part of a conspiracy hatched by feudalism together with the British. After 1963

this group admitted its own bankruptcy. But there are still some dispersed elements who regurgitate the 'What is to be Done?' of this group's mental production — why it was the 'outstanding' and 'sagacious' treatise left behind by the 'American Marxists'.

The second current in question was the Tudeh Party. During the events under discussion, this now emigre organisation was as usual far removed from reality, and still trying to synchronise its propaganda with the policies of the Soviet Government. In this period the Tudeh Party had no cell inside the country and Payk-i-Iran¹² radio broadcasts were the only means of getting to know their political positions. The Tudeh Party attacked Amini and his policies because the Soviet Government and one of its radio stations, The National Voice of Iran,¹³ did the same. Following a thaw in relations between Iran and the Soviet Union, Payk-i-Iran toned down its virulent anti-regime broadcasts. Subsequently, without pausing to consider the contradiction between the people and the monarchical dictatorship, the Party implicitly approved the land reform and condemned the 5 June 1963 uprising as a reactionary event. However, later on, it withdrew from this blatant error. On the other hand, in order to start political activities inside the country, this Party began work with great speed. Precisely when everything had ground to a halt, and the dictatorship was embarking on an attack on the people, it founded the 'Tehran Organisation' (of the Tudeh Party).¹⁴ During nine years of activity, the Organisation became a corrupt tool used by SAVAK against the people. In a situation where this Party that claimed to be the leader of the working class (and was at the time accepted as such by various other parties in the world) was in such a moribund condition and where various other currents like the 'American Marxists' were attracting the youth, there was hardly any chance for militant groups that owed their existence to a process of struggle to assume the leadership of the liberation movement. Those groups that were engaged in a political struggle against the enemy had at the same time to launch an ideological struggle against opportunism. No wonder they were hardly able to create the cells needed for a future revolutionary movement. In the meantime, what were the masses to do? How was the leadership vacuum left behind by the N.F. and the proletarian movement to be filled? To answer this we have to deal with the role and position of the religious hierarchy. Because of the clergy's proliferation of loyalties and variety of motives in facing the regime, it would be appropriate to study their position during this period separately from that of the people in general.

The Clergy — Popular Leaders by Default?

Except for a small section of the clergy that had ties with Mossadeq, the bulk of it was an effective ally of the regime both during the 1953 *coup d'état* and in the post-coup years. While the mass of the lower sections of this stratum were of petty bourgeois origin, the great majority of the high-ranking clergy represented feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie. An important section were themselves part of the system of feudalism. Endowment lands covered a major part of rural Iran and many high-ranking clergy owned substantial

private farmlands of their own as well. With the growth of the bourgeoisie another section of the clergy became its economic appendage. The growth of the comprador bourgeoisie and the decline of the national bourgeoisie contributed to the further dependence of the clergy on the former. Nevertheless the clergy's role was not confined to such economic dependence. Indeed, the clergy was regarded as an important part of the cultural and political hierarchy of Iran. Apart from its economic dependence on other strata and classes, this vast stratum, whose numbers ran into the tens of thousands, had a special social position. Because of its own sectional and economic interests, the clergy has to take a stand *vis-a-vis* both the government and the imperialists. In some situations it may be opposed to the regime or to one of its wings, and in other conditions it may actually unite with the regime. Therefore, we must remember that, depending on its loyalties, this stratum has an inner contradiction which manifests itself in the form of political alignments. Having said this, we shall attempt briefly to explain the position of the clergy on the question of land reform.

As long as no serious attempt was made to implement it, the clergy, like the feudalists, tended to ignore the whole matter. However, with the intensification of the contradiction within the ruling classes, the clergy, almost without exception, opposed the whole land reform project. The reason for this stand was not solely due to their interests in land. Indeed, according to their economic interests, that important section of the clergy that was allied to the comprador bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie should have stood for land reform and for the dissolution of feudalism. But the dissolution of feudalism would not be exclusively an economic phenomenon since such a transformation was bound to cause certain social effects that would have been detrimental to the position of the clergy in society. Religion plays a far less important role in a bourgeois comprador culture than in a feudal culture. The comprador bourgeoisie uses religion as a means of hoodwinking the masses while it at the same time weakens the position of the clergy by opening the way to the culture of foreign capitalists and to the expansion of secular education. On the other hand, the expansion of capitalist relations in the rural areas and the decline and absorption of the national bourgeoisie (including small shopkeepers and tradesmen) under the pressure of the international capitalist system provide the objective basis for the enormous decline in the prestige of the clergy in society as a whole. Given these contradictions the clergy, despite its inner contradictions, had to stand against reforms. From the very start of the land reform, the farmlands distributed were declared by the clergy to be *qasbi* (usurped), but, faced with the choice of land or obeying religious decrees, the peasant opted for land. This was the first blow to the clergy's position. Moreover, land reform was not the kind of question that they could afford to take an open stand against. Therefore, it was only when the regime put forward the secondary aspects of the reform, notably the enfranchisement of women, that the clergy found themselves with the necessary excuse to rouse the masses to oppose the regime. Around February and March 1963 the clergy's opposition assumed a general

character: shopkeepers, tradesmen, the deprived and the toiling strata of the petty bourgeoisie, as well as the proletariat, were roused against the regime. In some rural areas, and to a lesser extent amongst the urban workers, inflamed religious emotions provided a cover for the expression of class sentiments against the regime. This desire on the part of the clergy to preserve their own social and economic position was particularly effective in rousing the urban masses at a time when the contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism was politically resolved, and the regime was busy consolidating its position against the people. The new position of the regime, which was summed up in the dictatorship and concentration of power of the Court, was regarded as a more serious threat to the clergy; it had once before experienced a clash with the regime (in the 1930s during the second decade of Reza Khan's rule). On that occasion, the regime had managed, in the absence of an extensive revolutionary movement and in conditions of auto-cracy, to impose a one-sided relationship on the clergy and to strip it of its independence. This time the danger was more serious. The regime had grown infinitely more powerful than thirty years previously, and the clergy had undeniably lost even its earlier position. This time, having divided up the endowment lands and having instructed the Office of Endowments to encroach on the rights of the religious establishment, the regime demanded that the clergy should consent to be controlled by it just like a government department. Of course, in 1963 the long-term effects of the reform in this field had not yet become apparent, although from the very first moves the clergy were able to guess their future and react against the proposed reforms. It was in this way, at a time when the N.F. as the traditional representative of the national bourgeoisie was fading from the scene, and the proletarian vanguard lacked even the rudiments of growth, that the clergy entered the arena advancing slogans that were antiquated as well as sectional on the one hand but anti-dictatorship on the other. The wing of the clergy representing the national bourgeoisie and other declining sections of the petty bourgeoisie was — more than any other force — able to rouse the masses by concentrating on the struggle against the dictatorship. During this period the clergy managed to preserve its unity by keeping rivalries between its various wings internal. Later on, the progressive wing added anti-imperialist slogans to the anti-dictatorship ones. However, with the suppression of the popular movement (the massacre of 5 June 1963, etc.) and the consolidation of the dictatorship, the reactionary wing of the clergy, which formed the majority, adopted a conciliationist and compromising line in defending its rights and position against the regime.

The move by the Freedom Movement (the religious wing of the N.F.) to recognise Ayatollah Khomeini as head of the church and his sudden fame and popularity among the orthodox sections of the urban population illustrate that this wing was acting as a vanguard of the national and petty bourgeoisies. This wing of the clergy had, and continues to have, fertile ground among the religious sections of the population because of the latter's petty bourgeois characteristics. In addition to this wing, the religious establishment as a whole

tends, at least cautiously, to resist the autocracy as well as the increasing pressure of the dependent capitalist system, and tries to support any opposition force against the regime. Naturally, in this rather ineffective opposition the religious establishment tends to support religious currents more than others. Moreover, such support is not continued beyond the point where the reactionary wing of the clergy becomes alarmed by a popular movement — like the regime itself. Provided sheer necessities do not push it towards compromise there is some measure of common struggle against revolution. Therefore, while it is facing the regime, the conflicting wings of the clergy cannot be correctly and easily recognised. It is only when the clergy become separated from the masses and oppose the revolution that their small progressive wing will form part of the vanguard of the popular forces and draw away from the reactionary majority that struggles against the regime only for its own narrow sectional interests.

The American Triumph

The role of the U.S. in relation to the land reform has already been dealt with. Here we shall merely sum it up. The North American pressure for land and administrative reforms in Iran coincided with the U.S.'s imperialist onslaught on the region from 1959 onwards. Economic and military aid were levers by which the Americans exercised direct pressure. Their wide-ranging interests stood to benefit from the reforms which they were well prepared to take advantage of as a result of their experience of social and economic reforms in Latin America. The cutting off of North American aid (as a form of pressure to introduce the reforms) helped to exacerbate the economic crisis in Iran, but failed to force the ruling circles to retreat and accept the U.S. demands. But with the growth of political currents, the intensification of contradictions within the ruling classes, and the increase in popular struggles, U.S. pressure began to bear fruit. They openly supported Amini and his friends and also enlisted the help of the Second National Front. The Americans were officially demanding the implementation of the reforms, and made the future flow of aid dependent on the start of reforms. During Amini's premiership, U.S. Government officials frequently travelled to Iran to consult with the Government and the Court. Ultimately, once the land reform was started in February 1962, aid was sent to provide the necessary capital for co-operative societies in those villages affected, and North American satisfaction was shown by dispatching official congratulations to the Iranian Government. These events proved a turning point in the relationship between the regime and North American imperialism, which was sealed by the Shah's trip to the U.S. From then on the Americans occupied a position superior to that of the British in Iran.

The clash between the Amini faction and the military commanders — which was part of the struggle between the opposing wings of the ruling class — had another significance as well. While, for a decade already, the North Americans had shouldered the responsibility for reorganising the Iranian Army and provided it with arms and several thousand military advisers, the U.S. had

nevertheless acquired no authority over the Army's upper echelons. The Court, in association with the British, still dominated these levels. Amini began prosecuting influential army top brass under the pretext of 'waging a fight against corruption'. These high-ranking officers, who represented the feudalists on the one hand and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie on the other, were regarded as a major stumbling block in Amini's programme of reform, so much so that they were actually threatening him with a *coup d'état*. Faced with the prospect of prosecution by a civilian government and a consequent loss of prestige, the military commanders realised that the wind was blowing from America and that even the Court and the British would not be able to save them. Even after the Court's about-face on the reform issue, the prosecution of army officers continued for a while, although by this time the majority of the higher echelons and the civilian section of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie had accepted the superior position of the Americans and the dissolution of feudalism. Thus the conflict ended.

The main item in the reform programme demanded by the U.S. was land reform, and everyone knew that administrative reform would be limited to undermining the influence of the feudalists. For this reason the question of administrative reform, whether military or civilian, was not taken seriously.

To sum up, one of the effects of the reforms was the establishment of American superiority over their old British rivals in Iran, a process which manifested itself in both the political and the economic spheres during the decade that followed the reform. However this superiority must not be regarded as absolute. Set against the pro-U.S. policies of the administration were on the one hand the desires of other imperialists, chiefly the British, and on the other hand the interests and specific requirements of the comprador bourgeoisie, particularly its bureaucratic component. This is the factor that can explain the occasional lack of co-ordination and even possible conflict between the regime and North American requirements. However, it remains true that the most important outside factor determining the strategy of the ruling apparatus in the period after the reform was the U.S.A., and this country is also the chief force of imperialism in Iran today.

A Summary

In so far as the end of feudalism represents a new phase in the development of dependent capitalism in Iran, and the whole programme together with other economic and social changes has caused a transformation in the prevailing socio-economic system in the country, the land reform has had numerous indirect effects. We shall deal more comprehensively with the system of dependent capitalism established after the land reform and analyse its compound and indirect effects in another pamphlet.¹⁵ Here, therefore, we shall merely sum up the reform's more direct effects.

With the end of feudalism and the elimination of the feudalists, the peasants lost their class unity to a great extent and were broken down into various strata. Before the land reform, 30% of all arable lands were cultivated by smallholders. Afterwards, a much larger number of peasants joined the ranks

of the smallholders, so much so that today more than two million rural families come under this category. This vast section is itself subdivided into three strata of poor and rich families. Some middle smallholders employ *khosh nashin* (landless peasants) alongside the system of family production. The rich strata do not work on the land themselves but do manage their own farms. The third category are those whose land is not sufficient to support them and their families, and who therefore work for others either on land belonging to rich smallholders, or for the agricultural bourgeoisie, or else on construction sites and road projects. This section numbers one million families. About half a million semi-sedentary tribal nomads engaged in live-stock rearing should be added to the latter category. (Non-migrating tribes are included in the number of the other two categories.)

Feudalist exploitation has been ended in the rural areas but large sections of the peasants are now exposed to exploitation by the comprador bourgeoisie, which is mainly effected in the form of various state taxes and dues. Other sections of the comprador bourgeoisie exploit the peasants in a number of ways: the peasants' dealings with urban areas, forward buying, usury, and exploitation in the process of commercial contacts. Thus new contradictions have replaced the principal contradiction between peasants and feudalists in the rural areas. However, compared with the old and notorious system of feudal exploitation, the new indirect methods of exploitation employed by the comprador bourgeoisie have made the contradiction somewhat complex, and considering the backwardness of the peasants, it is difficult for them to understand this new contradiction. They see that while they (the smallholders) have their own land, and landlords are no longer breathing down their necks, they have nevertheless remained poor and hungry. As a result of the end of feudalism, followed by the penetration of capital and the influence of urban culture in the rural areas, the peasants' needs and expectations have increased, while there is at the same time a wide gap between their income and their requirements. Finally, the regime's administrative set-up and system of control has effectively filled the vacuum left behind by the feudal system, thus putting the rural areas to a large extent under the control of a police system like urban areas. This, then, is a general picture of the peasants in Iran today.

The end of feudalism paved the way for the rapid growth of capitalism. After the land reform the comprador bourgeoisie achieved both qualitative and quantitative growth. The agricultural bourgeoisie, as part of the whole system of the comprador bourgeoisie, began to grow rapidly. Rural markets were opened to capital and a cheap and plentiful supply of labour became available to the bourgeoisie. Foreign exploitation jumped fourfold with the extraordinary increase in production and export of raw materials and foreign investment. In order to understand these phenomena a thorough analysis of the governing system of Iranian society is needed. The most important contradiction before the reform was that between the feudalists and compradors. With the end of this contradiction, others between the various sections of the comprador bourgeoisie (i.e. between the big and petty bourgeoisie and between the

various imperialists) continued within the ruling apparatus. Nevertheless, the end of feudal influence in the system of administration and the military helped to unify the ruling apparatus. As a result of this transformation, the apparatus achieved unprecedented power in the economic, administrative and military sectors. The regime's most prominent characteristic was absolute rule in the form of autocracy together with relative mobility and an all-embracing control. Economic growth and administrative concentration enabled the regime to enjoy greater freedom of action in adapting its internal and foreign policies in the face of other ruling elements including its major imperialist ally, the U.S.

With the end of the old system the economic crises also ended and the growth of dependent capitalism provided more suitable answers to Iran's economic problems. The level of production, particularly in the industrial sector, went up, and this increase naturally improved the lot of the masses. This constituted the prosperous phase of the dependent capitalist system. Those previously unemployed found jobs, the living standards of the urban petty bourgeoisie went up, and all this created in them, and even among the workers, a kind of optimism. Such objective conditions coupled with the brutal suppression of the movement by the regime created a wide gap — a contradiction — in the momentum of advance within the popular forces, i.e. between the vanguard forces that faced the regime's extraordinary dictatorship and the masses who were without a movement and in a state of confusion. At a time when the regime was increasing its all-round pressure, the popular movement, that had failed to achieve the necessary results during the relatively democratic period of 1960-63, stepped out on a new road to end the absolute rule of the regime and to resolve the contradictions within the liberation movement.

Notes

1. A reference to some prominent ideological lepers who sided with the regime and publicly recanted their beliefs. They have since received handsome remuneration from the Shah's SAVAK for services rendered.
2. A puppet recommended by the Americans to the position of Premier at the start of the land reform. He was dismissed on the recommendation of his masters once he had outlived his usefulness.
3. A village irrespective of size. Each village is regarded as having six parts (*Shesh-dang*).
4. *Land Reform in Iran and its Direct Effects* by the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas.
5. See Chapters 3 and 4.
6. Two Anglophiles manipulated by the British through the machinations of the Shah's Court. To begin with, they together with the Shah opposed the land reform, but subsequently joined the rest of the comprador bourgeoisie and became its standard-bearers.
7. Feudal elements that have since become bourgeois by investing income

- (from the sale of land) in the dependent Iranian commercial and industrial sectors. The Mardom (People's) Party is now defunct.
8. In order to provoke an assault by the regime against militant students, the right wing of the National Front falsely informed the police of the students' intention to pull down the Shah's statue. On receipt of this information the regime dispatched its army commandos to Tehran University where they beat up and arrested many students.
 9. Upwards of 10,000 people lost their lives.
 10. Reproduced here in Chapters 3 and 4.
 11. He led a right-wing faction out of the Tudeh Party in 1948.
 12. A radio station situated in Eastern Europe broadcasting on behalf of this 'Party'. The host country has stopped these broadcasts since 1977.
 13. A radio station inside the Soviet Union sponsored by the Soviet broadcasting system. [Author's note]
 14. This was headed by a veteran member of the Tudeh Party named Abbas Shariari who was instrumental in betraying a great number of patriots to SAVAK. This traitor was executed in March 1975 by the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas.
 15. See Chapters 3 and 4.

3. Dependent Capitalism

The Nature of Dependent Capitalism Today

Neo-colonialism is the most advanced form of exploitation of dominated peoples by the imperialist monopolies; it is also the most advanced relationship between an exploiting society (the metropolis) and an exploited one (the colony). This phenomenon is the result of the development of the socio-economic processes in both societies. The conditions that have necessitated such a relationship have also caused the appearance of inter-related phenomena in both societies. Therefore it is impossible to talk about neo-colonialism in one society without studying conditions in the other. We shall attempt to deal with such conditions according to their relative importance for the colony and for the metropolis.

When colonialism imposed itself on dominated countries [from the 16th to the 19th centuries], feudalism was the established socio-economic formation in the most advanced lands under colonialist attack. At this time capitalism in the metropolitan countries had not yet reached the stage of imperialism. Therefore, exploitation was based on the export of finished goods to the colonies and the import of raw materials (agricultural and industrial), as well as any other consumable products, into the metropolitan countries and other colonies. During this time the feudalists and their dependent bureaucrats, plus the old local 'bourgeoisie', were the main consumers of luxury and other imported goods. These imported manufactured goods were of relatively simple construction and were suitable for the production methods employed at that time in metropolitan societies. Thus the peasants carried the main burden of foreign exploitation and the traditional artisans, whose products were pushed aside by the imported goods, carried the rest.

With the growth of a bourgeoisie proper in the exploited societies and the maturing of capitalism in the metropolitan countries [during the 19th Century], foreign capital began to enter the colonies. This capital was mainly invested in the production of raw materials. The export of other goods from the colonies continued, but the export of raw materials increased. At this stage the colonial powers made no official payments to the colonies for the exploitation of their resources since the latter were under their open domination, and colonial labour power was exploited at the cheapest possible price. They

did, however, pay a tiny proportion of the booty to the feudalists and to the bourgeoisie that was growing in the colonies. In countries where there was no overt political and military domination (i.e. in the semi-colonies), the exploiting power would pay a small royalty to the ruling feudalists while the nascent bourgeoisie received a commission for the sale of imported industrial goods and the export of raw materials. Thus in this system of exploitation, whether overt or covert (colony or semi-colony), there existed a more or less single formula for foreign exploitation.

For this reason, in both types of colonies, there appeared more or less similar phenomena. The most important of these was the growth of local bourgeoisies and the contradiction of their interests to those of the exploiting powers. This led to the appearance of liberation movements: in the colonies they crystallised in the form of independence movements, e.g. the movements in Latin American countries against Spain and Portugal, and against the British in the Indian sub-continent at the end of the 19th Century. However, in China, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and many other countries, the liberation movements began as a struggle against the local political super-structure of feudalism that was now being supported by imperialism. These struggles, which often ended in revolution, represented the initial stage of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in the dominated countries. Some of these revolutions, with their inadequate aims, achieved victory; others achieved only mediocre results or ended in defeat. The Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America achieved independence. But U.S. imperialism, having helped them during the period of their independence struggles, rapidly expanded its political and economic influence in these countries after they had extricated themselves from direct colonial rule. A few more decades were to elapse before a more complete form of liberation movement could take shape against North American imperialism. This period could have enabled the bourgeoisie, together with the exploited masses, to establish a truly complete independence. The bourgeoisie in most countries was divided into comprador and nationalist: the first, being a by-product of imperialist domination and helped by foreign exploiters, shared the government with the feudalists, while the second was threatened with extinction. A similar process took place in the semi-colonies — an example being our own country whose various revolutionary stages we have already dealt with in the previous chapters.

With the growth of a bourgeoisie and foreign investment, a working class also emerged in these exploited societies. The triumph of the revolutionary working class movement in Russia and the growth of similar movements in the advanced capitalist societies helped to awaken working-class consciousness in the colonies and semi-colonies, giving rise to the spread of anti-imperialist revolutionary movements on a world scale. These movements were often led by national bourgeoisies and represented a more advanced stage than the bourgeois-democratic revolutions. In Latin American countries they appeared at an early stage and openly, e.g. in Mexico, Chile, Argentina and the Central American states (including Nicaragua); in China the move-

nient took the form of the Kuomintang Government followed by a continual historical upheaval. In our own country, where the first manifestations of this stage of the revolution had been suppressed by Reza Khan's dictatorship, the movement developed after the Second World War and ultimately appeared in its fullest form during the oil nationalisation process of 1951–53. This phase of the liberation movement after the Second World War led to a great upsurge which is still continuing today in the colonies and semi-colonies. In some exploited parts of the world, the revolutions triumphed during this stage: in China and Vietnam a people's democracy was established; in India, Indonesia, Egypt and a few other countries, it ended in the establishment of national democracies. However, in the whole of Latin America (except Cuba) and in countries with similar historical backgrounds, such as Iran, the revolutions, despite their strength, were defeated because of open suppression by North American imperialism. What course was to be adopted by these states? It is possible to stop, slow down, or redirect a society's development, but a return to the previous situation, except for a temporary period, is impossible.

The course taken by these societies led to a system of dependent capitalism. After the bourgeoisie had a chance to grow during the course of a century, the exploited societies had two options. One of these led to the end of colonialism which either resulted in a system of nationalist democracy, with varying degrees of progressiveness and representativeness, or led to a people's democracy which is the preliminary stage of socialism. However, if the liberation movements fail to carry their victory through, this second course will inevitably fall back into a system of dependent capitalism.

Thus the primary factors that force a transformation of a colonial relationship are: (a) the growth of the bourgeoisie and (b) the growth of the working class. These two forces, in the form of a liberation movement, confront imperialism. Although in the majority of dominated states such a movement failed to triumph in the face of a tripartite alliance between imperialism, feudalism and comprador capitalism, persistent and open exploitation — together with the exertion of political and military force by a foreign power — cannot be continued as before without vehement opposition from the oppressed masses.

At this stage the slowdown in the growth of the national bourgeoisie is offset by the rapid growth of the comprador bourgeoisie. This latter bourgeoisie becomes a base for, and a partner of, imperialism by channelling the national bourgeoisie towards comprador capitalism and dissolving the feudalists as the ruling class. This transformation establishes a new system which we term 'dependent capitalism', in which an imperialist colonial relationship develops further: imperialistic monopolies, in co-operation with the comprador bourgeoisie, succeed in vastly expanding the system of exploitation. At the same time, through various concessions, they put an end to the old process of extortion that amounted to tyrannical foreign protection dues. In other words, exploitation is now disguised as a straightforward economic and commercial relationship.

The ultimate hallmark of this era of exploitation is capital investment in

production of raw materials, incorporation of these materials into concessions (e.g. the British consortium's oil rights in Iran) and limited investment in local industrial growth. The import of consumer goods is replaced by the modern formula of foreign investment in the form of partnerships with the public and/or private sector in production and mining; the setting up of dependent industries; the transfer of raw materials and semi-finished goods out of the country (steel and copper ingots instead of mineral ores, petro-chemical and oil products instead of crude oil and natural gas); and the import of intermediate goods as well as capital goods for dependent industries (assembly plants). The formula is further developed by allocating the production of simple consumer goods (e.g. cement, cloth, processed foodstuffs) as well as the assembly of intermediate goods to a dominated country with joint capital; while the production of sophisticated products (e.g. aircraft, electronic equipment, heavy machinery and arms) is allocated to the metropolitan country. Thus we have a limited and controlled system of production with a limited and controlled market in the dominated country. This, in fact, is a developed form of the old 'single commodity and single customer' formula and guarantees the economic subservience of a dominated country. Therefore, one of the special features of neo-colonialism is the emphasis placed upon economic, as opposed to political and military, domination.

An inseparable part of the system of dependent capitalism in a colony is the formation of a minority consumer class drawn from the better-off section of the petty bourgeoisie. The consumption and application of complex imported goods as well as internally produced items by dependent industries make the unequal distribution of the national income imperative. This increases the buying power of the better-off minority at the cost of mass deprivation. This phenomenon explains the rapid and continuous transfer of raw materials from the colony and the correspondingly proportionate import of foreign goods. This process continues through the export of foreign currency. In this way the expansion of industries inside the dependent countries and the development of the system of dependent capitalism takes place, providing economic dependence with a social base.

If in such conditions a national reformist government comes to power, a standstill often takes place in the production, mining and export of primary and intermediary commodities to the metropolitan country and the world markets controlled by global monopolies. This leads not only to stagnation and a disastrous economic crisis, but also means that the pressure exerted by the comfortable section of the petty bourgeoisie will manifest itself in the form of social crisis and political discontent. This in turn enables the comprador bourgeoisie to resort to political blackmail and counter-revolutionary measures in order to sweep away what is really a liberation movement. In Chile this occurred in the form of a persistent struggle by the consumer class at the time of Allende and was fully exploited by the comprador bourgeoisie. It is clear that this sort of phenomenon is able to crush any non-revolutionary attempt by the people to remove the system of dependent capitalism.

A third factor that makes neo-colonialism possible is the role of the

comprador bourgeoisie in government. In the past, imperialism imposed its rule by military force and, in order to stabilise its position and offer support to internal reaction, it often got embroiled in exerting brute force and resorting to open intervention. Prior to the establishment of advanced local military structures in Latin American countries, the North American forces used to roam the Continent. Of course, military intervention by the imperialists in dominated countries was followed by international protests, but the main danger to them was that the oppressed people would launch an anti-imperialist struggle. The establishment of dependent capitalism altered this pattern. It entails the political rule of the comprador bourgeoisie which has the ability to organise an advanced form of administrative and military apparatus. With the help of imperialist advisers, the army, the police and other organs of oppression can be reorganised and armed with the latest techniques and military hardware. As a result, the government can exert its power in both the urban and rural areas in order to nip any revolutionary movement in the bud. It is in such situations that internal reaction deputises for imperialism and, barring exceptional cases, the latter has no need of direct military intervention in a dominated country. It is also worth noting that the qualitative as well as quantitative expansion of the military and police absorbs a considerable portion of the national income. This provides further help for the export of heavy and complex goods from the metropolitan countries. Nevertheless, a system of dependent capitalism fails to mitigate the contradiction between the people on the one hand and imperialism and its internal reactionary allies on the other. Furthermore, the growth of such a system actually enables the people to organise a more effective revolutionary struggle. A revolutionary movement, together with the force which is matured within the new system and supported by experiences of revolutionary movements all over the world, becomes the antithesis of dependent capitalism.

Today, throughout the Latin American countries (except Cuba), where the system of dependent capitalism and neo-colonialist relationships has taken shape, the revolutionary movements are developing on a more advanced level than the previous stages. The Cuban Revolution also has the distinction of having triumphed in a society where dependent capitalism was in the process of development. The liberation movements in Iran, Turkey, Greece and some African countries, like Tunisia, are at such a stage.

The establishment of a neo-colonialist relationship in a significant proportion of the world will certainly have its effect on dominated countries which have not as yet achieved the required social growth (i.e. conditions for the establishment of dependent capitalism). These colonies achieve only superficial independence. Royalties for the appropriation of raw materials increase and a huge income accrues to the feudalist or feudal-comprador regimes of these countries in exchange for allowing foreign capital full exploitation of local resources. The bourgeoisie and the working classes are not sufficiently developed; there are no visible signs of dependent industries, a consumer class, or the other features associated with a system of dependent capitalism. Foreign exchange earnings are divided among the feudalists, tribal

chiefs and army top brass and, despite extravagant spending on luxuries and high living, they are able to salt away millions of dollars in foreign banks. But such a disequilibrium between foreign currency earnings and industrial backwardness cannot last indefinitely. The growth of liberation movements in these countries puts an end to such backwardness and blatant injustice; alternatively, the growth of a comprador bourgeoisie paves the way for the establishment of a system of dependent capitalism. A perfect example of this would be Saudi Arabia.

A century has elapsed since the dawn of imperialism, and capitalism has continued its growth as it had done during the previous two centuries. The development of the means of production, together with the savage and prolonged exploitation of dominated peoples, has contributed to the colossal growth of monopoly capitalism. Huge companies have come into being with their annual profits running into billions of dollars. Some of these monopolies employ hundreds of thousands of people in their industrial and commercial complexes and indirectly exploit many different countries. This phenomenon has vastly developed the many features of imperialism in various fields. However, here we can deal only with those features that have directly helped the establishment of neo-colonialism.

Firstly, there has been an unprecedented growth in the export of capital in the past decade. The North American imperialists are far ahead of any other country in the development of capitalism and are the unquestioned leaders in this field. During the first decade after the Second World War, this imperialism devoted more to foreign capital investment than during the whole of its previous history. Such a policy has a dual function. It provides a vast new arena for capital that has been accumulated and which would otherwise have been locked up in banks. It also provides the necessary raw materials for giant industrial complexes engaged in satisfying unbridled consumer demands — demands that have reached the stage of lunacy. However, such vast capital investments in exploited societies have led to the growth of a comprador bourgeoisie, have changed the face of the colonies, and have created a new relationship between exploiter and exploited. It is because of this very advanced stage of capitalism in the U.S. that the North American imperialists are the staunch supporters of neo-colonialism in exploited societies.

Secondly, the economic appropriation of the world has also undergone some changes. Having embarked on global rivalry, the imperialist monopolies eventually began to set up cartels in oil, steel, etc. in order to divide and control world resources and markets. But the increasing power of the socialist states after the Second World War, the expansion of anti-imperialist liberation movements that have managed to free many lands and peoples from the yoke of imperialism, and the tremendous advances in weapon technology (including the development of atomic weapons), have made a military confrontation between the imperialists over the division of the world well nigh impossible. In such circumstances the rivalries among imperialist powers in exploited countries have assumed the form of a scramble to acquire con-

cessions, economic competition, sponsored military *coup d'états* and occasionally military clashes between puppet regimes. On the other hand, the setting up of cartels, economic common markets, and international consortiums present a more developed form of economic division. At the same time these new institutions delegate the power to control economic resources and world markets to big monopolies, thus limiting even further the power of exploited countries to lighten the load of, or breach the system of, neo-colonial economic domination. In this field, too, the North American imperialists have been the standard-bearers of world imperialism. U.S. capital began to pour into Europe (especially West Germany) and Japan after the Second World War and laid the foundations for joint ventures and consortiums; these have today become an established feature of the whole of Western Europe. By a series of amalgamations European companies have also created huge concerns comparable to those of the North Americans. This phenomenon will continue into the future, providing the necessary confidence to the exploiters to press ahead with their economic domination of exploited countries.

Thirdly, in spite of various economic crises and in spite of the liberation of an important part of the world from the yoke of imperialism, capitalism has continued to grow. Capitalism has continued its growth and will do so in future, although at a slower pace, as long as exploited societies are oppressed and unable to achieve economic and industrial growth. The development of the means of production in the form of giant new industrial concerns, technological advance and automation, together with the maintenance of a neo-colonialist relationship (which makes it possible to intensify the exploitation of dominated nations) are the fundamental factors sustaining growth in the metropolitan countries. The standard of living (including that of the working classes) in these countries has been rising continuously. Their working classes have attained considerable levels of industrial training, and the developed means of production and industrial organisation generally have enabled the capitalists to increase the workers' hourly wages without reducing their own extortionate profits. The increasingly high concentration of capital proves that, as a result of both the developed means of production and neo-colonialist relationships, exploitation has increased both in the colonies and in the metropolitan countries.

If further development of the means of production is to be achieved in metropolitan countries, and if the people's standard of living in these countries is not to plummet — but rather increase — then the production of goods that can be achieved through the employment of cheap labour elsewhere must be avoided in metropolitan countries. A skilled metropolitan worker, with the help of the most advanced tools, must be engaged in the production only of those goods that can be exchanged for hundreds of hours of labour of a worker in a colony. Colossal capital investment in the colonies and the rule of the comprador bourgeoisies have paved the way for the production of primary goods and also simple commodities (from a technological point of view) in the colonies themselves. Suffice it to say, the metropo-

litan countries now concentrate on the production of heavy, complex and expensive goods. This leads to a kind of division of labour in the system of production between the colony and the metropolis: the colony is eventually allowed to produce steel, petrochemical products, cement, cloth, sugar and many other simple commodities which it had previously been forbidden to produce. In addition, a more important part of the assembly industries can be set up in the colony. The metropolitan country will produce complex items such as producer goods, computers, electronic equipment, aircraft and any other goods that require advanced technical know-how and skilled industrial labour, and will export them to the colony. At this stage there will be no need to transport a great amount of primary raw materials to the metropolis, since the resources and cheap labour power in the colony under the control of foreign and dependent capitals will satisfy the insatiable demands of the giant monopolies. This is yet another feature of the neo-colonialist relationship.

Therefore, we can clearly see that the economic and industrial phenomena in the metropolis find their complementary phenomena in the colony and, conversely, the phenomena in the latter find their answers in the metropolis. In its economic and political form, dependent capitalism is a developed socio-economic system and, in effect, represents the essence of a deep-rooted dependency on the part of the exploited societies.

Thus, with the expansion of anti-imperialist movements in the world and the duty of socialist states to avoid an atomic war aimed at destroying capitalism, the growth of contradictions between the socialist and capitalist camps is necessarily channelled through the liberation movements i.e. the contradiction is between the imperialists and the liberation movements. Furthermore, the fact that the exploited countries are the lifeline of imperialism, and that the liberation of the former will snap that lifeline, means that the contradiction between liberation movements and imperialism is also the principal contradiction in the world at the present time.

Dependent Capitalism in Iran

Dependent capitalism has been established in Iran in the past decade. This system determines the socio-economic infrastructure and political and cultural superstructure of our society. Compared with other historical socio-economic formations (from the very first commune to communism), this one may be regarded as a semi-formation, or as an unstable and transitory one. The fact of dependency, which is an inseparable part of this system, is a guarantee of foreign exploitation and imperialist domination in the country. The comprador bourgeoisie acts as the ruling class through which imperialism operates. As we have said before, this semi-formation is only one amongst many systems which, as a result of colonial relationships on a world scale, have appeared in exploited countries in the period between the historical formation of feudalism and the establishment of socialism. We shall now attempt to analyse dependent

capitalism and its main characteristics in Iran by dealing with the social, political and economic processes of our society.

The main features of dependent capitalism in Iran are as follows: (1) The growth of a comprador bourgeoisie and the consequent rule of this class. This has come about as a result of the channelling of the national bourgeoisie towards comprador capitalism, the dissolution of feudalism, the fragmentation of the small bourgeoisie, and the polarisation of the petty bourgeoisie. The comprador bourgeoisie has achieved qualitative and quantitative growth in five sectors (financial, commercial, industrial, agricultural and bureaucratic). Ultimately by the amalgamation of the monetary, industrial and bureaucratic bourgeoisies it will become a dependent financial oligarchy. (2) With the end of feudalism, capitalist relationships are being established in the villages and in the agricultural sector generally. This fragments the peasantry into various sections and forces them to join the reserve army of labour. (3) Foreign capital investment in various sectors is expanding in an unprecedented fashion and foreign exploitation will assume immense dimensions under neo-colonialist relations. The system of production will become directly or indirectly dependent on the economic and production system of the imperialist monopolies. (4) A minority consumer class is forming, consisting of the bourgeoisie and the better-off section of the petty bourgeoisie, as a complementary element of the new economic system and as a base for the neo-colonialist culture. (5) Dictatorship is consolidating itself organisationally as the most fundamental feature of the ruling apparatus and the anti-popular regime; it is leaning heavily on imperialism.

The Comprador Bourgeoisie

The comprador bourgeoisie's growth during the last few decades has already been discussed in the previous chapters. The final stage of this growth culminated in the channelling of the national bourgeoisie and the feudalists in the direction of becoming a comprador bourgeoisie. Today, what is left of the national bourgeoisie is engaged in only small undertakings and the remnants of feudalism are rapidly disappearing from the rural areas. The comprador bourgeoisie in contrast is growing rapidly in the fields of industry, finance and agriculture, largely managing now to offset its historical failure which had resulted because of the one-sided growth of the bureaucratic and commercial comprador bourgeoisies. Therefore, today, there are five sections to the comprador bourgeoisie.

The Commercial Bourgeoisie

Studying the various sections we notice that the commercial section of the comprador bourgeoisie has a historical as well as a logical precedence over the other sections. Its role, in relation to the other sections, has been that of a 'mother'; the other relatively recent bourgeoisies (industrial, financial and agricultural) have branched out of this commercial bourgeoisie. Starting with

assembly industries, the agents of foreign monopolies in Iran began to invest in dependent consumer industries, and entered into partnership with foreign capital for the setting up of banks, insurance companies, mechanised farms and livestock units. At the same time an important section of the commercial comprador bourgeoisie, specialising in the import of foreign consumer items, continued its activities in the field of commerce. This bourgeoisie was engaged in fierce competition with the national bourgeoisie for the control of internal markets. This competition still continues today with the remnants of the latter now confined to certain internal markets.

The growth of an industrial bourgeoisie has drastically reduced the activities of the commercial bourgeoisie in the field of imports. Proof of this trend is the slowing down of growth in the import of consumer goods compared to the rapid increase, in recent years, of the import of industrial and intermediary goods. In lieu of this reduction — which incidentally has its roots in the secondary contradiction between these two bourgeoisies — the commercial bourgeoisie has found enormous scope to increase its activities in the internal market. The distribution of goods produced by dependent industries, and the entry of large capital into the retail trade through the establishment of big stores as well as chain stores, are the main fields of activity of the commercial comprador bourgeoisie. This is in direct contradiction to the interests of the national bourgeoisie and sections of the small petty bourgeoisie. The various service sectors, such as hotels, education, health, transport and property development, are all fields for the commercial comprador bourgeoisie. The small bourgeoisie still has the upper hand in some of these sectors. However, the big commercial bourgeoisie, with its predominantly comprador characteristics, is being helped by the financial bourgeoisie (the banks, and occasionally the insurance companies) to have free rein over these sections, threatening to drive small and petty bourgeois concerns out of business. Therefore, while the commercial bourgeoisie has, to a large extent, lost the chance to develop in the field of imported consumer goods, it has a great scope for growth and investment in the internal market and service industries generally.

The following factors highlight the comprador character of the commercial bourgeoisie:

- (1) It imports foreign consumer goods and is the sole agent for their sale and distribution;
- (2) In commerce, it is an inseparable part of the comprador system by virtue of possessing the right to sell and distribute goods produced by the dependent industries;
- (3) It has an undeniable role in the formation of the consumer class in service industries;
- (4) Its reciprocal relation with the financial comprador bourgeoisie, the banks and insurance companies, and ultimately with Government, turns it into one of the most essential pillars of the dependent capitalist system.

The Industrial Bourgeoisie

During the past decade the industrial bourgeoisie has developed faster than any other section. Its activities are compradorial because it is dependent on imperialist monopolies. Like all other sections, this bourgeoisie's development is based on the increasing growth of foreign exploitation. Its activities are in the two basic fields of mining and consumer goods industries, although at the present time the former activity lags far behind the latter, and in the field of heavy industries the burden of capital investment is carried by the Government (i.e. the public purse). Here the Government is itself in partnership with foreign capital in the production and export of raw materials and semi-finished goods. Therefore, the most important area of activity for the industrial bourgeoisie (i.e. the private sector) is in the consumer industries such as food, clothing, medical supplies, toiletries, metal work, household goods and transport. These industries have grown rapidly in the past ten years and capital investment in them has increased at an extraordinary rate in a very short time (30 or 40 times in some cases). This is proof of the formation of a consumer class and the exorbitant profits accruing to the comprador bourgeoisie. In some of the more important fields, foreign capital has entered into partnership with local capital, although it would be completely wrong to attribute the dependency of these industries merely to the nature of the capital invested in them.

The dependence of the industrial bourgeoisie on imperialist monopolies takes various forms. The most important of these are:

(1) Dependence through capital. By this is meant the total capital, including the financial credits, employed in a particular industry. Thus the simplest form of capital dependency is the partnership between internal and foreign capital, as in many important consumer industries (e.g. B.F. Goodrich, the rubber company). This is a form of direct capital dependency. However, if an industrial company, e.g. Iran National, is formed with *official* internal capital (on which high interest is normally charged) borrowed, say, from the Industrial Expansion Bank, then, since the bulk of this bank's credits are provided by foreign banks, this would constitute a form of indirect capital dependency.

(2) Dependence through machinery. Today, the whole of Iranian industry is dependent on foreign industry for its machinery and spare parts. An important part of Iran's foreign currency reserves is handed back to the metropolitan countries for the import, maintenance and renovation of factories and machinery, and such capital goods represent the most important items of export for these countries. Nevertheless, the import of heavy machinery, etc., is necessary even in a nationalist or a people's democratic state in the period before they have had time to lay the infrastructure of their own industries, although the relations between such states and foreign countries are vastly different from those of dependent states. If Iran's industrial dependence had been confined solely to reliance on imported machinery, it would not have assumed a comprador character.

(3) Technological and technical dependence. The foreign 'advisers' have a

determining role in economic and industrial planning, in the assembly of various machinery, and are constantly supervising production itself. Every year millions of dollars are paid out for imported specialists. Thousands of foreign advisers and technicians accompany the dependent industries into Iran and are employed at extravagant salaries (plus privileges) to install and supervise industries. The cost of foreign technical supervision forms an important part of the total cost of production. This is yet another way in which the people are exploited and a huge income pours out to the metropolitan countries.

(4) The above types of dependency arise at the stage of initial capital investment and the actual setting up of industries. However, the most important factor compelling permanent dependency operates in the form of goods which are used by these industries. These goods come under three categories: first, those items that are then assembled in Iran, e.g. automobile parts; secondly, intermediate goods and raw materials that are directly imported from abroad, such as chemical compounds, various metals, rubber, industrial dyes, natural and synthetic fibres, raw or semi-processed food materials. These types of goods are widely used in industry. (Today, of course, there are some goods produced in Iran such as vegetable oils, woollen and nylon goods, toiletries, medicine and many other items that would, at first glance, be difficult to regard as elements reflecting dependency.) Thirdly, there are those products that are made in other dependent industrial establishments and used in one single industry. For example, the Iran National car factories use B.F. Goodrich tyres which are regarded as having been made in Iran; or, petro-chemical products made by joint foreign and Iranian concerns are used in most industries; or, aluminium products made by joint U.S. and Iranian concerns. Thus nearly all the input for consumer goods (except in the food industry) is imported from abroad. This is the most important form of industrial dependence on world monopolies. With the expansion in the production of raw materials and simple goods in Iran, often with joint capital, this form of dependency will continue with little change into the future.

(5) The last form of dependency is the payment made to foreign industries for the use of their patents, systems and production processes, and the brand-names and trademarks of foreign products. Such payments are sometimes as high as 15% of the total selling price of a particular product. According to one official estimate, Iranian industries are at the moment dependent on foreign monopolies at rates of between 20 and 80%. Of course, this estimate does not cover the indirect elements of dependency. Thus the most important internal factor for these industries, namely, labour power, is put at the disposal of the industrial bourgeoisie and its foreign partners.

The industrial bourgeoisie has important scope for development side by side with the state-run heavy industries. The Government, by capital investment in steel, mining and petro-chemical industries, relieves the industrial bourgeoisie of a heavy burden. Yet the Government intends subsequently to transfer these industries to the private (internal or foreign) sector. Or, to take another example, the products of the copper-mining establishment at Sar-

Cheshmeh in Kerman (South-East Iran) and those of the Isfahan steelmill, on which millions of dollars have been spent out of the public purse, are not sold in the open market but go to the private sector in order to be used in subsequent processes of production. Here we see the same process as occurred in the construction of the Dez Dam in Khuzestan. Millions of dollars were spent on building this dam and the irrigation system. The real burden was carried by the deprived masses of Iran, while the benefit was reaped by various foreign, domestic and joint Iranian-foreign agri-business concerns such as that of Hashim Naraghi. The industrial bourgeoisie, helped by the financial bourgeoisie and the state, enjoys all kinds of public facilities as well as financial and market support to increase its power. The fact that the task of producing simple commodities has been assigned to Iran has given the industrial comprador bourgeoisie an extraordinary scope for growth.

With the expansion of this class, the small bourgeoisie and the traders who, with their system of workshop production, were also engaged in making consumer goods, came face to face with a rival that began to flood the market. Nevertheless, as long as such commodities had not captured the whole market, the country's population growth provided some outlet for the continuation of an artisan-based system of production. The rapid increase in imports during the previous two decades, coupled with the subsequent establishment of dependent industries and their rapid growth, did force the sections under pressure to retreat from their position and take up trades not yet threatened. At every stage of retreat, a considerable number of people lost their source of livelihood and joined the reserve army of labour. So, with the import of a Pepsi-Cola factory, all local lemonade workshops disappeared; with the growth of factories engaged in the production of household goods, the furniture and other workshops closed down; with the setting up of shoe-making factories, shoemakers went out of business. This process is still continuing. Today, not only the urban markets but also markets in villages and even small hamlets are closed to the products of the artisan system of production. This process will eventually destroy traders, small businesses and ultimately the small bourgeoisie, and push the industrial and commercial comprador bourgeoisie to the height of their growth. Parallel with the decline and fall of these sections of the petty bourgeoisie, other sections of the petty bourgeoisie will grow. These are all processes that will affect social conditions in our country.

The contradiction between the declining sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the comprador bourgeoisie will intensify as the growth of dependent capitalism becomes more pronounced. The sections under threat are more prepared to struggle against the newly-established system. The working class, the lower strata of the civil service and other similar sections, which are in the process of growth, might have to wait for economic crises before they rise against the system. The petty bourgeois sections, however, will inevitably have to resort to vehement protests as the prosperity of the new system puts unbearable pressure on them. Later in this book, we shall deal with this social phenomenon and its implications for the revolutionary movement.

The Financial Bourgeoisie

Another section of the comprador bourgeoisie is the financial bourgeoisie, which took shape with the formation of commercial banks in the first decade after the 1953 *coup d'état*. The commercial bourgeoisie, the old 'High Street' foreign exchange shops, and the feudalists who had turned to comprador activities took part in establishing commercial banks alongside those set up by foreign capital. The second manifestation of the financial bourgeoisie, namely, insurance companies, also emerged in this period. The activities of these banks were initially limited to financing the rapid increase of foreign imports and supporting internal commerce. However, industrial banks have now come into being during the last decade and some of the old banks also have specialised in industry.

The comprador character of this section of the bourgeoisie is revealed by the following factors:

(1) The banks put capital at the disposal of the industrial, commercial and agricultural comprador bourgeoisies. In other words, there is an organic relationship between the financial bourgeoisie and the rest of this class. This is the most general aspect of its comprador character.

(2) The financial bourgeoisie has, in recent years, actually begun to take a direct part in industrial and commercial activities (e.g. the Industrial Expansion Bank has provided loans to many industrial concerns on top of investing directly in diverse business ventures).

(3) There is, lastly, the direct dependence of this section of the bourgeoisie on foreign monopolies through their capital. In the case of this bourgeoisie, too, one must not be deceived by the *official* capital of their institutions. For instance, the Industrial Expansion Bank, the biggest banking institution in Iran, was initially set up with a 40% foreign capital component. Subsequently, this was reduced to 20% or less. Now if one determines the scale of this bank's dependence based on such yardsticks, then one might conclude that the bank has to a great extent lost its comprador character. But the official capital of the bank is very small indeed in comparison with its financial activities. The bank has, in recent years, borrowed close to 1,000 million dollars from foreign (mainly American) banks, investing this directly or indirectly in dependent industries. Thus the bank returns tens of millions of dollars to foreign banks every year as interest on these loans. The industrial banks, like the industries, are keenly supported by the Government: the latter guarantees all their foreign loans and, what is more, puts enormous interest-free sums at their disposal in the form of credits that are part of the nation's income. Thus the system discharges its duties to the comprador bourgeoisie at the cost of mass deprivation.

The Agricultural Bourgeoisie

The agricultural bourgeoisie is the most recently created section of the comprador bourgeoisie. The basis for it was laid in the first decade of the post-*coup d'état* era. The capitalist system of production became the foundation of agriculture on those richer farms that were grabbed by the courtiers

and big bureaucrats, and farmed on a mechanised basis. A number of feudals, having foreseen the demise of feudalism, turned all their fertile land into mechanised farming even before the declaration of Land Reform.¹ Supported by the regime they set about depriving the mass of farmers, by hook or by crook, of their title (*nasagh*) to the land. During the Land Reform too, the regime closed its eyes to such fraudulent practices as the mechanisation of farms as a deliberate ploy to drive peasants off their land in order to establish a capitalist system of production. As a result of such practices the number of fertile mechanised and semi-mechanised farms that became exempt under the Land Reform laws increased. Such farms formed the basis for the establishment of the agricultural comprador bourgeoisie.

Parallel to these developments the system of modern orchard farming expanded, first in old farms that were suitable and subsequently on modern farms. Today, with the expansion of fruit consumption, orchard farming has developed considerably. Agricultural workers and landless peasants work on mechanised and semi-mechanised orchards as wage labourers and sometimes on a seasonal basis. There is no more share-cropping in this sector of agriculture, although more time is still required for the complete mechanisation of all agricultural land under capitalist control.

The most important aspect of the growth of the agricultural bourgeoisie has been the creation of large mechanised farms as well as meat and dairy farming corporations. This 'agri-business' sector is the true representative of the big bourgeoisie in agriculture. The joint U.S.-Iranian farming venture of Hashim Naraghi below the Dez Dam in Khuzestan is a perfect example of such companies. This unit was set up in a suitably fertile area with an initial capital of 20 million dollars. The Government, having spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the dam and irrigation system, put all the facilities at the disposal of private (foreign and internal) capital at a very cheap price. Two thousand peasant families, who were practically forced to sell, put their lands at the disposal of the corporation and now work for it as farm labourers. The products of these farms are flown directly to Europe from Abadan Airport. Food-processing industries are also being set up next to these large corporations.

The privately-owned agricultural companies are being lavishly helped by the state. Confronted with such giant corporations, small capital and petty landlords are facing the same fate that befell small urban businessmen and traders in the face of the big commercial and industrial bourgeoisies.

Another aspect of the growth of a bourgeoisie in the rural areas is the setting up of joint-stock agricultural companies and the establishment of capitalist relationships. In this case things are managed by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, but the lands divided amongst the peasantry are again under attack. The peasants, who are still in the process of paying instalments for the land, are deprived of it on the basis of a capitalist formula; and they receive shares in these companies, not on the basis of their work but according to the amount of land they are supposed to have. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie has found various methods of exploiting the farmers through

these companies — in business transactions, in the sale and purchase of agricultural products or the everyday requirements of village life, in the administrative system and the payments for water, instalments on lands and other Government dues, etc. Nevertheless, because of the existence of many poor and drought-stricken rural areas, the expansion of these companies is rather limited. Therefore, the most important fields for the growth of an agricultural bourgeoisie are the large mechanised farms, large agricultural units and live-stock farming corporations. Their growth will soon become apparent in the internal market: it will cause the contradiction between the agricultural bourgeoisie on the one hand and the petty landlords and small bourgeoisie on the other to become a reality.

The Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie

As the industrial and commercial companies, factories, mines, stores, banks and other private institutions provide the grounds for the growth of the bourgeoisie in the private sector, so the Court, the Government, the Army, state-owned commercial and industrial institutions, and Government-sponsored agricultural and reform programmes provide the grounds for the growth of an administrative (i.e. bureaucratic) bourgeoisie. The section that heads these public institutions is part of the bourgeoisie for two reasons. First, because it represents the interests of other sections of the comprador bourgeoisie; and secondly, because the wealth of the community at large provides the means (via the institutions of government and the Court) through which it directly exploits society's resources and the greater part of the labour force, thus confirming this section's fundamentally bourgeois character. Furthermore, by reason of extracting its share of the booty from other sections of the bourgeoisie, it has an indirect hand in the exploitation of the masses. The special feature of the Iranian administrative bourgeoisie is summed up in the political and administrative role of the Court and the courtiers. In other words, the Shah and his courtiers are the perfect manifestation of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie in Iran. The manner in which they exploit is revealed in the following processes:

(1) Exploitation through misuse of political, administrative and military positions. In nearly all official state transactions, a certain percentage is illegally appropriated by the higher echelons of the bureaucracy for personal gain. In awarding state contracts, inviting tenders, in determining commercial tariffs and export-import quotas, in concluding economic treaties and giving economic concessions to foreign countries, in the purchase of arms and ammunitions, in selling especially well-paid Government posts — in short, in any activity which involves money or for which a commodity changes hands — the higher strata of Government administration, state institutions and the military hierarchy pocket a share of the transaction. This phenomenon is known by the peoples of Iran and world public opinion as 'administrative corruption'. And this does from time to time force the Government to raise a hue and cry about the 'fight against corruption' or 'administrative revolution'. But since the phenomenon is well entrenched in the ruling

system, it is inseparable from it. It may well be possible to launch an 'anti-corruption crusade' against the most outrageous kleptomaniacs, but large-scale misappropriation connected with the higher echelons of the state administrative system and the Court is completely uncontrollable. Frequently, *after* a political personality or an Army top-brass falls out of favour, his misuse of power for huge personal gain becomes a talking point even in Government circles. But the colossal plundering of public wealth by the Court and persons connected with it goes on unadmitted although the general public knows that it is taking place.

(2) Exploitation of the country's resources and the people's labour by the administrative bourgeoisie heading the industrial and commercial institutions belonging to the state. During the previous decade the state already owned several consumer and military-industrial units. However, barring exceptional cases such as the tobacco industry, it became an official Government policy in the last decade to invest in heavy industries, mining and the production of intermediate goods. Joint foreign-domestic consortia are also active in these fields. This development has directly helped the growth of other sections of the bourgeoisie. The Government invests millions of dollars of public funds in industry and mining whilst the private sector reaps the benefit. (This phenomenon will be dealt with later.) There are a number of bureaucrats and technocrats at the head of these industries who not only illegally (i.e. in contravention of the rules of the system), but also legally (through making them into independent units, administered on a privately-run basis) pocket huge sums of money. The most important of these concerns are the National Oil Company, the petro-chemical corporations, steel industries, the tobacco industry and even certain smaller industries.

(3) Exploitation of commercial companies, public utilities and control of resources, such as grain, water, electricity and housing institutions, state banks, communications, etc. Here, too, the higher strata of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie find various legal and illegal ways of securing a private income.

(4) Lastly, exploitation by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie is effected through their control over agricultural lands and implementation of various reform programmes. In the past this part of the bourgeoisie was able to acquire millions of hectares of fertile land without payment. After the Land Reform, new avenues of exploitation were opened to them through the setting up of joint-stock agricultural companies, state and joint (foreign-domestic) mechanised farming units, and meat and dairy corporations. The nationalisation of grazing lands and water supplies tended to expand the Government's scope for extortion in various ways, whilst the schemes for the distribution of water proved a lucrative source of income for the bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

Thus it is clear that the administrative bourgeoisie in our society has a wide scope for growth and exploitation. The historical weakness of the national bourgeoisie, together with the corresponding increase in the economic role of the state, has widened the scope for the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The income acquired by this section through exploitation is spent in a variety of ways. Some goes to building huge luxury mansions,

villas, and private beaches; some is spent on foreign holidays and luxury consumer goods; a portion of it is invested in commerce, industry and agriculture; and the rest is piled up in foreign and local banks, thus going into indirect partnership with other sections of the bourgeoisie. However, as long as a bureaucrat, technocrat or Army general keeps his position, and his income is dependent on preserving that position, then he ought to be regarded as a bureaucratic bourgeois.

As well as investing in the various fields of commerce, industry, etc., the need for the private sector to be supported by the regime in an autocratic state forces such firms to offer shares to people in higher positions and especially to the Shah personally. It is this need that has turned the Shah into the biggest single capitalist in Iran. Should his position weaken or should he fall from power, [as of course, happened in 1979 — Ed.] the whole of his extraordinarily accumulated wealth in Iran and abroad will slip from his grasp. Thus, despite his personal wealth, the Shah too can be considered as a bureaucratic bourgeois (of course, the premier example of his class).

Depending on the position of different elements, the administrative bourgeoisie is also divided into small and big. Government employees who receive salaries for their work (no matter how minor and bureaucratic) belong to the petty-bourgeois class. They are divided, in turn, into three sections: poor, middle and prosperous civil servants.

For a complete analysis of the role and position of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, we propose to study their activities in three different connections. First, their relationship with other sections of the comprador bourgeoisie and their attempt to further stabilise the system of dependent capitalism; secondly, their connection with imperialist monopolies; and thirdly, their relations with socialist states.

Shifting Alignments Within the Ruling Class

The bureaucratic comprador bourgeoisie performs a conscious economic role within the system. Despite all attempts by the regime to adorn the nature of the system of dependent capitalism by means of such concocted phrases as 'the co-operative system', all economic phenomena controlled by the state point to the fact that the system of dependent capitalism, or 'the free market economy' as it is called by the capitalists, is expanding. An analysis of state investment in various fields clearly indicates that all of it is directed in the interests of the private sector.

For instance, the steel mill and copper-mining establishment were set up out of public funds because the industrial bourgeoisie lacked sufficient capital for these investments. The steel mill was established with the help of loans from the Soviet Union. As for the copper mines of Sar Cheshmeh, the international monopolies refused to invest and left it to the Government to invest 400 million dollars out of oil income in this venture. In both cases the end products are either offered to foreigners for export to their own

countries, or to the many joint-venture firms locally for the production of industrial items such as wire, pipes, and sheet metal. The Government openly announces that subsequent stages of production (up to the stage of consumer goods) will be undertaken by privately-owned steel and copper firms. The products from the steelmill such as girders, sheet metal, rods and many others can only be used in privately-owned dependent light and medium industries, all belonging to the bourgeoisie. Therefore, capital that could be employed in these fields is invested in consumer industries, the burden of which falls on the people.

Exactly the same process is at work in the various development programmes. The Dez Dam is built but not a single bulb can be switched on in peasant homes in the nearest provinces of Khuzestan and Lorestan. What is more, the peasants have to hand over their lands, as we noted earlier, to the joint-venture company of Hashem Naraghi; the peasants become homeless migrants and it is foreign and internal capital that benefits from the Dez project. Television and radio stations are built so that thousands of TV sets and hundreds of thousands of radios are sold. Motorways and tarmac roads are built to enable Iran National to sell 50,000 cars a year (the number is to reach 500,000 in ten years' time) — excluding those directly imported from Western Europe and Japan. There is no state investment programme which is not directly in the interest of the private sector. The end result of such capital investment is the concentration of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the raising of living standards for only a minority of wealthy consumers.

Each year the Government hives off one or other public service to private concerns as part of a policy of 'delegating people's work to the people' (for 'people', read 'bourgeoisie'). Twenty years ago education from school up to and including university was provided free of charge. Today, payment of one kind or another has to be made for state and, of course, private education. Indeed education from kindergarten to university has been turned into an important branch of commerce. The same pattern applies to hospitals and clinics. These, of course, provide new grounds for the growth of a small bourgeois class alongside the big comprador bourgeoisie. And with the opening of education and health to private enterprise, there will appear an ever clearer demarcation line between the consumer minority and the deprived majority.

The ultimate destiny of the comprador bourgeoisie — which began with a union between the financial and industrial bourgeoisies (the banks and manufacturing) in co-operation with foreign capital supported by the state — will eventually culminate in the establishment of an oligarchic dependent capitalism. Huge corporations will come into being that will be connected to the big banks and foreign capital. These will play a major role in state decision-making, thus crushing small capital under their monopolistic power. Today, there are firms in Iran whose capital exceeds thousands of millions of *toomans*.² Such wealth, which is acquired in collaboration with foreign capital, is invested in banks and it is not uncommon to hear one or other capitalist owner of such firms arrogantly admitting to having invested as

much as a thousand million *toomans* in some bank or other. The Iran National Company accumulated a hundred million *toomans* in less than a decade. Such unprecedented growth is only possible via the connection with foreign capital (through various forms of dependence) and through the ruthless exploitation of resources and the national wealth with the help of the state.

We can thus see the role of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in supporting the interests of other sections of the comprador bourgeoisie. There is a class unity between the bureaucratic and other sections of the bourgeoisie and it is their common interests, direct and indirect, that bring them together. This unity constitutes a front against the people and in relation to imperialism.

However, another aspect of the relationship between the bureaucratic and other sections of the bourgeoisie is its contradictory aspect. The contradiction that exists between the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the other four sections stems from the superior position of the former and its decisive role in formulating economic policies. In Iran, due to the traditional weakness of the bourgeoisie in the private sector, the state — and the ruling apparatus as a whole — plays a prominent role in economic affairs. This is specially the case in conditions where superficially democratic institutions capable of representing the power of the ruling class are suspended. When the Majlis, local authorities, chambers of commerce, industry, the media, etc. are all directly under the control of an autocratic system, then not only are the people in general unable to use them but even some sections of the bourgeoisie (including the small bourgeoisie) cannot exploit them to preserve their sectional interests. It is precisely in such circumstances that royal autocracy (of a bureaucratic bourgeois character) clashes with traditional aristocratic elements and the comprador bourgeoisie. Although, in an overall sense, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie upholds the interests of *all* other sections of the bourgeoisie as well as those of the imperialists, its primary task is to look after the ruling bureaucratic bourgeoisie and to defend the autocratic monarchy. It is this contradictory aspect which, in its political form, is a factor in suppressing the people in general, and, in its economic form, curtails the freedom of the non-bureaucratic bourgeois institutions and subjects them to the intentions, programmes and specific interests of the ruling clique.

If an extraordinary situation develops due to an economic crisis, then the state's domination over economic affairs will become more apparent. In such a situation economic problems will be dealt with in a dictatorial fashion instead of the previous method of bribes and persuasion. This situation can be described as a 'fixed-bayonet economy'; its primary task is to protect the position of the ruling clique, the Court, and the dictatorship, and it will view economic and other problems from this angle only. In 1908 Ala-Aldoleh, the Governor of Tehran, employed the *falakeh* (beating of feet) on businessmen in an attempt to lower the price of sugar. Today the dictatorial regime, despite its bourgeois characteristics, still does not allow the bourgeoisie the right to make political or economic decisions and, if need be,

uses SAVAK and the police to force them to implement its own laws — laws that may not necessarily be in the economic interests of the whole system. In order to deal with its own economic problems, the dictatorial regime can even sacrifice one section of the (non-administrative) bourgeoisie in the interest of another. For example, it suspends its support for home-made industrial products and, in the interests of its own political purposes, allows the commercial bourgeoisie to import similar goods under 'certain conditions', thus ignoring the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie.

In other words, the contradictions between the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and some other section of the bourgeoisie come out into the open and are resolved in the interests of the ruling clique. Obviously, such contradictions and this kind of approach are of a purely internal character. But the methods employed by the dictatorship against the petty bourgeoisie, the remnants of the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat are completely unbridled, irresponsible and anti-popular. For example, when this or that section of the small bourgeoisie or petty-bourgeois traders is to be sacrificed in the interests of compradorial growth, then their economic existence is summarily ended with a Government decree or circular: thousands of families are left to their own devices and the petty bourgeoisie is ruthlessly polarised not through economic machinations, but through the use of brute force.

External Economic Relations of the Comprador Bourgeoisie

Links with Imperialism

The exploitation of Iran's oil resources provides the most important economic link with imperialism and plays a pivotal role in foreign exploitation of Iran. This is despite the various foreign investments in the production of other raw materials and finished industrial goods. From the time when d'Arcy began oil exploration in the early 1900s up to the oil nationalisation struggle in the 1950s, the exploitation of this important economic and industrial resource has been carried out under a 'concession'. And despite the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1971, the 1954 Consortium Treaty was still signed under the general formula of a concession. The Treaty was arranged on a 50-50 basis, and as a result of all the wheeling and dealing by the Consortium, 65% of the official price of crude oil was supposed to accrue to Iran. Nevertheless, the truth behind such attractive figures was that, at the end of the day, for every barrel of crude oil exported, the Western companies and states were receiving seven times as much as that got by Iran. Ultimately, however, with the establishment of a fully fledged system of dependent capitalism and a neo-colonial relationship, the exploitation of oil also became subject to more modern formulae. On the face of it, Iran became an all-powerful seller of its own oil. However, the following conditions, some official and some expedient, still govern the transaction:

- (1) The level of production is set by the needs of the 'customers'.
- (2) The 'seller' undertakes to sell the commodity only to certain

'customers'; the 'seller' acquires the right, after a period of twenty years, to sell 20% of its commodity freely.

(3) Good relationships entitle 'satisfactory customers' to substantial discounts.

(4) The price of oil is determined by the price of crude in the free market. Thus the extortionate treaties of the past have been replaced by the new formulae of production control and sales control.

Like other oil-exporting countries, Iran is allowed to haggle with the oil companies for a better price for oil. [Jazani, of course, was writing before OPEC took control of the oil price in 1973. Ed.] This done, the price of imported industrial goods will immediately shoot up, more than offsetting the increase in the price of oil. Success achieved in this way is so utterly unconvincing that even Government circles are forced to admit the futility of such exercises. What is new, of course, is that, in the modern formulae, what accrues to Iran from the production and export of oil is equal to, or sometimes less than, the profit appropriated by Western customers. This is an undeniable fact which forms the basis of neo-colonial exploitation in the Iranian oil industry.

However, quite apart from the methods through which oil incomes are distributed between the producer and the customers, it is interesting to note that, in the past decade, the volume of production has trebled or quadrupled, and the economic role of oil has considerably increased in Iran despite the growth of industries and foreign and internal investment in other sectors. Crude oil forms 90% of total Iranian exports. Iran is still regarded as a single-commodity country. Oil income provides the main link in Iran's economic dependence upon imperialist monopolies. With a reduction in, or end to, oil income, proportionate changes will occur at all levels: the consumer market will collapse and dependent industries come to a halt. Even the administrative and military complexes are subject to this form of state income. Thus oil has always been, and will continue to be, a simultaneous economic, social and political problem.

Besides oil, foreign capital in conjunction with state money has been invested in other fields. The most important of these is the petro-chemical industry. Petro-chemical plants have been set up by joint ventures and many treaties signed with mostly North American companies for the export of natural gas. During the coming decade, state co-operation with world monopolies will become increasingly close in such fields. After the gas and petro-chemical industries come mining and the export of various minerals. This is a growing trend. We have already touched on the copper-mining industries in Sar-Cheshmeh. According to official estimates, copper will form a big item on the list of exports in the coming decade. Steel mills are also being set up in the south.

Foreign capital prefers the Government to invest some of the oil income in these sectors since these are long-term projects which provide no immediate return for foreigners. The latter are content to undertake the technical supervision of these projects and possibly invest in the later stages

of production which require less capital (e.g. the production of various goods from steel and copper ingots). The foreign capitalists see their main interests in controlling exports and keeping the market under their control. Let Iran use oil revenues to import machinery and factories from the West. Let her also mine copper, etc., using low-paid workers up to the stage where they become useful for the giant Western industries, and can be offered on a plate to international monopolies. Such is the basis of the neo-colonial relationship in mining and refining minerals in Iran.

It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that Iran is planning to set up an oil refinery in this or that part of the world which is within the domain of the world monopolies (e.g. South Africa, South Korea). A country whose own oil refineries are built by importing complex parts from metropolitan countries and supervised by foreign technicians, a country which is unable to produce simple things like nails and nuts and bolts, sets about establishing refineries in India, Africa and even in Europe, or jointly undertakes with Britain to explore for oil in the North Sea.

Has the Iranian comprador bourgeoisie become a long-distance runner overnight without first being able to walk? The truth is that, in order to plunder the country even further, the heavy burden of capital investment has been assigned to Iran. When the oil-grabbers increase the production of oil in Iran in relation to other oil-producing countries, they are not only aware of the Shah's declaration that 'We shall spend the last cent of oil income on imports from your countries', but they also have in mind the promises and treaties implicit in the performance of this precocious long-distance runner. Under old-style colonialism the foreign company itself would undertake to shoulder the whole cost from exploration, production, transportation up to export and the building of a refinery; and it was the same company that would pay out of its income for housing and health programmes for its employees as well as development projects within its domain. However, under modern neo-colonial formulae, the cost of a floating platform at Khark Island in the Gulf (\$800,000,000), of new refineries and pipe-laying in Iran (and in other colonial markets and even metropolitan countries) is borne by the colony. Perhaps, it is believed this will provide an adequate answer for the inferiority complex suffered by the comprador bourgeoisie! Or it is just a source of amazement for those perplexed observers who are scanning the situation, trying hard to understand the new formulae. No such luxury is available for the deprived masses of Iran who feel the truth with their bare feet and empty stomachs; they refuse to fall for such conjuring tricks.

It is therefore clear how the Iranian bureaucratic bourgeoisie fulfils its duties towards world monopolies. Of course, this unity of interests does not mean that there is a permanent absence of contradictions between the comprador bourgeoisie, particularly the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the world monopolies together with the dominant imperialist powers.

It is only through a scientific and dialectic analysis that one can study the unity as well as the contradictions of the ruling clique with its foreign partners. Such an analysis must realise that the ruling clique represents a

ruling class and is not just a retainer or mere agent of the imperialists. On behalf of the whole of the comprador bourgeoisie, the bureaucratic section demands more and more payment from international monopolies. The extra payment enables it to accumulate more capital and profit as well as provide sufficient funds for the running of complex administrative and military institutions. By means of an increase in oil production and export, instead of a real increase in the colony's share of oil revenue, the imperialists satisfy this cash need of the regime, and the latter gladly accepts it.

Nevertheless, differences do arise over such transactions. Inflation in metropolitan countries pushes dependent capitalism into economic crisis. This angers the local ruling clique, since such crises can disrupt its political stability.

On the other hand, some imperialist forces are dissatisfied with their share in Iran since not all of them enjoy equal shares or have equal domination at any one time. British domination is now overshadowed by North American domination. To receive a bigger share, some of these imperialists may criticise the ruling clique and, in certain conditions, even exploit the contradiction between the people and the regime against their own rivals. Some imperialist circles may even voice their disapproval of the regime's persistence with dictatorial high-handedness. They may think that the ruling clique in pursuit of its own sectional interests is endangering the system of dependent capitalism and therefore the interests of the imperialists.

In such conditions the emergence of some contradictions between the regime and the imperialists is not unexpected. When we hear of a *coup d'état* in a dominated country, this indicates that there has developed a contradiction between the ruling clique of that country and one or more imperialist powers which can only be resolved by a change of government. In Iran, the dissatisfaction felt by less powerful wings of imperialism also comes to the surface from time to time. There may even appear a difference of style between these imperialists and the U.S. imperialists. The fact that Iran is a country dominated by several countries encourages the emergence of this contradiction. But at the same time, it is precisely this fact that gives the ruling clique scope for manoeuvre. In a particular case where the regime's interests are at variance with the domination of the North Americans, the regime will impose its policy on the latter by approaching other imperialists. And whenever, say, the British bring pressure to bear on the regime for a bigger share for British capital, the North Americans will defend themselves by siding with the regime against the British.

However, these manoeuvres take place within the overall framework of ongoing dependency. The contradictions between the regime and the imperialists, especially Yankee imperialism, can only appear within the context of a strong unity of interest between both sides and with the U.S. dominating the other imperialists. The powerful ties that connect the ruling system in Iran with the imperialist powers and world monopolies will not be shaken by these contradictions. Nevertheless, it is essential as well as necessary for the revolutionary movement to be aware of these contradict-

ions and reckon with them. The contradictions cannot form the strategic basis of the revolutionary liberation movement, although they can, at a certain stage, help its growth and advance.

Relations With the Socialist States

The regime has managed vastly to expand its relations with the Soviet Union in the last decade. Its relations with other socialist countries have also greatly improved. Since such relations reveal certain characteristics of the comprador bourgeoisie, we shall attempt to analyse them briefly – from the stand-points of the regime, the socialist countries, and the Iranian liberation movement.

The principal aims of such relationships from the point of view of the Iranian regime are economic and political. The economic aim consists of making use of loans and technology provided by the socialist states. These are used in setting up heavy industry, development programmes, and helping projects such as state industries (the steel mill and car factories) that are subsequently used to further the growth of the comprador bourgeoisie in the private sector. As explained in the preceding pages, projects like the steel mill will not weaken the private sector or reduce the degree of Iranian economic dependence upon world monopolies. The second economic aim is the export of goods and commodities to socialist countries in exchange for heavy machinery on a barter basis. Oil and gas have also been added recently to such exported items. This system of barter helps Iran's balance of payments. The dependent consumer goods, which face stiff competition in the markets belonging to the world monopolies, are easily accepted by socialist states. On the whole, these commercial and industrial relations bolster Iran's economic stability.

The political aims of the regime are:

(1) Relations with the socialist states enable the regime to use the political prestige of China, the Soviet Union and other socialist states to deceive progressive forces at home. At the same time the regime relieves itself of possible political and propaganda pressures which might otherwise be brought. This influences internal conditions.

(2) The expansion of friendship with the socialist states helps the regime withstand moral pressure in the region and from international public opinion. There is absolutely no other regime in the world that has murdered hundreds of freedom fighters in the space of a few years, without even the semblance of a trial. Yet all the socialist states have maintained a complete silence on this issue. Had Iran persisted in her previous policies towards the Soviet Union, it would have faced great pressures from that country, which would have weakened Iran in its regional rivalries. Today, the Soviet Union is in favour of Iran reducing her antagonistic stance towards her neighbours. Without these policies such antagonisms would escalate dangerously.

(3) The regime tries to exploit the rivalries and contradictions between China and the Soviet Union to its own advantage. It has even encouraged these contradictions among the ranks of the opposition forces, at home and

abroad. A clear example in this connection is China's support for Iran's policy in the region (notably its military expeditions to Dhofar), relations with Pakistan and questions relating to the Indian Ocean.

Turning to the aims of the socialist states in their relations with Iran, these are:

(1) They manage to capture a considerable portion of the Iranian market from the international monopolies.

(2) They help the socialist countries' economic growth by expanding economic relations with Iran.

(3) They may also believe that, with the expansion of such relations, they are encouraging the economic independence of Iran and, by the expansion of the public sector (e.g. the steel industry), they are helping to create 'socialist' as against 'capitalist' tendencies in the system.

(4) They may further believe that, as a result of this economic expansion, Iran will feel obliged to alter its policies in favour of socialist states and possibly alter its internal policies to some extent.

We believe that, if the socialist states are swayed by such considerations, then they have no objective understanding of the prevailing system in Iran and have also failed to pay due attention to global transformations as they affect countries like Iran. The system of capitalism in Iran has made her unity with imperialist circles and dependence on world monopolies unavoidable. Her relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist states can only take shape in the light of this fundamental reality. Whereas unity with the West is the principal object and goes to the root of the matter, co-operation with socialist states is secondary. The fields in which Iran is becoming dependent on the West are increasing daily, and for every step that the Soviet Union and other socialist states take, several are taken by Western economic interests. The Iranian Government and the state-owned industries and commerce are all part of the country's comprador bourgeoisie. Just as the contradictions between the regime and this or that imperialist state are unable to damage Iran's basic relationship with, and dependence on, Western capitalism, so co-operation with the socialist states is unable to transform the system of dependent capitalism in Iran.

As against the above two views, we analyse the situation as follows:

(1) The socialist states are using their relations with Iran to expand their own economies.

(2) Iran uses these same relationships to stabilise its economic and political position.

(3) Neither the Soviet Union nor any other socialist state can hope to alter Iran's dependence on the West, nor ever appreciably influence Iran's internal policies or its policy in the region. Neither can Iran control Russia and other socialist states through her economic relations with them. Both sides openly admit to a lack of fundamental unity between them; hence their relations can be disturbed by a crisis which may even end up in a political clash. Therefore, Iran is careful not to proceed any further in a direction that might make it dependent on the East. At the same time, the

ending of this relationship might damage Iran economically. Such an eventuality is, however, easily rectifiable considering Iran's all-embracing relationship with the West. And the ending of economic relations evidently cannot severely damage Russia and other socialist states economically. So we are left with the political effects of this relation between Iran and the East.

The revolutionary movement in Iran does undoubtedly suffer as a result of the socialist countries' friendly relations with Iran, both because of their approval of the regime and their economic relations with it. In the present stage of our struggle, we expect the following from the Soviet Union, China and other socialist states:

(1) We are in no way in favour of a propaganda war between Iran and the socialist states since we would not be the beneficiaries of such a war; neither do we expect these states to break diplomatic relations with Iran.

(2) However, we demand that the socialist states refuse, at any price, to approve the regime's programmes and its internal as well as regional policies; and that they further refuse to adopt a friendly stand towards the basest dictatorship in the region. The continuation of their economic relationships with Iran is in no way dependent upon such a stand.

(3) We expect the socialist pressure groups in the socialist states, as we expect similar groups in the West, to protest against crimes committed by the regime and to make public opinion aware of what happens inside Iran.

No doubt in the subsequent stages of the struggle, and with the growth of the revolutionary movement, the approach adopted by the socialist states towards the movement and the regime will have to be altered in favour of our people. In other words, during the final stages, these states must discharge their fraternal duties towards the Iranian masses and against the imperialist powers and imperialism in general. But at no stage of our struggle do we ask any state to fight *on our behalf* for our liberation. Finally, despite all that has been said, if interests and strategic considerations compel some socialist states to overlook our contradictions with the imperialists and take up a stand on the side of the regime and the imperialist powers in the region, then naturally they will come into direct conflict with the interests of our revolution.

Although this book is intended to be brief, the importance attached to the study of the main features of the system of dependent capitalism, i.e. the all-embracing growth and rule of the comprador bourgeoisie, has obliged us not to pass by it too lightly. For this feature of the system is its most fundamental and other characteristics grow from it. In the next sections, dealing with the remaining characteristics of the system, we shall try to be as brief as practicable.

Compradors: The Conveyor Belt of Dependence

In the preceding discussion we analysed the relationship that exists between the comprador bourgeoisie and the imperialist monopolies. Here we shall merely outline the main points concerning this phenomenon. Foreign exploitation in Iran began with the start of colonialism in the country. This

exploitation then continued parallel with society's development on a course which ultimately produced a system of dependent capitalism. Nevertheless what has taken place in this field during the last decade is regarded as a leap forward. The exploitation of Iran's resources and labour power has increased many times in a matter of a few years and is continuing to grow very rapidly. This process hands over billions of dollars to the imperialist monopolies on the one hand and makes the country increasingly dependent on metropolitan countries on the other.

This dependence is consolidated in two main ways: first, through foreign investment in industry, mining, agriculture and commerce — in short any new imperialist investment is a step contributing towards our intensified dependence; secondly, through the production and export of a single commodity which, in the case of Iran, is crude oil. The more the export of this commodity increases, and the more the export of other minerals brings in foreign currency, and the more such revenues dominate the national income and state budget, the more will be Iran's economic dependence on the world monopolies and imperialist circles. It ought to be pointed out that the increase in the price of export commodities does not cure any of our country's ills, i.e. it does not reduce the degree of exploitation, since the increase in the price of exports is more than offset by the increase in the price of imported materials from metropolitan countries. This is a phenomenon which we have witnessed time and again in the past two years. At the end of 1970 the regime declared, with great pomp and ceremony, that it had managed to increase its foreign currency reserves by 300 million dollars through increasing the price of exports. Yet during the first three months of 1971 alone, the state faced a 20 to 25% increase in the price of imported commodities. The position was thus back to square one. On the other hand, any schoolchild knows that Iran will never be able to get its just dues through the official increase in the price of its exports. It is only by ending economic dependence and scrapping the system of dependent capitalism that an end can be put to the increasingly savage foreign exploitation of the country.

This economic dependence forms the basis of political and military dependence. The manifestation of the regime's political dependence can be seen in its regional and global policies and its subservience to the imperialists in its internal policies. Military dependence has transformed the regime into a regional gendarme, encouraging it to engage in actions directed against the peoples of the region and to follow a consistent policy of suppression against our people. Membership of CENTO, regional treaties, and the bilateral treaty with the North Americans are all official indications of Iran's military dependence upon imperialist powers. The Yankee 'advisers' play a fundamental role in the Army and all other armed forces as well as in the political police, SAVAK. The most up-to-date experiences of the imperialists in suppressing the people are put at the disposal of the regime so that it can 'always stay one step ahead of events', as the regime is fond of repeating. These are all undeniable indications of Iran's dependence on imperialism.

Nevertheless, we must accept that economic as well as political and

military dependence is secured through links with internal forces: the comprador bourgeoisie is the basic channel through which our economic dependence is achieved, and the ruling cliques enforce the anti-popular policies of the imperialists inside and outside the country.

This, in effect, means that our struggle against imperialism has to be conducted through a struggle against the regime and the system of dependent capitalism. The neo-colonialist relationship has more than ever before managed to conceal foreign exploitation and imperialist domination under the cloak of the internal ruling classes and governing apparatus. Today we are neither facing an imperialist military aggression such as the one China faced in her war against Japan or which Vietnam faces at the present time; nor do we have to fight against the open rule of colonialist companies like the old Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP).

For these reasons the masses do not feel any direct imperialist tyranny against themselves as far as internal processes are concerned. Nor do they see it in terms of imperialist aggression, in the world and in the region. Indeed, they quite rightly put the whole blame squarely on the regime and internal reaction. While it is our duty to increase the consciousness of the masses regarding neo-colonialism and the indirect imperialist tyranny, we must never forget that tyranny and exploitation are being imposed on us through internal elements, and we must not blindly imitate the strategy of movements that are genuinely fighting against direct imperialist aggression or Zionism, which is a manifestation of imperialism within a specified area. (We shall return to this subject in the section dealing with the contradictions of the prevailing system in Iran.) This characteristic of the system of dependent capitalism, therefore, manifests itself in the form of an increase in foreign exploitation and the increasingly indirect nature of such exploitation.

The Peasantry in Transition

With the end of the landlord-serf relationship and large ownership of land — the twin features of feudalism in Iran — the system of feudal production came to an end. Some believe that the end of such a relationship has *ipso facto* brought capitalist relationships in agricultural production into existence. However, not only in Iran but even in societies where the bourgeoisie underwent a classical growth, agricultural production faced a relatively long period of transition after the dissolution of feudalism in the rural areas. In these countries the establishment of capitalist production in agriculture, after the bourgeois revolution, took a few decades. In some cases this process even took a few generations to materialise. During this time the system of smallholdings, combining family production with some exploitation of outside labour, grew until it disintegrated under the impact of capitalism. For the U.S.A. this process has been clearly illustrated in John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Thus while the system of capitalist production fails

to establish itself immediately in most of the rural areas, bourgeois exploitation that had begun to penetrate the countryside a few decades previously did find suitable grounds for development at this stage. We therefore have two subjects to look into: first, the system of production in the rural areas during this transitional stage; and secondly, the nature of exploitation by the bourgeoisie at this stage.

Rural Production

As has been explained before, capitalist relations of production had been established in limited parts of the countryside even before the start of the Land Reform. These relations were somewhat expanded after the Land Reform. The joint-stock agricultural companies are fundamentally dependent on the capitalist system of production. It is the number of shares owned by a person that determines his possession, and not his work. There are some shareholders who receive handsome dividends without working and others whose main income is from their daily earnings as farm labourers. There are also privately-owned as well as state-owned farming units and industries, agricultural organisations, private livestock farms and other forms of capitalist relationships in the rural areas. But despite all this, the fact remains that this kind of production covers but a small percentage of the rural population. Prior to the Land Reform, nearly 30% of all cultivated land was in the hands of petty landlords (smallholders). The Reform added another two million smallholder families. There are therefore two main strata in the non-capitalist agricultural class: the smallholders (old and new) and the poor landless peasants (*kosh-nashins*).⁴ Smallholders are regarded as the largest section of Iran's rural population. And as the urban petty bourgeoisie is divided into rich, middle and poor sections, so are the smallholders who are called the rural petty bourgeoisie.

Production by the three strata of the smallholder class takes various forms. In the case of the prosperous farmers with relatively large amounts of land, the special feature is that they do not themselves work their farms but manage them on the basis of renting out the land in small parcels. In other cases, these small landlords run their farms by hiring other poor farmers. This is the most prosperous section of farmers, the great majority of whom were petty landlords before the Land Reform. Next are those smallholders who, together with the rest of their families, work their own lands; but the size of their holdings is large enough for them to employ the labour of some other poor families. Here, therefore, the system of family production is combined with limited exploitation of others. A large section of the new smallholders, however, farm their lands solely by their own labour and that of their families. The third and last section are those whose land is not sufficient to support them, or who are unable to use their land. They are therefore either forced to leave their land and put it at the disposal of others, or they have to supplement their living by working as wage labourers or seasonal workers. The great majority of smallholders come from the two last sections and form the largest section of Iranian farmers.

Whereas urban traders and small businessmen (the equivalent of rural petty landlords) came under strong pressure from the very start of the growth of dependent capitalism, it will need a long period of time before capitalism fully penetrates the system of rural family production and small-scale farming. The transitional period will not be a short one. At the present time, the system of capitalist relationships is being established in suitable plateaux below dams and in newly established agricultural lands. But some of the rural areas will not be ready for the establishment of the capitalist mode of production even in the final stages of dependent capitalism, let alone at the present time. We should, therefore, accept the fact that the great majority of the rural population consists of smallholders and poor landless peasants (*khosh-nashins*). With the demise of feudalism, these vast sections have lost their class unity and have been transformed into a semi-class. Although the smallholders have a better standard of living than the *khosh-nashins*, they are nevertheless in many respects in conflict with the system of dependent capitalism, with the exploitation of the comprador bourgeoisie and also with the small bourgeoisie. In fact, the portions of land received by this section are used as a means of exploitation by the bourgeoisie. The Land Reform has heightened their expectations and increased their demands, but it has failed to raise their standard of living proportionately. They are now faced with an indirect and invisible exploitation and, while they do recognise that they no longer have the old landlords and farm managers breathing down their necks, they feel that they are being robbed on all sides through invisible channels. They have lost a straightforward uncomplicated contradiction (feudalists versus peasants) and are up against a highly complex contradiction (bourgeoisie versus farmers). Their lack of consciousness, the circumstances of the transitional period, their dashed hopes and an uncertain future are all contributing to drive the bulk of smallholders into confusion and a state of helplessness.

Rural Exploitation

With the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the peasants had to endure exploitation by the feudalists and the bourgeoisie, as well as indirect exploitation by imperialism. With the dissolution of feudalism, the way became open for the growth of bourgeois exploitation. Moreover, the burden of indirect foreign exploitation via the comprador bourgeoisie also fell on the peasants. This exploitation is generally effected at the stages of production and exchange.

At the production stage, the smallholder farmers (of all sections, whether prosperous or poor) are exploited by the administrative bourgeoisie in the form of state taxes on land, water and pastures. Any kind of payment to the Government constitutes exploitation in their eyes. Also at this stage the usurers, private banks, forward buyers (the latter being the most blood-thirsty exploiters of the smallholders) appropriate a large portion of the latter's income in return for the capital they provide for cultivation. All administrative expenses and accompanying wastage and embezzlement by

the agricultural joint-stock companies during the stage of production are also regarded as exploitation.

In addition, the smallholders are exploited by these companies at the exchange stage, be it during the provision of the farmers' agricultural requisites or during the sale of crops. Moreover, farmers often have to sell their crops at an unfair price through a middleman or to a merchant. Lack of proper transport facilities prevents the farmers getting products to the market in time. Transport, sale and storage are all lines of business in the hands of those with capital. Only large agricultural organisations or companies enjoy privileges in transport, modern storage and sale without intermediaries. These problems rob the smallholder to such an extent that it becomes uneconomical for him to produce for sale. Similar problems when purchasing industrial goods and consumer requirements also expose them to the exploitation of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisies since goods are made available to farmers at extortionate prices. The ultimate result of this system of exchange is that the labour of a smallholder's family is bought at a giveaway price by the bourgeoisie.

This system of indirect exploitation makes out that the farmer himself is the only cause of his own poverty: after all, he has water at his disposal, he is free to sell his product to whomsoever he wishes to, he has freedom of action in matters such as buying, selling, renting his property, acquiring loans, etc. Therefore he has no one to blame for his poor condition but himself, or bad luck, or the unsuitable natural conditions. The result is that the smallholders carry a very heavy economic burden. Consequently, those with less ability to cope shun responsibility and end up in prison, or run away, leaving their land behind. It is only a small proportion of the most prosperous section of smallholders that will be able to preserve their shaky position till the end of the current changes. The smallholders are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their lot. Their children have grown up since the Land Reform and therefore have other needs and expectations from those of their parents. The present system will not be able to satisfy these expectations, and discontent and anger will become a norm in the villages. However, in order that this should be transformed into tangible protest, there is a need for consciousness and unity of action, both of which are to a great extent lacking amongst this class.

The *khosh-nashins* sell their labour for want of land. They work for prosperous smallholders in building and development works, or are exploited by members of the small and large agricultural bourgeoisies. Like the urban workers, who are relatively more deprived than the urban petty bourgeoisie, these peasants suffer more than the smallholder. But being deprived of land and doing casual seasonal work has given a more fearful dimension to their lack of consciousness; whereas they are potentially *more* revolutionary than the smallholders, they are also more gripped by inactivity and torpor because of the non-existence of a mass revolutionary movement.

We can therefore say that the main contradiction between farmers and feudalists has vanished from the rural areas. If here and there a feudal

relationship can still be detected, this cannot be regarded as proof of the continuation of the system of feudalism. This contradiction has been replaced by the contradiction between the bourgeoisie (especially the comprador bourgeoisie) and the farmers. And this is also the channel through which the farmers are faced by imperialism. Now, the question is how far has this new contradiction grown, and is this growth sufficient to give farmers the necessary political jolt? In the preceding pages we have several times mentioned the problems facing a peasant movement in Iran and its past shortcomings. Neither at the height of its power nor during its decline did feudalism cause the rural contradictions to become antagonistic. The fact that the contradiction between feudalists and farmers was of a fundamental nature was not in itself sufficient to transform it into the principal contradiction in society. It is only the total and cumulative effect of social and economic factors that can transform a contradiction into such a state of acuteness that it will generate a vast movement.

Today, after the Reform, the rural areas have been shaken out of their slumber and the peasant who had for centuries accepted the landlord's yoke with equanimity has learned that such slavery is unjust. Although he has not played an active role in gaining his own freedom, the result of the Reform has nevertheless had a positive effect on his consciousness, his demands, his attitudes and his tendencies. The growth of capitalism is imposing increasingly heavy pressures on the farmers. Exploitation by the bourgeoisie, and very soon the devastating competition by the commercial bourgeoisie, will provide the necessary pressure for the polarisation of the smallholder class, pushing the great majority of them towards loss of their lands and serious deprivation.

Will this pressure force the farmers into submission and surrender? Or will they and their offspring, who have seen the more comfortable side of urban existence and are therefore more sophisticated than the older generation, turn to the revolutionary movement? Obviously, without the necessary consciousness and vanguard movements, it would be futile to expect the farmers — dispersed as they are — to move towards collective action and effective protest. No doubt we will have to wait for dispersed and localised protests to come to the surface. Such protests will indicate the readiness of the rural situation for a revolutionary movement. At the present time, however, there are only two ways in which the farmers, and particularly the smallholders, can be mobilised and their consciousness raised. First, it is necessary to establish armed struggle in the rural areas which in the initial stages will have to lean heavily on progressive forces in the urban areas. Such a struggle will help accentuate rural problems and raise the consciousness of the rural masses in a practical way. With the continuation of armed struggle the younger generations of farmers can be expected to join the struggle. Secondly, political and economic movements by the urban masses will influence the farmers. However, it must be pointed out that it is the political and economic movements by the workers and urban proletariat that will push the farmers towards struggle, and *not* the struggle and protests waged by

the progressive forces and urban petty bourgeoisie. Therefore, our answer to the problem is clear. Even before the pressure brought to bear on the farmers by the system of dependent capitalism is increased and during this transitional period in which capitalist relations of production are not as yet established in traditional villages, one can emphasise the prevailing contradictions between the farmers and the comprador bourgeoisies (i.e. in the private and public sectors) and use the two above-mentioned methods, each of which tallies with one or other aspects of the revolutionary struggle (i.e. military or political) to increase the consciousness of the farmers and then mobilise them.

The Minority Consumer Society

In any system of production and any socio-economic formation based on class, a small section of the population assigns to itself a major portion of the total product. In the feudal-comprador system which ruled Iran until about 1960, the feudalists and big bourgeoisie, who formed a tiny proportion of the total population (about 2%) were the main consumers. In between this section and the direct producers of wealth, namely the peasants and workers, there existed the important urban petty bourgeoisie and prosperous rural petty landlords. Naturally, these intermediary sections enjoyed a more comfortable life and used up a more than proportionate part of the national income. Nevertheless, we do not regard these latter sections as part of the minority consumer sector.

The distinguishing features of a minority consumer society are:

(1) Such a society consists of small and big bourgeoisies (comprador or the remnants of the national bourgeoisie) and the prosperous sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie. This consumer society is twice the size of the previous ruling classes (the feudalists and the bourgeoisie) since it includes a part of the intermediate sections (the petty bourgeoisie, etc.). Thus this consumer society comprises a small minority (some 3%) of the total population.

(2) The share of consumption by this minority is far higher than that of other sections, and the form of consumption reflects the natural progression of the system of dependent capitalism. This minority consumes some 30% of the total national income either directly (family income) or indirectly — i.e. money spent on 'public' utilities used mainly by the consumer society, such as tourist establishments; communications; health, education and entertainment (specifically, things like airports, motorways, beaches, ski resorts, hotels, casinos, *de luxe* hospitals, and higher education). This, of course, does not include the concentrated exploitation through capital investment, either in its private sector (such as private house building) or in its public sector (such as commercial building construction). Obviously, the total volume of exploitation is a different matter altogether. Here we are merely discussing the level of consumption and the form it takes.

(3) The minority consumer stratum has a culture peculiar to itself, emanating from its material conditions of life (i.e. its consumption pattern), and its intellectual circumstances. The formation of this section of the population as a class is completed by its cultural unity. Its culture is a combination of the dominant metropolitan culture and local feudal-bourgeois remnants. It, therefore, suffers from a fundamental problem as a result of this lack of homogeneity between two fundamentally different cultures. This culture can be called a bourgeois-comprador culture. Thus this class, unlike the metropolitan elements present in the old colonies, is not separated from the rest of society by clearly defined cultural boundaries and is not easily distinguishable. Moreover, language and racial affinity in our society are apt to make this distinction even more difficult.

The economic role of the minority consumer class is to complete the vicious circle of dependent industrial production and import of complex foreign goods in the face of ever-increasing exports of industrial raw materials. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that Government statistics are correct and further, that the national income is equally divided among the people of Iran. After allowing for necessary public expenditure (about 30%), each family of five receives a monthly income of about 800 *toomans* (£21.50) to cover rent, clothing, food, education, health and entertainment. Can such an income provide a satisfactory market for foreign goods such as refrigerators, air conditioners, television sets, etc., as well as pay for higher school fees and hospital charges? In truth, this income is hardly sufficient for a family's bare necessities. Therefore, what is needed is a transformation of the system of production in favour of the masses. This will herald the destruction of the system of dependent capitalism and the liquidation of foreign exploitation. For the prerequisite for the continuation of the present system is the uneven distribution of income and the creation of largescale buying power for a minority. This minority must not be so small that it is unable to provide an adequate market for the consumer goods produced, and not so big that its *per capita* buying power is reduced. For instance, in the last year alone, 150 million dollars was spent on foreign travel. The minority consumer class is an inseparable part of the system of dependent capitalism — such is the role of this class.

This class also performs a social and a political role. Neo-colonialist culture has penetrated it and effectively cut it off from the rest of society. This class will gradually distinguish its problems from those of the rest of society, will fail to recognise the masses of its own country, and is only motivated by the rules passed down by the metropolitan societies. In the long run, a considerable portion of this class will be able to act as a political base for the regime. To preserve its interests it will take a stand against the masses and at the same time have a superficial and conservative approach to society's problems. These are the hidden features of the minority consumer class.

However, what has been said about the characteristics of this class is merely one side of the coin. The other is that, influenced by metropolitan culture and prompted by its own intellectual considerations, this class will

begin to show its increasing dissatisfaction with the dictatorial methods of the regime. The intellectual section of this class begins to fight against the regime, particularly under conditions of dictatorship. In other words, while the comfortable petty bourgeoisie is regarded as an impediment and nuisance in a people's revolution, they do nevertheless represent a constantly dissatisfied bloc in the present period of suppression and dictatorship. This is a fact which we must take into consideration in the fight against the imperialist-orientated dictatorship.

Opposed to this minority consumer class there is a deprived majority and an intermediary section. If we base this division on the amount of benefit individuals get from the total national product, then we can say that the big capitalists, higher echelons of the military establishment, small capitalists, higher civil servants and specialists (in the private and public sectors), the administrative section of the clergy, the well-paid, self-employed professions (doctors, lawyers, commercial middlemen, artists, writers) or, put in scientific terms, the big and small bourgeoisies and the more prosperous section of the petty bourgeoisie belong to the minority consumer class. This class forms 3% of the total population. The middle petty bourgeoisie consists of craftsmen, small shopkeepers, Government employees and employees of private institutions, a section of the clergy, and the prosperous smallholders (petty landlords) — in other words, the middle urban petty bourgeoisie and relatively prosperous section of smallholders. Together, they form 20% of the population, and, as in the past, are sandwiched between the very prosperous and very poor sections. The poor sections consist of workers, farmers (middle smallholders down to *khosh-nashins*), the lower and poor sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie (such as small traders and hawkers), the lower employees in the public and private sectors (such as dustmen and doormen), who altogether form 75% of the population.

Although Government statistics are notoriously unreliable, they do provide some basic facts to go by. Thirty per cent of the total national income is spent on the military and Government and private investment. The rest is divided among the three above-mentioned sections in the following manner: the minority consumer class, with 3% of the population, receives 25% or three billion dollars of the national income; the middle section, with 20% of the population, also receives 25% of the national income; and the deprived section, with 75% of the population, receives only 22% of the total national income. The *per capita* income for the three sections is \$3,000, \$500 and \$120 respectively. The lowest income in the case of the *khosh-nashins* and some tribal people is \$60 per person. This totally unjust distribution of the national income has set the people against the comprador bourgeoisie and its imperialist allies. With the increase in the production and export of oil in the coming years, the national income will naturally increase (leaving aside inflation), and the disequilibrium in *per capita* income distribution will also continue to rise. According to Government forecasts, Iran's foreign exchange earnings in the next ten years will reach ten billion dollars. During this time the population will have reached forty million and the

percentage of people in the three sections will be as follows: the minority consumer class with 2 million people will form 5%; the middle section with 8 million will form 20%; and the deprived section with 30 million will form 75% of the total population.

The poor and middle sections form, at the present time, the overwhelming bulk of the people, while even amongst the minority consumer class the people do have some allies⁶ against the system of dependent capitalism. The most revolutionary forces, i.e. the forces favouring a democratic revolution, are to be found in the 23 million strong section of the population. However, at the present stage, when the struggle against the dictatorial regime is the main concern of the liberation movement, the middle section shows a greater preparedness for struggle. It is our foremost task to move from this stage to the stage of a people's democratic revolution. The central requirement of correct strategy at this phase of the struggle is that it should enable the forces available today to reach the much larger potential forces of the revolution.

The Dictatorship of the Monarchy

Although this characteristic of Iran's system has been left to the last, it is by no means the least important. The regime's dictatorship has been the dominant feature of Iranian society for five decades, except for some short semi-democratic intervals. It represents the innate political character of both the previous feudal-comprador system and the present system of dependent capitalism. The semi-democratic intervals — the most important of which were immediately after the Second World War and later during the oil nationalisation movement — did not represent, in historical terms, a natural development of the political superstructure of the system, but were really exceptions and superimpositions.

The necessity for dictatorship is explained by the fact that foreign exploitation and imperialist tyranny, together with the tyranny imposed by the local ruling classes, pushes the people to rise up and win their own liberation. The moment the people find the opportunity to move, the movement will be transformed into a devastating surge and will rapidly expand, either politically or militarily, towards its principal aim of liberation from foreign domination. Awareness of this fact impels internal reaction and foreign imperialists to suppress the people with counter-revolutionary force. They establish their rule with the bayonet while stage-managing a pseudo-democracy in conditions of terror. This means that any democratic institutions such as elections, parliament, local councils and trade unions are merely facades and serve as tools in the hands of the dictatorship. This democratic facade, which in certain circumstances even compels certain forces of the regime to respect the rights of the people, is liable to be thrust aside by internal reaction at the slightest provocation, revealing the principal feature of the dependent system, i.e. the dictatorship.

However, the regime's dictatorship has not always manifested itself in a

single form. In some periods it took the form of internal reaction dependent on imperialism (aristocracy), and in some other periods it adopted the shape of a monarchic dictatorship (or autocracy). The main feature of the aristocratic dictatorship was that the representatives of the various internal and external reactionary classes, in the shape of powerful military and political personalities, together with the Court and often with the support of the higher strata of the clergy, engaged in suppressing the people. In this case, not all the power was vested in the Shah and the Court. The first years of Reza Khan's rule and the periods of dictatorship in 1947–50 and 1953–63 were of this type. In contrast, the second decade of Reza Khan's rule, and the present Shah's reign from 1963 up till now, come under the category of monarchic dictatorship. Some people may fail to attach the necessary importance to this distinction and consequently fail to appreciate its bearing on the choice of a revolutionary line. However, we believe that this is a vitally important question that should be taken heed of. The importance lies in the fact that the monarchic dictatorship has given rise to special conditions for the liberation movement.

The special features of the monarchic dictatorship are:

(1) Concentration of the regime's power. The Shah and his family acquire god-like power and bring all the military and political elements of the ruling cliques under their complete control. Not only are the people in general suppressed by the regime, but elements and circles belonging to the ranks of the ruling cliques are also exposed to the dictatorial demands of the Shah and his family. Whenever an individual or wing of the ruling clique — of whose reactionary character there is no doubt — is liable to pose a danger to the Shah, he will be destroyed. The political and military elements lose all right to establish direct contacts with imperialist powers. In other words, the decision about the limits within which the various imperialists can operate will be directly controlled by the Shah and the Court. Members of the Cabinet, governors of state-owned institutions, top military officials, and even major capitalists can preserve their position *only* with the consent of the Shah. The Shah personally issues orders concerning all walks of life from top to bottom; personal rule currently appears to be at the advanced stage of its growth. This is what is meant by the special character of a monarchic dictatorship, namely, the super-concentration of power.

(2) The intensification of military and police dictatorship to the point of fascist tyranny. In a monarchic dictatorship, force is not only exerted when it is essential to preserve the system (i.e. the interests of the compradors and the imperialists), but the regime also exerts brute force to preserve the particular interests of the Shah himself and his cronies. And, in fact, it can even go as far as aiming to satisfy the desire for revenge and other narrow-minded policies of the Shah and his close associates. These elements of the ruling clique resort to counter-revolutionary force and unbridled harshness in order: (i) to preserve the interests of the class whose representatives they are; (ii) to preserve their own political positions and economic interests; and (iii) to satisfy the personal ambitions of the Shah and other courtiers. In certain

conditions, this eagerness to preserve their position can actually endanger the position of foreign exploiters and internal reaction. The Shah, who in the past sustained terrible blows against himself by the people and who will never forget his desire for revenge against them, has an insatiable desire for power and wealth and plays an undeniable role in exerting his dictatorial force inside the country. He also pursues an ambitious policy in the region in order to satisfy, amongst other things, his appetite for adventure.

(3) The concentration of power in the hands of one person and his limited circle of cronies stops the booty being equally divided between the different kinds of plunderers. The Shah and his close associates do not believe that other wings of the ruling class have any right of supervision. In a monarchic dictatorship, Parliament, the Army, the Cabinet and the higher clergy, which the domestic ruling classes and imperialists regard as levers to be used by them in their own interests, lose all their rights. A comparison between the period of dictatorship in 1953–63 and that of the present time will clearly reveal how all the higher clerics, Army top brass, politicians and Parliament have lost their previous roles and are now forced to be blind followers of the Shah and his cronies. The role and power of the clergy during the time of Ayatollah Boroojerdi (from the *coup d'état* of 1953 till the start of the Land Reform), the role of Army generals Bakhtiar, Hedayat, Kia and Alavi (the first two assassinated by the Shah's agents and the other two put out of circulation) during the same period, the roles played by Hussein Ala, Manoochehr Eqbal, Ali Amini and even Ali Mansoor (all premiers at that time) compared with that played by Hoveida,⁷ the present Prime Minister – or the role played by the Majlis then and the present one – clearly show how the present system of monarchic dictatorship has vested all power in the hands of one individual.

The political position of foreign imperialists *vis-a-vis* the ruling apparatus has also changed. In an aristocratic dictatorship, the various wings of imperialism face each other and compete by occupying various political and military positions and dividing the forces in Parliament and other political platforms. However, in a monarchic dictatorship, it is the Shah himself who, in accordance with the dictates of his interests and position, decides to accept the superiority of one particular imperialist power or prefers to share the booty with this imperialist power rather than another. The fact that Iran is dominated by several imperialist powers has given the Shah considerable power of manoeuvre in his dealings with them. The monarchic dictatorship is unable to give equal attention to the interests of all the imperialists. Although one single imperialist power has always had the upper hand in Iran (or any other dependent country), such a superiority has nevertheless always met with protests from the other imperialists. In other words, the rivalries between the various imperialist powers fought out through a division of the various governing instruments, have always existed and will always continue. Moreover, if all such levers are at the disposal of one element, i.e. the Shah and the Court, then the dissatisfied sections of the comprador bourgeoisie and imperialists, or those sections whose share has been assigned to their

rivals at the instigation of the Shah, have no alternative but to secure their interests by pressurising the Shah. The result is that the Shah is pushed into conflict now with this imperialist power, now with that one. The internal and external contradictions of the ruling system revolve round this powerful dictatorship. There are important consequences for us in this monopoly of power and limitless personal ambition of the Shah, this manifestation of internal contradictions of the ruling apparatus around the dictator, and this dissatisfaction of the various sections and circles who are in conflict, not with the system of dependent capitalism, but with the personal brand of dictatorship imposed by the Shah. An all-embracing struggle against the Shah's dictatorship is the principal aspect of the liberation movement in the present conditions of monarchic dictatorship.

The question we must ask is this. Whose interests does this system of personal dictatorship serve? As the prevailing system it certainly serves, in general terms, the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialists. But at the same time it is a breach in the normal pattern of dictatorship under dependent capitalism — such a system can even have a so-called democratic superstructure. In other words, monarchic dictatorship is not the sole form guaranteeing the continuation of a system of dependent capitalism. Even in a military dictatorship not all power is vested, except for a relatively short period of time, in one person or a handful of associates — the regimes of 'Papa Doc' Duvalier, Trujillo and Franco, like that of our country, being the exceptions.

If imperialist domination takes the form of undisguised economic and political rule and palpably interferes, then, under certain conditions, it can become the principal enemy even of the reactionary anti-people front. This happened in the case of British imperialism during the Iranian oil nationalisation movement. However, when there is neither open imperialist aggression nor is the regime using the organs of the dictatorship in a concentrated manner to deprive people of their rights, then the ruling class or classes resort to political levers such as Parliament, the religious establishment, the Government, the Court and the Army to suppress the liberation movement. This was the case during the years 1941–46 and 1950–53. In such circumstances the ruling class of the three anti-people elements is the one that plays the main role. But where the regime, in the form of an aristocratic dictatorship with a fascist character, controls all the instruments of power and the anti-people role of the imperialists is also effected through it, then the dictatorial regime is the most important factor in suppressing the people. In our country the black years of Reza Khan's rule and the years after the *coup d'état* of 1953 and particularly the past decade have been marked by such a characteristic. We believe that talk of a contradiction between the people and imperialism with its internal allies, without due attention to the special conditions attached to the anti-people elements and forces and without determining the specific character of these elements, will lead us nowhere.

If we assume that the struggle in Iran is governed by the same conditions

as those in the Vietnamese struggle against the U.S. or those that exist in the Arab world in the fight against Zionism, then we shall be deeply mistaken. Vietnam, China or any other country faced various contradictions between the people and their enemies at different stages of their revolutions. If we fail to pinpoint the crucial character of this contradiction in Iran, we shall fail to recognise the principal enemy: we will therefore be shooting in the dark. Today we see various Iranian progressive forces who, moved by the Palestinian liberation movement, lump Zionism, imperialism and the Iranian regime together; or, influenced by the Vietnamese Revolution, simply repeat the slogan 'Down with U.S. imperialism and its running dogs'. Our movement feels a deep respect for the Vietnamese and the Palestinians, but just applying such slogans to Iran completely fails to convey our respect to these people. Rather they indicate that we have not yet acquired an original and creative understanding of conditions in Iran capable of mobilising our forces towards the principal aim. Zionism in our country plays a subordinate role to imperialism. Here it is the Iranian regime that is the regional gendarme — not Israel. And the North American imperialists work hand in hand with the regime whilst Zionist aggression is confined within a specified area. The anti-Zionist orientation among some non-proletarian and ultra-religious groups, under the influence of various pan-Arabist movements, ought not to push us to place undue importance on the role of Zionism in Iran. So, too, if the above slogan accords with the conditions of struggle in Vietnam, then our slogan should be 'Down with the fascist dictatorship of the Shah and his imperialist masters', for it fits in with the conditions of our struggle.

Contradictions Within Iranian Capitalism

In the prevailing contradiction between the people and their enemies, the regime plays the principal role. However, as we have already analysed in detail, there exists an organic relationship, i.e. fundamental unity and contradiction, between the three elements of the anti-popular front. Apart from this fundamental contradiction, there are other contradictions in the present governing system and in our society as a whole. The most important of these are the direct result of the prevailing system of government. These contradictions can be divided into three categories:

- (1) Contradictions within the anti-popular front.
- (2) Contradictions within the people's front.
- (3) Contradictions which are left over from the previous periods in the history of our society; or which are contradictions that will reveal their true form in future socio-economic formations.

The Anti-Popular Front

Despite their unity the three elements mentioned above have certain contradictions with each other. The comprador bourgeoisie, in its capacity

fundamental and principal contradictions, and also magnify and heighten secondary contradictions in order to mislead the forces of the people.

There are other contradictions in society that are the result of our historical circumstances and the geographical position. Iran comprises many nationalities who are also oppressed by the regime. The Azerbaijanis, the Kurds, the Arabs and the Baluchis are the more important of the nationalities who suffer from the regime's tyranny in varying degrees. In comparison to the Persian people, they suffer twice over in the form of a dual exploitation as exploited classes and as nationalities that are culturally and religiously oppressed. Their struggle against this exploitation is directed, not against the Persians, but against the governing regime. Therefore, their struggle forms part of the struggle by the liberation movement. Being the result of our society's historical development, this contradiction conforms with the fundamental contradiction between the people and reaction at this stage of the revolution. All our peoples can, therefore, present a united front against the common enemy.

Other contradictions can be added to the list above. There are as many contradictions in our society as there are social processes. However, the contradictions that can guide a revolutionary process are those already mentioned. Apart from the contradictions within our society, there are external ones that also have a political influence in our country. They include: the contradiction between the peoples of the region on the one hand and Zionism and imperialism on the other; the contradiction between liberation movements and imperialism in a global context; the contradiction between socialist and imperialist states; the inner contradiction between imperialist states in a global context; the contradiction involving progressive forces within capitalist states; the contradiction of socialist states with one another; and the contradiction of the various imperialist wings within a capitalist country, e.g. the U.S.A. An understanding of these contradictions and their correct handling is necessary for our people and its liberation movement.

The Principal Contradiction

In determining the principal contradiction of our society the first question to be resolved is this. Is the fundamental contradiction, namely that between the people on the one hand and imperialism and reaction on the other, also the principal contradiction? Our answer is that if we regard the Shah's dictatorship as the general manifestation of the system of dependent capitalism, then this contradiction is indeed also the principal contradiction. But if we accept that the autocracy (which is the most prominent anti-popular feature at the present time) represents only one element among three anti-popular elements, then the *principal* contradiction is between the people and the regime's dictatorship in the form of the Shah's autocracy, whereas the *fundamental* contradiction is between the people on the one hand and the regime plus the comprador bourgeoisie plus imperialism on the other. During the anti-Japanese War in China, Japan was regarded as the common enemy

of the people, the comprador bourgeoisie, the feudalists and their imperialist allies. But Japan was also regarded as an imperialist power. The Chinese people's struggle against the Japanese was also a struggle against the chief imperialist force in China. Nevertheless, this principal contradiction differed from the contradiction during the people's democratic revolution.

In our country the problem is entirely different. The monarchical dictatorship is only one factor in the anti-popular front. Although this factor is capable of adding fuel to the contradictions within the anti-popular front and even, in certain conditions, of provoking the reactionary forces into a fight amongst themselves, nevertheless, because the Shah's dictatorship is not a foreign aggressor (as Japan was), the people cannot form against it a united front — an anti-dictatorship front — which includes, the forces of reaction. The upshot of this analysis is that, in the present conditions, the principal contradiction is between the liberation movement and the dictatorial regime — which is the main anti-popular element.

The factors that confirm the principal nature of this contradiction are:

(1) The Shah's dictatorship with its fascist characteristics (highly organised as well as brutal).

(2) The personal nature of the dictatorship. Autocracy is currently the dominant phenomenon and all other factors are channelled through it.

(3) This dictatorship not only oppresses the toiling masses and their popular allies, it also extends its oppression to sections of the reactionary forces, and even imposes its will on some imperialist quarters. The dictatorship is finding more and more dissidents within its own ranks. Political and economic crises will strengthen the hands of these dissidents and will make quarrels and clashes within the anti-popular front inevitable.

(4) The presence of some reactionary forces within the opposition, and the make-up of the forces within the movement, show that the people, in the true sense of the word, have not as yet come face to face with the anti-popular force. Opposition, albeit mild and conservative, by the clergy, who are not connected with the national bourgeoisie and the considerable activities of intellectuals and sections of the petty bourgeoisie in the absence of the toiling masses (particularly the proletariat and the peasants) show that the basic contradiction (between the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the comprador bourgeoisie — in the form of the ruling class and ruling apparatus — and imperialism on the other) has not, *as yet*, reached such a degree of acuteness as to be regarded as the principal contradiction of our society. Therefore, we are confronted with one aspect of this contradiction (the Shah's dictatorship) which at the present time is our principal contradiction.

A situation more or less similar to today's was brought about during the second decade of Reza Khan's rule (the present Shah's father). His dictatorship (not forgetting the relative backwardness of the administrative set-up then) assumed a similar position to today's *vis-a-vis* the ruling classes (feudalists and compradors) and the imperialists. In that situation the Khans, the aristocratic feudalists, the higher echelons of the clergy, as well as

and owners of internal capital are dependent on foreign domination. Indeed the interests and continuing existence of some of them (the national bourgeoisie, no matter how weak) is against the continuation and growth of foreign domination and the comprador bourgeoisie. Foreign capital, therefore, although exploiting us, cannot be regarded as part of the Iranian bourgeoisie. It follows that the contradiction between labour and capital, with its social manifestation in a confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, cannot be the principal contradiction of the Iranian system. For this reason our society is not at the stage of a socialist revolution, i.e. of a revolution where the slogan would be the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the expropriation of all private capital.

Moreover, the need for the reconstruction of the national economy and the need to uproot dependent industries and end the economic domination of imperialism immediately after the peoples' triumph make it imperative that our society should go through a necessary period of transition before the establishment of socialism. To sum up: because of the necessity of anti-imperialist struggle, because of the progressive nature of part of the bourgeoisie, and since it is imperative to go through a period of transition before socialism, the principal contradiction of our society (namely the contradiction upon which the present class system is based) is that between the people as a whole and their enemies.

The economic manifestation of this contradiction is that on the one side are the exploited strata and classes under imperialist oppression, and on the other side are the domestic exploiters dependent on foreign domination, and foreign capitalists who have an all-pervasive control over Iran. The social aspect of this contradiction is that on the one side are the workers, peasants, urban and rural petty bourgeoisies and the national bourgeoisie, and on the other side are the comprador bourgeoisie (whether in the form of private capital or the Government sector), foreign capitalists and the imperialist powers. The political manifestation of this contradiction is in the form of the national liberation movement fighting against the regime and its foreign protectors. This, then, is the essence of the contradiction between the people on the one hand, and reaction, together with its foreign imperialist protectors, on the other — a contradiction which, although perhaps not fully expressed in these terms, is here concisely designated as the contradiction between people and imperialism.

There are three different elements within the anti-popular front that have nevertheless an organic relationship with each other. They are the ruling apparatus or the regime, imperialism, and the ruling class. In any given situation, one of these plays the major role in relation to the other two. When a country is faced with foreign aggression, as in the case of China during the anti-Japanese War, or Vietnam, then imperialism wields more power than internal reaction or the ruling class. Where the contradiction becomes so acute that the policies and actions employed by the regime for its own protection are in contradiction with the interests of the system as a whole and the interests of the dominant imperialists in particular, then

one or more imperialist powers takes steps to topple the ruling clique with the help of internal elements. The more the regime faces difficulties in running the system and controlling the situation, the more it tries to perpetuate its rule no matter what the cost. The more serious a danger the liberation movement poses for the regime, the more urgent is the need for a change in the ruling clique.

The People's Front

Although the people, whether officially or unofficially, have a united front against the enemy — this is being necessitated by the present stage of the revolution in which all other contradictions are overshadowed by the principal contradiction — nevertheless the people do have contradictions within their forces. This, in one way or another, affects the policies and groupings of the various revolutionary forces in the process of struggle and so affects the united struggle against the common enemy. These contradictions will continue to grow in subsequent stages of the revolution and will have to be resolved. However, since they are deeply rooted in the economic and social realities of our society, they are bound to affect the course of the liberation movement today.

The most important of these contradictions is that between the exploiting and exploited forces within the people's front. The exploiting forces within the people's front are the national bourgeoisie and prosperous sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The exploited forces include the proletariat, those peasants with little or no land, and the toiling sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

This contradiction has retained its importance, notwithstanding the fact that the national bourgeoisie has lost its historical position as an important stratum in Iran. For vast sections of the petty bourgeois, which of course lack a proletarian ideology, are ever ready to play the decisive role in the national liberation movement, even to the point of assuming the leadership of the revolution. Should they succeed, the toiling masses and their vanguard organisations have no alternative but to accept their overall leadership of the liberation movement. In this case the struggle will become more prolonged; or, should it succeed, the revolution will become bogged down at the phase of bourgeois democracy led by the non-proletarian (non-Marxist Leninist) currents, instead of reaching the stage of a people's democracy. It is this eventuality which necessitates the struggle *within* the liberation movement. The principal manifestation of this latter struggle is the active rivalry between the classes as to which employs the most revolutionary tactic in mobilising the various forces in different sections of the movement against the enemy; the ideological struggle is its second manifestation.

Apart from this contradiction, there is another (admittedly secondary) contradiction in the people's front — that between intellectuals and the toiling masses, and also between the proletariat and the peasants. These contradictions can grow, although they are inevitably overshadowed by the principal contradiction. Of course, opportunists can overlook the

as the ruling class, has some contradictions with foreign monopolies over secondary economic problems. The regime, in its capacity as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and as the representative of all sections of the bourgeoisie, haggles with foreign monopolies over increased oil income. This is one example of the contradiction between two sections of the ruling formation. There is, in addition, a contradiction between the comprador bourgeoisie (the ruling class) and the regime (the ruling apparatus). This manifests itself in the form of a contradiction between the private sector of the bourgeoisie and the governing apparatus of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The appearance of this contradiction in its various forms is particularly apparent when autocracy plays the major role in controlling all aspects of society. There are also secondary contradictions between the various sections of the comprador bourgeoisie itself. For example, the contradiction between the industrial and commercial comprador bourgeoisies over their respective interests and the overall economic direction of society. But the most important of these secondary contradictions is that which can crystallise between all the various sections of the bourgeoisie and the monarchic dictatorship. In so far as this contradiction conforms with the principal aspect of the contradiction, i.e. that between the people and the monarchic dictatorship, it assumes great importance.

The contradictions between the various imperialist wings over their plundering of Iran are also part of the contradictions within the anti-popular front. When a particular imperialist has the upper hand at any one time, he has a more important share in determining the policy of the regime as well as in exploiting the country's resources and labour power. Inevitably, rivalries and quarrels begin to develop involving imperialists who have either lost their positions, or now demand better ones. Since, due to the growth of autocracy, the rivalries among imperialists in Iran have at present been curtailed, their contradiction is now manifested in the form of their involvement and conflicts with the Shah and the ruling gang. To acquire more concessions the imperialists have to pressurise the dictator and exact tribute from him. Nevertheless, the contradiction between the imperialists and the regime can, in certain conditions, become antagonistic.

It should be said that this autocracy first and foremost serves the interests and political position of the Shah, the Court and the cronies who hover around him. Secondly, it serves the big comprador bourgeoisie who, trying to influence the will of the dictator, appropriate the biggest share of profit for themselves. It also serves North American imperialism which is at the present time the major imperialism in Iran, and whose economic, political and military programmes in Iran and in the region are designed to satisfy the ambitions of the Iranian dictator. Thus it secures a most profitable gain from its position in Iran. Lastly, the dictatorship is the guardian of the interests of the whole system, namely all sections of the comprador bourgeoisie and all those imperialists who have a share in Iran.

It is, therefore, impossible for the present dictatorship to be equally mindful of the interests of both the various domestic exploiting sectors and

all foreign imperialists as well. The dictatorship has created a new and unavoidable contradiction within the system and has exacerbated other contradictions.

Obviously, not all sections of the ruling classes feel the brunt of the dictatorship all the time. Just as it is impossible for the masses to feel the dictatorship's bayonet before they begin to stand up for their economic and political demands, so it is that, as long as the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie do not clash with those of the dictatorship, this class does not feel any danger or experience any oppression. But if political and economic crises intensify the inner contradiction within the ruling class, then even the comprador bourgeoisie begins to notice how ruthlessly the regime will follow a particular policy which is only in the interests of its own limited gang, and detrimental to the growth and continuation of the system in which the compradors have a stake. The fascist methods employed by the regime will be revealed not only to the people at large, but to the various wings of the ruling class, as the dictatorship expands its all-pervading control over the economy, planning and the private sector. This is precisely the kind of method that is akin to classical fascism; the difference is that its domain is mainly confined within a specified country (Iran) and will be extended to the region only at the behest of a particular aggressive imperialist power, or group of such powers. In the face of this dictatorship, the people have no rights; even the bourgeoisie has no right to determine its fate. It is the regime and only the regime that controls everything, even the most elementary economic questions. If this were not so, it would be impossible to explain the presence of some groups in the ranks of the opposition or the squabbles that take place within the ruling apparatus.

Such are the main features of the system of dependent capitalism that was established ten years ago and has since been going through a phase of aggrandisement — a process manifested in the form of economic growth, expansion of dependent industries and a consumer market, revitalisation of administrative and military organisations, and the establishment of an advanced system of anti-popular control. No doubt this system, like any other, is bound to create contradictions which will grow.

In so far as this is a class system based upon the exploitation of the great majority by a small minority, the deepest and most fundamental of its contradictions is that which enables the growth of the system and the continuation of exploitation. Since the relations of production in this system are based on capitalism, there seems to be a tendency among some Marxists to believe that the principal contradiction in Iran today is that between labour and capital. If this is the case, then our country is on the verge of a socialist revolution and the working class together with its allies forms the basis of the revolution. But this is an erroneous belief.

In the analysis of dependent capitalism we have seen how the lifeline of the comprador bourgeoisie, as the ruling class, is connected with the domination of the international monopolies. Foreign domination forms an important part of the prevailing system of exploitation in Iran. But not all exploiters

all progressive forces such as the national bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie, and the peasants, felt acutely the tyranny imposed by the dictatorship. Eventually, the relationship between the dictatorship and its foreign benefactor Britain had reached such a crisis that the contradiction could only be resolved by toppling Reza Khan. This clearly shows that, in those conditions, the contradiction with the regime had become the principal contradiction. Today, although we can witness insignificant clashes and quarrels within the anti-popular front, we can once again recognise the main features of that time in today's situation.

The significance of understanding this contradiction is very important. Understanding the necessity of an anti-imperialist struggle in the past was fundamental in securing the leadership of the movement for the proletariat. As for today, whichever force succeeds in winning the leadership of the anti-dictatorship struggle will also succeed in securing the leadership of the liberation movement in future. For the proletariat and its vanguard to ignore the anti-dictatorship struggle is tantamount to ignoring the principal contradiction in our society. It amounts to avoiding the fundamental struggle against dependent capitalism. Does this mean that we wash our hands of the struggle against imperialism, dependent capitalists and foreign capitalists in Iran? No, it does not. It merely means that the struggle against them should be conducted in conjunction with the struggle against the Shah's dictatorship. Those imperialists will be attacked who are the front-line defenders of the dictatorship. That section of the system will be attacked that has close relations with the dictatorship. Failing to observe this basic rule is bound to disperse the impact of our blows, thus rendering the struggle ineffective and wasteful. Furthermore, the absence of such selective attacks, instead of intensifying the inner contradictions of the system to our advantage, will tend to unify the enemy.

It is the historical task of the vanguard organisations to deploy all available forces and possibilities that have risen against the dictatorship for the mobilisation of the masses. We must use the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie, together with any other anti-dictatorship elements, be they progressive or reactionary, for the mobilisation of the toiling masses, who are the main force for a people's democratic revolution. Obviously, not until the people, whether the petty bourgeoisie or the toiling masses, begin to move and protest, will they feel the weight of the regime's bayonet. But no sooner do the tradesmen, artisans, clergy and students resort to the smallest protest movement, than they come face to face with the regime's fascist methods. If the workers of the Jehan Cheet factory had not acted to demand better pay, they would not have become the target for the Shah's soldiers.⁸ Every strike, every protest and even any economic crisis will increasingly reveal the fascist nature of the Shah's dictatorship to the masses. During such economic crises, even the comprador bourgeoisie will realise to what extent its fate is at the mercy of the dictatorial clique.

In so far as the Shah's dictatorship has an organic relationship with the system as a whole, our struggle against the dictatorship will culminate in a

struggle against the system in its totality. Will the collapse, then, of the dictatorship culminate in the collapse of the whole system in a democratic revolution? Or will, initially, the dictatorship only lose its principal role? i.e. it will either lose its power in the face of an onslaught by the liberation movement — since it is not through a miracle but due to the weakness of the mass movement that the Shah's dictatorship has become such a horrifying spectacle. Or, because of the growth of the liberation movement and the intensification of internal contradictions, it will be replaced by a government comprising dependent capitalists and representing imperialism. Then, in a subsequent period, the liberation movement will achieve the democratic revolution. These are questions that are related to the growth of the people's forces and the role of the reactionary forces opposed to the Shah's dictatorship. This dictatorship is the most fundamental task before the liberation movement at the present time. Among the revolutionary experience of other nations, we can find some interesting examples that will help to shed more light on this problem.

Despite the fact that capitalism had reached the stage of imperialism in Czarist Russia, the Czarist autocracy forced people into a continuous fight against the dictatorship. The working class, while fighting the bourgeoisie for better conditions, was on a common ground with it in the struggle against Czarism. Lenin forcefully stressed the importance of the political role of the working class against the Czarist dictatorship despite the insistence of the 'Economists' that this class stay clear of political struggle. Prior to the Revolution of 1905—07, Lenin was stressing that, notwithstanding the exploitative nature of the Russian bourgeoisie, it should be regarded as part of the people in so far as it stood for a bourgeois democracy and was against Czarism. The struggle led by the bourgeoisie, and involving the petty bourgeoisie, had a very important effect on ending Czarism. Eventually, Czarism collapsed as a result of the February 1917 Revolution, thus paving the way for the October Revolution led by the proletariat (the Bolshevik Party). Does this experience not tell us that, faced with a personal dictatorship with its fascist characteristics, the most urgent struggle waged by the working class and its vanguard should be directed against the dictatorship — employing all anti-dictatorship elements and forces in such a struggle? The historical and socio-economic conditions in our country are in such contrast with Russia that perhaps this example is not sufficient for an understanding of the principal contradiction in Iran. Maybe, the Cuban experience is a clearer guide.

In Cuba the regime headed by Batista was a personal military dictatorship. The socio-economic system had a striking similarity to that of Iran. Batista had resorted to the most brutal suppression and fascist methods. All human rights had been suspended and all levers of power were concentrated in the hands of the dictatorship. Hence the struggle against this dictatorship was regarded by all opposition currents as the most urgent task. It was in such conditions that the revolutionary movement started. The fight commenced in the form of an armed struggle and culminated in the collapse of the whole

system. Even to the last triumphant day, the programme of a people's democratic revolution was not revealed. . . The concealment of the ultimate aims of the revolution was a tactic employed to deceive the North American imperialists. But the start of the struggle against the dictatorship and its development into a democratic revolution was regarded as a historical necessity, in tune with the political and socio-economic conditions in Cuba. We must ask: What was the nature of the forces which fought alongside Castro against Batista's dictatorship, and subsequently pulled away from him to such a degree that they formed the kernel of the subsequent counter-revolutionary emigrant organisations? Were they not part of the forces that had fought against the dictatorship but were not prepared to accept a people's dictatorship? Was there not a historical similarity between these people and the Russian Social Revolutionaries of the period between February 1917 and the Civil War? During this phase of the revolutionary movement (which we call the armed revolutionary movement), we will fight primarily against the Shah's dictatorship, and we are bound to draw the support and co-operation of all those forces who are against this personal dictatorship which is supported by imperialism. Our unity and co-operation with these forces will be based, not on a democratic revolutionary programme, but on an anti-dictatorship and anti-colonialist struggle. It is not necessary, however, to form an official united front with reactionary elements and forces who are against the dictatorship. In the present phase, historical necessity has, willy nilly, brought us together for a short time with these reactionary elements and forces; and there is no need to demand more than this. On the other hand, we must unite with the progressive forces — the national bourgeoisie and the mass of the petty bourgeoisie — and develop this unity up to the subsequent stages of the fight.

Hence, when Ahmad-Zadeh says, 'We shall start with the most general and the most widely accepted slogans and press forward till the eradication of exploitation and the eventual rule of the people'⁹ he is only giving expression to the historical reality that the fight against the Shah's dictatorship is the most urgent and important aspect of the struggle today, and that this struggle will enable us to mobilise the forces of the toiling masses for the realisation of a people's revolution. The historical necessity of such a struggle is also forcefully stressed in the book, *What a Revolutionary Must Know*,¹⁰ which is based on an analysis of the nature of dependent capitalism in Iran, the role of the regime, together with the monarchic dictatorship, and a demystification of the nature of the Court and the dictator himself. The fact that the book is addressed to intellectuals means that the writer was aware of which forces were available in 1970 and paid special emphasis to their struggle against the dictatorship.

Needless to say, the importance of this struggle does not mean that the day-to-day economic problems of the masses should be left to look after themselves. The dictatorship will only become tangible to the masses when they begin to fight for their economic demands. It is then that the fight against the dictatorship becomes part of their programme of action. Therefore, it is in relation to this fight that we call on the people to stand up for

their political and economic rights. At the same time, we attempt to reveal the connection between the dictatorship and the most rabid imperialists through propaganda and other operations. This is our conception of what we call 'the most general slogans'.

To end this chapter, we propose to say a few words about the problem to which references have been made in the preceding pages, namely, the phase of the revolution. What is the phase of the revolution in Iran?

The changes that have taken place during the last decade, the establishment of dependent capitalism, the breakup of the national bourgeoisie, and the growing social and economic processes have all contributed to paving the way for a people's democratic revolution today more than ever before. The growth of the present system will increasingly help these objective conditions. Nevertheless, the prerequisite of such a revolution is to secure the objective conditions for it. It is the task of the revolution to replace the present system with a progressive and developed system. The basic contradiction of this system — i.e. the contradiction between the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and nationalist bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the comprador bourgeoisie and imperialism on the other — must be resolved in the revolution. Also from a theoretical viewpoint, both a bourgeois democratic revolution and a people's democratic revolution are capable of resolving this contradiction. The end results of both these revolutions, i.e. national democracy and people's democracy, are more progressive than the present system, although one is a stage less advanced than the other. The question as to what kind of revolution the liberation movement will lead our country into will depend on both objective and subjective conditions. Although the weakness of the national bourgeoisie . . . has helped to prepare the objective grounds for a proletarian leadership, nevertheless, the political backwardness of the working class — and that of the toiling masses as a whole — plus the active role played by the petty bourgeoisie (the natural beneficiary of the traditions and ideology of the national bourgeoisie) make the subjective conditions for the unrivalled leadership of the proletariat difficult. The whole outcome depends largely on what role the vanguard proletarian organisations and forces as well as non-proletarian ones (whether petty bourgeois or national bourgeois) play in the liberation movement. The outcome will have a decisive effect on the nature of the revolution. The nature of the revolution and the leadership of the people are not something that can be sorted out and decided upon on a piece of paper.

If today the vanguard Marxist-Leninist currents are able to understand the conditions of struggle and adopt correct tactics, if they succeed in playing a major role in the fight against the dictatorship, and if they are thus able to end the political backwardness of the working class and increase their consciousness and activity in relation to their economic growth, then the way will be open for the hegemony of the proletariat. The national forces will move forward on a course that will enable all the people's forces to accept a democratic programme, thus leading the revolution on a people's democratic path. The fact is that, despite all the invaluable work undertaken by

the vanguard proletarian organisations in the past two years, and despite the undeniably determined stand adopted by these organisations to offset the weaknesses of past working-class movements in our country, the vanguard of the working class is still faced with unsuitable conditions. The unity of proletarian forces has still not taken shape and there is a long way to go before it does. These conditions, therefore, put a heavy responsibility on elements within the working class.

In the present conditions, the non-proletarian forces, being the inheritor of a few decades of struggle by the national bourgeoisie, are in practice fighting the enemy of the people. It is quite possible that they may not have a scientific knowledge of social conditions in Iran, but even without such a knowledge they are able to understand the historical requirements of the time. The petty-bourgeois sections of society, which (under pressure from the system of dependent capitalism) are facing annihilation and polarisation, are spontaneously veering towards resistance against the system. Such a movement will manifest itself in the form of a fight against the regime. The necessity of paying attention to the working class and the proletarian masses will encourage the petty bourgeoisie to take heed of slogans that are put forward by the former. It would, therefore, not be surprising if the petty-bourgeois forces begin a half-hearted attempt to adopt proletarian ideology with the eventual aim of combining this with a national bourgeois ideology. The dual nature of these forces completely justifies this dual ideology. At any rate, there is no doubt these forces play an important role in the struggle against the dictatorship, and it is only their right that they should attempt to capture the leadership of the people, including the working class. How far they will succeed in achieving this aim depends on the role of the vanguard proletarian forces. To what degree they will move towards the ideals of a people's democratic revolution will only be known on the eve of such a revolution. However, there is no doubt that an important section of the petty-bourgeois forces, even those inside the non-proletarian (non-Marxist-Leninist) organisations, will accept a people's democratic revolution. But if a revolution is to take place under the leadership of non-proletarian forces, then the revolution will be limited to the stage of bourgeois democracy.

Therefore, to bring about the conditions for a people's democratic revolution, it is essential that not only the leadership of the liberation movement be secured for the proletariat, but that the movement succeed in mobilising the masses and the proletariat secure the leadership of the whole people. The present task of the vanguard of working-class forces is to attach sufficient importance to those forces that are available. These consist mainly of the petty-bourgeois sections of society, and instead of following them the vanguard must try to mobilise them for the expansion of the vast movement of the toiling masses. The declining sections of the petty bourgeoisie (i.e. tradesmen, artisans, the lower section of the clergy and the prosperous and middle smallholders), while being an inseparable part of the people, are, nevertheless, due to their hopeless position, incapable of subscribing to a revolutionary ideology and tactics. They have a tendency to rely on national

bourgeois ideology, no matter how inert and inadequate it may be. They are manifestly failing to analyse fundamentally, and understand, a system under whose pressure they are being crushed. Neither do they understand that there exists no way back. In the face of this pessimistic and backward world outlook, it is the historical task of the vanguard proletarian organisations to transform these sections of the petty bourgeoisie into an ally of the working class through the scientific analysis of their socio-economic conditions and through increasing their practical consciousness in the course of a revolutionary strategy and tactics. Of course, ideological struggle and theoretical work have a major role to play, but it is the correct and developing actions of the revolutionary forces that will secure a revolutionary leadership.

The reactionary forces within the system are also likely to take part in the anti-dictatorship struggle. If these forces do take such a course to secure their own interests, and if they do so at a time when the liberation movement is weak, then in spite of their reactionary nature they will have the chance to carry the masses with them. This then is also a reality that, although highly unlikely in present conditions, must not be overlooked. In case of a victory for these forces, personal dictatorship will leave the scene but the system will remain in place.

Notes

1. See *Land Reform in Iran and Its Direct Effects* by the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas, translated and published by the Iran Committee.
2. A *tooman* is a Persian unit of currency equal to about £0.08p.
3. This book was written prior to the complete Vietnamese victory over North American imperialism and its ignominious retreat from Vietnam.
4. See *Land Reform . . . and Its Direct Effects*.
5. See B. Jazani, *Armed Struggle in Iran*, translated and published by the Iran Committee.
6. The nationalist elements within the minority consumer class.
7. Hoveida was eventually executed after the fall of the Shah.
8. This factory is situated in Karaj, a suburb of Tehran. In 1971 the workers came out on strike for better wages. The police opened fire and killed scores of strikers.
9. From the treatise, *Armed Struggle: A Strategy as Well as a Tactic*, by the martyred comrade Masood Ahmad-Zadeh. This work is not yet translated and published in English.
10. By the martyred comrade Ali-Akbar Safai-Farahani, commander of a mountain guerrilla unit. The unit's attack on the gendarmerie base in Siakhal in 1970 (a township along the Caspian Sea Coast) heralded the start of the armed revolutionary movement in Iran. The event is known as 'The Siakhal Resurgence'. *What a Revolutionary Must Know* has been translated and published by the Iran Research Group.

4. The Revolutionary Forces

Introduction

The class analysis of a society can only help our understanding of revolutionary forces, and therefore their appropriate organisation and mobilisation, if it satisfies two conditions. Firstly, it must provide a scientific knowledge of the composition and economic role of the various classes and strata. Secondly, it must analyse their social, cultural and political features. Unfortunately, in this context, Marxism in Iran has been badly learned, i.e. subjectively and scholastically. Instead of being a guide to action, it is used very differently. Among such pseudo-scientists we come across some 'Marxists' who have not only failed to distinguish the correct course of action any better than those who have no scientific understanding of social phenomena, they have also reduced Marxism to the level of worthless abstract precepts. There has always been, and will always be, a relentless fight between this superficial approach and a deep and creative understanding of Marxism-Leninism.

Incorrect tendencies in tackling class problems manifest themselves in various forms. When defining and determining the classes and strata of the society, some comrades merely look at their relationship to the ownership of productive forces. Based on this premise, they proceed to 'solve' this complex problem, hoping thereby to arrive at conclusions which will help them determine their political course of action. And others seem to have a ready-made formula (in theory) for every subject: they talk of the role of a class or stratum in terms of the social organisation of labour. Basing their approach on these two premises (i.e. the social organisation of labour and the ownership of productive forces), they proceed to talk about the qualitative and quantitative aspects of consumption. However, in practice they are unable to reconcile these formulae with objective reality.

The main shortcoming of this type of approach is — as usual — first, a lack of active and real contact with society and the masses in question, and secondly, a superficial understanding of theory — a theory which is learned not in conjunction with struggle and practice but memorised as in school for the sake of passing an end of term examination. If these comrades unlearn all their scientific theories and look at the phenomena around them

with a clear mind and average intelligence, they will frequently achieve results that are more correct than those they have come to as a consequence of unfinished and incorrect knowledge. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that those with a popular knowledge or, on the whole, unscientific understanding, have a better appreciation of problems than those 'Marxists who know everything and nothing'.

It is necessary to determine classes on the basis of (a) their relationship to the ownership of the productive forces; and (b) their role in the social organisation of work. The result of these two, namely their share of production, will enable us to determine the economic role of classes and strata. But is this analysis sufficient for an understanding of a social force? Certainly not. Having tackled the problem from an economic point of view, we must immediately start to study the cultural and social position of the class. Does a class go through certain processes before it can make and digest its own class culture? Does it go through certain experiences before it is able to discard its state of infancy? Lastly, having defined the social and cultural status of a class, we must proceed to define it politically and determine its political and ideological positions. It is during these stages of analysis that the previous superficial approach must be discarded and the understanding of a complex phenomenon take place through an elaborated formula. It is only in this way that a theoretical concept can be superior to a vulgar conception, or to that held by certain political currents. It is thus that we can understand reality, not in a shallow form or only in unimportant cases, but in depth, in long-term processes and important instances, thus enabling us to use it in practice. In analysing and understanding the proletariat, Lenin stresses that the definition of psychology must be added to that of economics. We must ascertain the proletariat's degree of consciousness and psychological state of mind. Do they understand class unity? Do they know their own position *vis-a-vis* the bourgeoisie and other classes and strata of society? Are they conscious of their own power? Have the leading organisations undergone qualitative and quantitative growth? Does the organised leadership of the class perform its class duties; or is the class still leaderless? Such is the important task that faces us in a class analysis and the understanding of the various forces.

To undertake such a study would be a very heavy burden for the present writer, especially at the time that this book is being written. [The author was imprisoned in one of SAVAK's gaols at the time of writing — Ed.] Therefore, in the few pages of this chapter that are being devoted to the analysis of the revolutionary forces in Iran, we shall attempt to outline only the main points of this topic hoping that, like other problems that are put forward in this book, it will be analysed and researched more fully by those competent comrades who have the time to fulfil the task.

The Role of the Working Class

In the preceding chapters we have frequently talked about 'the people'. We have emphasised that the people consist of the working class, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. It is now time to deal with the subject more fully, not overstepping the limits imposed on the present study.

We have looked at political problems relating to the working class from two angles. First, by 'the working class movement' is meant all those political groups and trends or organised economic movements that are bound up with, and regarded as representatives of, the working class and its ideology. This definition therefore covers such organisations as the Tudeh Party, genuine (but not fake state-run) trade unions, as well as Marxist-Leninist groups that have come into being, and been active, since the breakup of the Tudeh Party. Of course, prior to the establishment of that party (in 1941) social democratic groups, the Communist Party of Iran, and other smaller and less significant groups did, in varying degrees, represent working-class ideology in our society. Therefore, wherever we have talked about 'the working class' and its hegemony, political role and tasks, we meant the political and organised expressions of it. Secondly, we have viewed 'the working class movement' from a social and economic standpoint, having also had in mind the spontaneous movement of this class.

After the *coup d'état* of 1953 the working class was not only politically defeated and disarmed within two years, but its activities came to a halt. And the fact that the national bourgeoisie's decline was more than matched by the growth of the (financial) comprador bourgeoisie caused the working class to weaken further, from an economic point of view. The growth of Iranian-owned factories came to a standstill and some of them went bankrupt. Old-established workshops could not withstand the pressure caused by the import of foreign goods, and they closed down. There was, in addition, reduced production and export of refined oil, a partial closure of the Abadan refinery (in the south), automation in the production and export of crude oil — all involving a reduction in the number of workers. These were symptoms of a decline in the working class (particularly the industrial sector) in this period. However, with the growth of the industrial comprador bourgeoisie and the increase in foreign investment, there began a new era in the growth of the working class which has been moving rapidly forward during the last decade. It is clear that economic stagnation in the years immediately after the *coup d'état* was essential for society's subsequent change of course: namely, the halt in the growth of the national bourgeoisie and the beginning of the growth of a comprador bourgeoisie. A movement that had been on the threshold of a national democracy or even a people's democracy was transformed into a movement resulting in today's dependent capitalism.

Compared with the previous two decades, the working class today has achieved considerable economic progress. The Iranian working class can be divided into various sections. The three main types of workers are industrial workers, workers in various workshops, and other workers. Agricultural

workers are a relatively new class who are also on the increase. According to this classification, a worker is one who (a) is a wage earner, i.e. does not own his labour; (b) does manual labour; and (c) may be, but is not necessarily, engaged with a machine, or employed in a production centre using advanced techniques and employing large numbers of people. Thus the labourers (or navvies in common parlance), i.e. the owners of pure unskilled labour which is the basis of calculation in the labour market, are the simplest form of workers, while the industrial workers in factories and advanced production centres are the most developed kind.

The stagnation of the 1950s and subsequent rapid growth in recent years have effectively divided the working class into two sections: new and old workers. Although both are engaged in the same workshops and other centres of production they are divided, as it were, by clearly defined borders. The old workers are distinguishable by their age, skill, level of income and extent of family responsibilities. They have been through one or two periods of economic and political movement and, despite their relative conservatism and lack of recent political activity (for reasons of age and established status), they possess a working-class culture and consciousness. Nevertheless, because of their aloofness from the new generation of workers and particularly because of the unredeemed effects of the defeats suffered during the past two decades, which have created in them a sense of despair, pessimism and selfishness, they refuse to enlighten the younger workers. Such ambivalence is specially acute in the most important section of the working class, i.e. the industrial workers. Such people are frequently to be found in the ranks of foremen and highly skilled workers. They receive better wages and regard the new breed of workers, who lack any working class consciousness and culture, with complete contempt and detachment.

Compared with the previous generation of industrial workers, the new generation enjoys a higher level of education, i.e. literacy. The bulk of them have urban working-class and petty-bourgeois backgrounds, whereas the previous generation were of peasant stock. While the new workers lack any form of working-class culture, they have clear socio-economic demands which stem from their urbanised situation and are based on the tendencies which have their origin in the recent Land Reforms.

The number of industrial workers in the mining and production sector (public and private) — i.e. factories, the oil industry, electricity, power, mines and so on — is 350,000. In contrast, the number of workers in traditional urban workshops (bricklaying, tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, printing, carpet weaving, small-scale weaving and spinning) and in public services (railways, buses, truck driving, hotels and restaurants, public baths and hairdressing) is far in excess of the number of industrial workers, and is at least 600,000. Taking seasonal factors into account, the number of workers engaged in road and house building is between 400,000 and 500,000. Thus, the working class, in an economic sense, forms about 18% of the country's total work force. If we add to this the agricultural workers, seasonal casual farm labourers — who work at one season and are idle at the next —

the unemployed in search of work in the urban and rural areas, the total would be some 25%, which in effect means that the working class has never been as large as it is today. This class of 25% of the working population produces more than 50% of the national product. Needless to say, a further growth of the comprador bourgeoisie will cause a corresponding increase in the number of workers. While backward workshops will increasingly have to go out of business, the volume of work in industry and mining as a whole will increase. While tradesmen and small-scale capitalism disappear, the working class grows in step with the growth of the present system; and the unending waves of migration from rural areas to urban centres continue. There also occurs a polarisation of tradesmen and shopkeepers, with the bulk of them eventually having to join the ranks of the working class. This, however, is the future pattern in the growth of the working class.

But can one base one's assessment of the social and political impact of the working class on such quantitative data and economic evaluations alone? If this were the case, then the peasants who had, throughout the history of feudalism, formed the largest section of society should have played the biggest social and political role. The fact is that we should study the social and cultural position of the working class and consider its role, not in isolation, but in relation to other sections of society.

One of the special features of our society is the position of the petty bourgeoisie in relation to the working class. While, as a result of the historical weakness of the industrial bourgeoisie, the working class has not developed as fully as it might have done, the urban petty bourgeoisie has progressed considerably. The backward artisanal system, the scale and labour-intensive nature of the system of distribution, and the general bureaucratic system of government which bears no relation to the productive forces of society have greatly expanded various sections of the petty bourgeoisie. So the socio-economic weakness of the working class has crystallised in the form of a qualitative backwardness *vis-a-vis* the national and petty bourgeoisies. The growth in size of the petty bourgeoisie provided a suitable basis for its qualitative growth. This discrepancy between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, being a special feature of our society (and that of the majority of dominated and dependent societies) has always come to the fore. This in turn has caused the appearance of various phenomena, the most important of which we deal with.

Despite its historical weakness which has continued up to the present day, the working class, during the years before it was defeated, did enjoy a class consciousness and culture far superior to that of today. The economic and political processes that began in September 1941 and ended with the *coup d'état* of 1953 had a decisive role in awakening the consciousness of the working class.

In fact, without such class consciousness, without such a feeling of solidarity, the working class is a dispersed and ineffective mass of individuals with no revolutionary character. Collective work with machinery in a crowded space can pave the way for a sense of economic, and subsequently

political, solidarity amongst working people. But working-class culture, emanating from the material conditions of the work environment, does not come about suddenly and immediately after people begin to labour in a factory or workshop. Rather it is the result of a lengthy process, combining social, economic and political factors and the position of the working class in relation to other classes and sections of society. Hence the Iranian working class enjoys class consciousness and culture only in so far as it has been through such lengthy processes.

Thus the most important section of the working class, namely those in the 18 to 30 age group, have the lowest level of class consciousness, and their previous culture (peasant and petty bourgeois) has yet to be replaced by a working class culture. These workers have a basically individualistic approach to their problems and deprivations; they are unaware of their collective power, mistrustful of others and try to overcome their problems through individual efforts. The collective actions (e.g. strikes) that took place during the last two decades were so limited that they did not even begin to familiarise the new generation of workers with a working class consciousness. Those who talk about the corruption of, or influence of non-proletarian culture in, the working class ought to realise that what they see is neither corruption nor the replacement of working class culture by an alien culture. Rather it is a sign of the inexperience of the working class amongst whom a proletarian culture has not had time to take root.

Unfortunately, before collective actions start to develop — which will initially be in the form of an economic movement like strikes — there is no chance that the working class will miraculously begin to absorb proletarian culture. And without such a culture, they will be unable to perform their historical task. This, then, is the objective weakness of the working-class movement in Iran at the present time.

It must be emphasised that some sections of the working class do nevertheless enjoy class consciousness. However, their lack of growth (in size and experience) has created a certain sense of resignation and despair. A clear example of this would be the printing workers, particularly the typesetters. To understand the culture of every section of the working class is a task which has to be undertaken by those organisations that have connections with them. There are enormous differences of culture between brick-factory workers and, say, lathe-turners; indeed sometimes it is hard to find a wider gap even between two classes. The culture of industrial workers, similarly, is considerably different from that of ordinary labourers. In such a short space we are not able really even to touch on this vast subject. Our aim is merely to make clear the depth of the problem and thereby warn against any superficial approach.

Working-class culture, in its entirety, undergoes changes in various phases of its development, as does that of other strata of society. However, when we talk of a 'proletarian culture', we mean the main features of this culture that can be clearly distinguished from the culture of other classes. The main features of a proletarian culture are a feeling of sympathy and comradeship

towards one another; sympathy and generosity towards other workers; unity and solidarity; a progressive attitude and readiness for self-sacrifice; hatred of reactionary regimes and capitalists in general; and vigilance, precision, audacity and perseverance. The progressive attitude of the working class reveals itself in the fact that, despite an insufficient education, the class shows unexpected adroitness in its approach to religious, moral and intellectual issues.

Compared with the working class, some sections of the petty bourgeoisie, such as small shopkeepers and Government employees, who enjoy better education and more material comforts, are quite conservative. What some of the petty-bourgeois organisations are unable to appreciate is that, based on their own values and ways of thinking, they expect to find the workers on the same level of understanding as themselves or more backward. They cannot see the difference of approach between a relatively educated shopkeeper and a hardly literate industrial worker. From the very start of his life a worker begins to absorb and express his culture, albeit in a crude and primitive form. It is only in conjunction with a continuous and extensive working-class movement that the full potentialities of this slow, but nevertheless spontaneous, growth can be realised. The working class can, in a relatively short period of political activity, attain cultural maturity at a speed quite out of proportion to decades of political stagnation, and this will provide the basis for its ideological growth. Therefore, the spread of proletarian consciousness amongst workers is not possible through limited individual activities (e.g. individual political education and recruitment of sympathisers).

Although working-class vanguard organisations are well aware of the potential force of the working class, they ought not to be deceived by its numerical size, and place too much emphasis on its actual power. On the other hand, pessimism towards, and a lack of faith in, the working class, as well as a denial of its potentialities, is tantamount to breaking contact with it.

This problem is reflected in the position of the trade unions and working class political organisations. In the first case, the unions must obviously be assessed in terms of their genuineness or otherwise, and in terms of their connections with working class political organisations. Genuine trade unions have a vital role to play in the development of working class culture, thereby helping to pave the way for the political growth of the class. As we all know, present conditions are not conducive to the emergence of genuine trade unions. Neither is it possible to set up such unions in secret, since the role of unions necessitates their exploitation of legal and open channels, however limited. Although a group of workers might come together and engage in organising some activities it cannot be regarded as a trade union. Despite the present dictatorial climate and police surveillance, the existing legal trade unions can be exploited by conscious workers, and failure to do so will be harmful to the working class. Needless to say, these same controlled trade unions will develop some sense of solidarity and unity amongst the workers. For the mass of young workers, the existence of such unions at least incul-

cates the idea of organisation and struggle. Conscious elements amongst the workers, as well as working class political organisations, should cautiously exploit the facilities offered by these unions to spread and strengthen proletarian culture and consciousness.

Because of the present disunity amongst the various working-class political organisations, there is a lack of a unified vanguard movement representing the Iranian proletariat. The composition of political organisations in relation to the structure of our society is such that in present conditions only intellectuals form the bulk of their membership. The reasons behind this state of affairs are the objective conditions of struggle: disunity amongst vanguard organisations and the influence of opportunism on our working-class movement, which has had a hindering or at least confusing effect on it, thus stopping politically conscious workers from joining revolutionary groups. So the struggle against the people's enemy is combined with ideological in-fighting amongst progressive organisations. The unity of these organisations can only be achieved as a result of a process of struggle against the enemy that goes on alongside an ideological struggle within. Despite the unsatisfactory political position of the working class, there exists no easy way of dealing with differences, however superficial an agreement we might wish for. No doubt Marxist-Leninist organisations engaged in armed struggle have taken useful steps in the past two years towards the creation of a unified revolutionary vanguard, although they are still a long way from achieving this aim. The move towards unity is necessarily slow and has to be achieved in stages: the first being ideological unity among some organisations, and the second being the extension of that unity to the whole of the working-class movement, i.e. the creation of a unified vanguard. To achieve this we envisage three distinct stages: (1) unity based on a fundamental analysis of the movement's past record; (2) unity around strategy and tactics; and (3) unity on secondary ideological issues. These goals can be realised only during a process of struggle and not around a conference table. Nevertheless, exchanges of views on various topics do not contradict these three principles, and the present book is a contribution to this process.

Unity in the liberation movement as a whole is not dependent on unity within the working class movement alone. Nevertheless, without the latter an attempt to achieve wider unity will be limited. It may also be claimed that, if a universal unity is to comprise the working class political organisations, then without a united proletarian front wider unity is unattainable.

Another subject that ought to be touched on here is the role of intellectuals, and petty-bourgeois elements generally in the working class movement. Such a role is neither particularly progressive nor unusual. The situation of any exploited society necessitates such a role. During the past few decades, the intellectuals have lent their active support to our proletarian movement and backed it through thick and thin. We must accept this as a feature of our society (and most other similar societies), providing we are alive to the weaknesses that it is liable to exert on the working class movement. Now, after decades of struggle we can recognise a great number of

these weaknesses: they reveal themselves in the form of petty bourgeois tendencies (opportunism) and can only be kept in check with determined methods. And a separation between the various generations of fighters, and an absence of a scientific analysis of the past, are liable to cause such shortcomings to recur. There is a wide gap between the acceptance of working class ideology by intellectuals in principle and its practice. This gap can only be closed in the process of struggle.

The Role of the Peasantry

The economic and social changes that have taken place in the rural areas in the past ten years have carried a redistribution of the rural population with the result that the peasantry's class character has been torn apart. This process has differentiated the class into distinct strata that have lost their unity in the context of the new economic system. The smallholders, who are subdivided into different sections (prosperous, middle, and poor) are the biggest stratum of the peasantry. The landless peasants are even more deprived than the smallholders, while fewer in number. The most deprived of all, and smallest stratum, are the nomadic tribes — if it is even possible to classify them under the broad rubric of peasantry. Because of their possession of a piece of land, the smallholders come into contact with the comprador bourgeoisie and the regime. While the landless peasants are less likely to come under economic pressure from the regime and the bourgeoisie, they, like the proletariat, are forced to sell their labour at give-away prices. Yet they are counted for nothing, as less even than the proletariat, although they form nearly one million of the two to three million peasant families in Iran.

Nomadic tribes, whose main means of support is livestock farming, have been rapidly disappearing during the past two decades. Whereas the enforced settlement of livestock farmers (who were pastoralists) by Reza Khan failed to yield the required results, the economic necessities of the past two decades have had considerable effects on stabilising this section of the population and compelling them to engage in arable farming. Wherever there appeared to be suitable conditions for arable farming and the permanent settlement of the tribes (e.g. on the Gorgan plateau in the north and the Mogan plateau in the north-east), their cultural traditions of nomadism were ignored. On the other hand, these same tribes, when forced to settle or emigrate under the threat of bayonets, returned to their traditional way of life as soon as the pressure was off. Nevertheless, transformation of nomadic livestock farming into a settled form did take place in most tribal areas, such as Kurdistan, Fars and Liristan. The land reform affected the tribes in two ways. Firstly, with the downfall of the feudal Khan who, as head of the tribe, exploited a group of villages and their thousands of peasants, the tribal organisation to a great extent disintegrated. Secondly, economic growth and the redistribution of land guaranteed the annihilation of nomadic livestock

production. Limitations on grazing land, under the guise of 'grazing land nationalisation', have curtailed the freedom of the nomadic tribes, and acted as a direct economic pressure to force them to quit a nomadic existence and look for jobs in town or on farms. Some of these displaced tribespeople have swelled the number of shanty town dwellers. As a result of drought, and because of the limitations imposed on the use of grazing lands, great numbers of livestock have been destroyed. Moreover, because of the disintegration of tribal organisation, the tribes, contrary to their long-standing traditions, have been unable to organise revolts against the regime in pursuit of their economic and political demands.

Although our knowledge of economic processes in the rural areas during recent years is quite considerable, we have unfortunately no comprehensive data about the effect of these processes, and resulting contradictions, on the psychology of the rural strata. There is no doubt that the smallholders are dissatisfied with the pressure they are under. When the Government takes away their private land and instead gives them a share in agricultural joint-stock companies, they feel that they have been tricked and that the Land Reform, which, in the form of that piece of land, had given them hope, turns out to be an empty shell. And when the farmers below the Dez Dam are forced to turn their lands over to big agribusiness combines, they undoubtedly resent such compulsion. In the face of other difficulties, unjust practices and pressures, the peasants are bound to realise that the Land Reform was nothing but a mirage and that nobody, except for a relatively small number of petty landlords, has had a share in the spoils. Poverty continues while the Reform has increased people's expectations. How is this dissatisfaction reflected among farmers? Have those farmers who, in the initial stages of the Reform, looked to the future with vague hope, become angry with their present disappointments? The disappearance of feudalism and the present complexity of the system of exploitation have, on the other hand, created a kind of satisfaction and some hope among a generation that had become used to being ensnared, and have now had the feudalists taken off their backs without themselves having had to do anything. They can see with their own eyes that the two resources of land and water are now in their grasp, and with these they can provide comfort for their families. But the problems and pressures of recent years since the Land Reform have jerked the peasants out of their dreams into the world of reality. However, we have no idea what kind of reaction this backward peasant culture — to which petty bourgeois narrow-mindedness has been added because of possession of a plot of land — is likely to yield.² To assess the peasants' true state of mind and outlook, one has to get in direct touch with this class and its day-to-day existence. And unfortunately this has not been possible for the present writer to do.

It is worth remembering the general principle that, merely because of their greater poverty and deprivation, the *khosh-nashins* (landless peasants) are not necessarily readier for revolution than the smallholders. Whereas under revolutionary conditions this section of the peasants has great reserves of

revolutionary spirit, in the absence of such conditions they, like some important sections of the proletariat, are in a state of deep unawareness, resignation and torpor. Here, too, it is imperative that this stratum, a great number of whom are constantly flowing between urban and rural areas and have the distinction of coming face to face with political and social events, should be known and assessed at close quarters.

In the case of tribes, the main problem at the moment is the disorganised state of the tribal system. The tribes' martial spirit was largely dependent on their traditional organisation, including the political and economic role of the Khan. What is there now to replace this old form of concentrated organisation? Although the tribes possess a rebellious spirit and military capacity, it would be a highly complex problem for the urban revolutionary forces to employ this capacity.

The final point to bear in mind is the attention that should be paid to the new generation in the rural areas, the generation that has not felt the devastating and inhibiting domination of the landlord and his farm manager. There is no barrier between them and the world of the urban areas, as there was for their fathers (in the form of serfdom to the feudalists). This generation recognises no god-sent authority that might attempt to justify its deprivations. The regime, too, knows it to be of a different character. Collective organs and a constant relationship with the urban areas have helped to increase its general awareness. The expansion of education, albeit at the stage of the regime's piffling 'Education Corps', will also have its effect on the intellectual development of this generation. In response to the deprivations and economic disadvantages of the rural areas, this generation will have different reactions to that shown by the previous one. In the near future the progressive movement must carefully watch the changing moods of this new generation.

The Composition of the Petty Bourgeoisie

This large and varied stratum comprises the majority of the urban population and can be differentiated on the basis of several criteria. On the basis of the share of production that accrues to the petty bourgeoisie, they can be divided into three sections, each having different grounds for relating to the governing system and the revolution: (a) the prosperous section who are almost untouched by the regime's exploitation although they are oppressed by it and by imperialism (this section is the least prepared for a progressive move); (b) the middle sections who do not receive their fair share for the work they do, and so are both exploited and oppressed by the regime; and (c) the poor sections of the petty bourgeoisie who in some cases are more exploited than the proletariat. Although the latter are exploited to such a degree, they nevertheless follow a petty-bourgeois culture and are devoid of any proletarian revolutionary character. But they are readier for a protest movement than any other sections of the petty bourgeoisie.

Other divisions of the petty bourgeoisie (which help us to know its various

sections from a different viewpoint) can be made on the basis of their economic and social relationship to the system of production. The question here is, which sections of the petty bourgeoisie achieve economic growth as a result of the overall growth of the system, and which sections disintegrate as a result of such growth?

Considering the vastness of the bureaucracy and the presence of unproductive sections as well as indirect producers, some sections of the petty bourgeoisie clearly are growing while, due to the nature of capitalism and the increasing growth of large industrial, commercial and financial capital, other sections are in a process of disintegration. The vastness of the bureaucracy has caused the growth of the civil service, some of which is superfluous and unproductive, while some others are indirect producers. The growth of military personnel and police organisations has led to the expansion of the unproductive and superfluous sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The growth of the comprador bourgeoisie has increased the number of people employed by private institutions, including the system of distribution. At the same time the system's need to expand education, plus the increase in the living standards of some urban and rural sections, has caused an increase in the number of educational establishments from primary to higher levels. The needs of industry and other private institutions demand a considerable growth in the system of education (for workers, lower-grade staff, engineers, bureaucrats and technocrats). The expansion of these petty bourgeois sections, which is the result of the dependent economy and enormous increase in foreign exchange earnings from oil, has caused a rapid but uneven growth of schoolchildren, undergraduates and teachers.

Thus we see that, with the growth of the system of dependent capitalism, the above-mentioned sections of the petty bourgeoisie also grow. The growth and prosperity of the system will initially raise the living standards of these sections. And such prosperity can also reduce temporarily the system's contradiction with the working class. However, it is this same growth which is potentially able to intensify the contradictions within the system, forcing the appearance of economic crises. Such crises, which stem from the inherent shortcomings of the system, will bring the contradictions to the surface, causing increasing dissatisfaction amongst both the expanding petty bourgeoisie and the workers.

Let us now examine the parts of the petty bourgeoisie that are declining. The reason is that the growth of domestic capital and the invasion by foreign capital cut the ground from under small capital and the old system of workshop production and distribution. These sections will mostly disappear before the onrush of large capital and the new dependent industrial system. A very small proportion will take refuge in peripheral regions of the country. But by and large those trades that are condemned to bankruptcy will be vacated, and their former occupants will move into the developing sections of the petty bourgeoisie, or be forced into the working class or those trades that have not as yet been subjected to attack. However, the onslaught continues relentlessly. Every day we witness the bankruptcy and disappearance of some

tradesmen. The onslaught of the economic processes and their basic direction facilitate the annihilation of these sections. With the dwindling of small capital and the further enlargement of big capital, the small-scale distribution outlets are forced to retreat and eventually die out. Of course, this is not a process that will get rid of these sections in a few years. But the constant pressure on them is so great and tangible that it is difficult to deny its importance.

Another section under pressure is the clergy. They are suffering both cultural and economic pressure and are retreating. The end of feudalism weakened them both through causing a shortage of funds and depriving them of the support they used to enjoy from the feudalists. Today with the dissolution of small capital and the disappearance of many tradesmen and shopkeepers, a big source of income has been taken away from the clergy. The annihilation of these sections of the petty bourgeoisie is important to the clergy not only from an economic point of view, but also because religion plays an important role in the formation of culture amongst these sections. With their increasing weakness, the socio-economic position of the clergy is also seriously threatened and this paves the way for the regime's domination over this class. The loss of an independent source of income for the clergy will culminate in the loss of all political influence.

Side by side with weakening of the tradesmen, small businessmen and small bourgeoisie, the regime has already started an official programme of taking over the clergy's non-agricultural endowment properties and is actively bringing religious organisations under its control. Religious shrines are being taken away from people and run like Government departments. The Government has appointed special bodies to administer the mosques, religious squares, and pilgrims to the various religious shrines as well as those going to Mecca.

In such conditions the clergy have no choice but to become dependent on Government hand-outs like any civil servant. Hence, it is not surprising to see that the upper crust of the clergy, quite apart from their nationalist background, are dissatisfied with the regime and regard it as their enemy. In the face of a great revolutionary war, the bulk of the clergy's leadership, because of their reactionary traits, will naturally side with the regime. Only that section of the clergy, representing the national and petty bourgeoisies, will feel able to go along with a bourgeois democratic (but not a people's democratic) revolution.

With the growth, as we have seen, of the comprador bourgeoisie and the system of dependent capitalism, the declining sections headed by the national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and clergy will come under heavy economic as well as political pressure. For them to feel a serious threat to their position, there is no need of a crisis within the system. The growth and prosperity of the system is itself tantamount to the beginning of a decline. Thus these sections will begin to protest against the regime and the system in a situation where they are losing their economic positions. The national bourgeoisie, having been subjected to such pressure over the previous two decades, made

its last protest through the Second National Front Movement (1961–63); it has since lost its active role. During the last decade it has become the turn of the clergy and other petty-bourgeois sections to protest. And this is continuing. These protests, together with the tough attitude adopted by intellectuals against the regime, form the main feature of the movement today – a movement which has not as yet successfully rallied the various forces of the toiling masses (workers, peasants, etc.) around them.

Before we analyse the cultural and political characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie, it is necessary to know a little about its composition. Using the total number of occupations and trades that come under the heading of petty bourgeois, this class makes up 25% of all the working population. (In the case of farmers, each family has been counted as one unit, bringing the total to 42% amongst farmers.) Moreover, nearly 15% of the population have been through high school or higher education for at least 12 years. This number is already included in the above 25%. (It is important to note that the number of undergraduates in Iran during the past ten years has risen from about 20,000 to over 100,000.) The occupational division (approximate figures) of the above is as follows: Government employees and civil servants (not including the workers in Government economic establishments) about 700,000; workshop managers and independent tradesmen in towns and rural areas 150,000; salesmen in shops (including shopowners, salaried sales staff and independent individuals) 500,000; salaried staff in private commercial and production establishments 300,000; self-employed individuals, such as doctors, architects, engineers, solicitors, barristers, writers, artists, middlemen, consultants, 50,000; the clergy and religious students 70,000; undergraduates inside the country and abroad 140,000; secondary school pupils (5th and 6th formers) 500,000. Such is the economic and social make-up of the vast and heterogeneous petty bourgeoisie that has had, and will continue to play, an undeniable role in the social and political processes of our country.

The peculiar differences that exist between the various sections of the petty bourgeoisie in relation to the ownership of the means of production, their role in the division of labour and their share in society's total production, causes great cultural divergences between them. Some are akin to the workers and peasants, others are indistinguishable from the bourgeoisie. For example, compare a doctor with his monthly income of £2,000 with a hawker whose total capital, even in these days of inflation, does not exceed one pound and whose income is less than an ordinary worker.

Nevertheless, some common characteristics, stemming from the dual nature of their connection with the relations of production, can be traced in all sections of the petty bourgeoisie: individualism and its many different facets; narrow-mindedness; liberalism, which is a direct result of individualism; backward-looking attitudes manifesting themselves in the form of philosophical and artistic idealism and religious superstition; a sudden liking for things and immediate responses in the event of some occurrence or excitement

(the petty bourgeoisie always moves sooner than the toiling masses); lack of perseverance; impatience and rapid tiredness with the struggle; lack of a spirit of sacrifice in the true sense of the word — all these traits can be found in more or less all the petty-bourgeois sections. Of course, the extent of these characteristics varies according to whether they are in the prosperous category or the middle section or the poor one.

Looked at from another angle, while the declining sections of the petty bourgeoisie should be the more ready to protest, and their future is obviously interwoven with that of the masses, their spontaneous mood is nevertheless one of disappointed anger. While they try to register their protest as a means of saving themselves from collapse, these sections will never reach a stage where they feel able to use the working-class slogan 'Death is preferable to living like this.' The backward-looking tendencies of writers like Ale-Ahmad are a reflection of the attitude adopted by the vanishing national bourgeoisie and declining sections of the petty bourgeoisie. Left to themselves, or worse still, adhered to by the movement, these petty bourgeois tendencies are liable to lead the revolutionary movement into deviation and ultimately collapse. It is the duty of progressive forces, whether in the working class or outside it, to overcome these tendencies and use the waves of protest by these sections to expand the movement and mobilise the people's forces.

Although the intellectuals, being a social stratum in their own right, could belong to any of the various classes of society, they must be regarded as part of the petty bourgeoisie. A student or teacher who might have come from a peasant or working-class family is a petty bourgeois. The general definition of an intellectual is someone who, with education as their resource, engages in mental activity and thereby makes a living. The extent of this knowledge and the way it has been acquired varies from society to society. It may even vary in a particular society in its different stages. On the eve of the Constitutional Revolution (1906–08) in Iran, anyone who had passed the primary stages of education or had a religious education was regarded as an intellectual. Today, the successful completion of at least a secondary education is the criterion, whereas in advanced industrial societies this level would not be sufficient to put one in the intellectual category. Thus the economic definition of an intellectual is summed up in terms of a certain quantum of knowledge. But the social and psychological definition is quite different: an intellectual in these terms comprises only those professions that necessitate an active and progressive approach to society's problems. Under this definition, therefore, only those people are regarded as intellectuals who are directly involved in shaping society's way of thinking, and whose lives as well as their professions make their involvement with society's culture unavoidable. This definition of intellectual in our country will embrace students, teachers (from primary to higher education), writers, artists, part of the clergy (the educated section), and perhaps university graduates who support themselves through their own work. As is clear, there is no cultural unity even in this stratum, despite its being more precise than the wider definition of intellectual. For example, there is a clear divergence of culture between the

clergy on the one hand, and students and teachers on the other. Nevertheless, the role played by these sections in social and economic processes is very similar.

The fact that intellectuals come into frequent contact with social problems, and that theoretical education provides a basis for their understanding and relatively greater consciousness, has always had an important bearing on social and political changes. Although the role of these intellectuals takes shape in the cultural background of the stratum, its ideological content manifests itself in different and sometimes contradictory tendencies. A part of this section will end up defending the ruling ideology, but the bulk of them will play their progressive role, i.e. will act against the ruling system. During the past few decades, this opposition force has been divided into the two main wings of the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Therefore, while the intellectuals accept the ideologies of the national bourgeoisie or the working class, they preserve their own cultural features in relation to both these forces. In order to purge intellectuals of their petty bourgeois features and make them accept proletarian culture, they have to have long and sustained involvement with the movement. Basic theoretical education can be beneficial only in the context of serious struggle which at the same time transforms the social and living conditions of the intellectuals. Nevertheless, the aim of such education is not to rid the intellectual of all his cultural traits. In other words, a working-class intellectual will remain so, and will only lose those negative traits that are in contradiction with proletarian ideology.

The Clergy and Intelligentsia

The fact that the regime's dictatorship is a principal factor in the present situation has obliged the liberation movement to accept the fight against the dictatorship as the principal aspect of the struggle at this stage. In conditions where the toiling masses have a limited scope for collective action and have lagged behind politically, the petty-bourgeois sections have, according to their class characteristics, shown greater readiness for political growth. This phenomenon has appeared in the form of better preparedness on the part of those sections, compared to the workers and other toiling masses.

The motives behind this movement of the petty bourgeoisie and its protest against the regime are of two kinds. Firstly, their consciousness and material conditions of life are conducive to their considerable political activity. Secondly, the extraordinary economic pressure brought to bear on the declining sections of this class forces them to protest and try to defend their existence. The combination of these two motives is the *raison d'être* of a movement whose main force comes from the petty-bourgeois sections. This movement, with its anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorship orientation, is the inheritor of the mantle of the liberation movement and bearer of all its traditions of struggle.

The movement nurtures two currents within itself: one is the working-class revolutionary movement, and the other the movement of the nationalist and, on the whole, non-proletarian forces, that carry on the movement of the national bourgeoisie. With the destruction and absorption of the national bourgeoisie by the dependent capitalist system, and the intensification of the contradiction between the clergy and the regime, the progressive section of the clergy has played a more active role in the leadership of the non-proletarian wing of the movement. This has helped revive religious ideology amongst intellectuals, progressive elements and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie. In other words, whereas in the previous decades modernised religious tendencies had a smaller share in the world outlook of the national forces, such an outlook has played, and continues now to play, a major role. This trend is the result of the anti-regime activities of the big clergy on the one hand, and the political defeat of the national bourgeoisie and ideological bankruptcy of the National Front³ during its last period of struggle (1960–63) on the other.

Apart from the clergy, there is another section that is gaining importance in the non-proletarian movement. This section, which represents the petty-bourgeois segment of the intelligentsia, is trying to wrest the leadership of this movement from the clergy and the remnants of the national bourgeois organisation by creating a mixed-up ideology that projects a kind of progressive image. A rivalry for the leadership of the petty-bourgeois sections can be detected between this and other nationalist currents. At the same time these non-proletarian factions do, as usual, deny that they are upholding any class interest. From the clergy to the radical petty-bourgeois organisations, they all claim that they represent a national leadership, i.e. they profess to be the leader of all classes and all strata of society. Nevertheless, we cannot assess these currents on the basis of what they claim but on the basis of their ideological reality and what they do. The radical petty-bourgeois currents have painted nationalist and religious ideologies with a socialist colour by borrowing proletarian ideology, some of its analytic concepts, and its organisational traditions. This affinity to the world outlook of the working class is a sign of the objective realities of the time as well as the fact that the basic tendencies of the masses must be taken heed of. If it is accepted by politically conscious intellectuals that the people will not triumph without the active support of the toiling masses, then it becomes essential to pay attention to the global class outlook and economic needs of these masses, and in particular the proletariat at its centre, and to use this ploy to achieve leadership of these forces. This brings home to the petty-bourgeois currents the objective necessity of paying attention to proletarian ideology. The resultant concoction is an amalgam of religious nationalism and socialism, or even Marxism.

An important section of intellectuals, as well as progressive elements and other petty-bourgeois sections, have tendencies to move towards accepting proletarian ideology. In the absence of a revolutionary and united proletarian vanguard these tendencies, as reflected in various political currents, enjoy

differing degrees of ideological purity. At the moment these currents are open to various non-proletarian ideologies, although they will, gradually and step by step in the process of practice, absorb proletarian theory and education. The progressive elements from amongst the working class will take part in this process and play an important role in this educational and theoretical advance.

The main problem facing these currents is disunity and dispersion. These problems have to be ended if the vast forces of the masses are to be harnessed. This is possible only through a correct strategic and tactical programme of action and through a display of competence in the process of struggle. At the same time, it would be a great mistake if these organisations, and generally all working-class organisations, neglected to attract the vast forces of the petty bourgeoisie. This is so not only because these forces are part of the people's forces who should be guided into the ranks of the liberation movement led by the working class, but also because today they are more prepared, and it is via their struggle that the toiling masses must be mobilised. Attention must be paid to the needs of these sections, and at the same time care taken not to follow their ideology or buy their support via ideological concessions. This exacting task requires an experience which will save us from collapsing into ultra-'left' or 'right' deviations — an experience which will have to be acquired at a great cost.

The National Bourgeoisie

From an economic point of view the national bourgeoisie today continues to exist in small-scale industrial, commercial and agricultural undertakings. These remnants of the past are at the moment under pressure from comprador capital and will inevitably see their position deteriorate even further. However, from a political and social point of view, the traditions of the national bourgeoisie — with roughly a century of struggle behind it — are deeply rooted in the various strata of the petty bourgeoisie. These are not the sort of traditions that can disappear as a result of the national bourgeoisie's current economic weakness. Even today the political remnants of this class (in the form of fraternal associations) continue their communal type of existence. On the other hand, a small section of the higher clergy is regarded as the political representative of the national bourgeoisie. Therefore, these traditions and remnants must not be underrated. In the contemporary movement the vanguard organisations of the working class must avoid a one-sided assessment of what forces are available, and should not merely concentrate on radical political currents. Although the organisations attached to the armed revolutionary movement are at this moment the most active force available, other organisations have large followings and enjoy political prestige among certain petty-bourgeois sections. In so far as unity at this stage does not have a democratic and revolutionary content, and since socialist and Marxist tendencies among the radical nationalist organisations do not have great significance, it is important to note that unity and co-

operation must be extended to cover all nationalist forces. Any organisation that is engaged in the fight against the dictatorial regime and imperialism can enjoy the support and co-operation of vanguard proletarian revolutionary organisations.

The Lumpenproletariat and the Subproletariat

Because of the expansion of the present system, the ever-increasing migration of deprived peasants to towns has gained momentum. And the dependent nature of the economy and industry, which is not geared to absorb these impoverished migrants into commerce, manufacturing and other occupations, will gradually create layers of extremely deprived people in the towns and surrounding areas where they will encircle the system of dependent capitalism. This accumulated force, lacking any skill, capital or education, faces continuous unemployment and horrific deprivation. Standards of sanitation and nutrition and material conditions will decline to such an extent that they will not be comparable to any other urban or rural group. This reserve army of unemployed has, due to a terrific drop in their standard of living, to live in far worse conditions than the workers. This is what qualifies it as a 'subproletariat'.

This section will take shape in the form of shanty town and 'black-spot' dwellers in the big cities. Their lives are characterised by employment in temporary jobs requiring hard work with low pay, peddling, scavenging, living off food thrown away by people in the prosperous residential areas and army barracks, and so on. This stratum has taken shape in South American countries over a number of decades, but has been on the increase in our country particularly during the past ten years. It is also a by-product of the system of dependent capitalism and is the inevitable counterpoint to the minority consumer society.

There is a fundamental difference between this section and the lumpenproletariat, which comprises depraved classless elements. Whereas petty smugglers, thieves, professional hooligans and louts, and prostitutes are the most important components of the lumpenproletariat, the shanty town dwellers, peddlers, and temporary labourers are the main manifestations of the subproletariat. This class forms a considerable reserve for the working class. The horrific deprivation and feeling of gaping inequality when comparing themselves with the bourgeoisie and prosperous petty bourgeoisie does occasionally push them into a state of explosion culminating in spontaneous and bloody riots. At the stage of general mobilisation of the masses, the working class movement will be able to take these sections into account, as the non-proletarian movement does too.

As for the lumpenproletariat, they come from that section of society which, despite deep economic deprivation, lacks any productive role and because of the ignorance and corruption prevailing in society have lost their class characteristics and are themselves thrown into corruption and degrada-

tion. Thieves, beggars, petty smugglers, prostitutes and louts are the main sections of this stratum. The lumpenproletariat has a degenerate culture which is fundamentally different from that of the toilers. Slovenliness, ignorance, superstition, parasitism, vulgarity and violence, sexual perversion and sloth are the main features of their culture. These economic and cultural conditions prepare this class for use by internal reactionary forces for their counter-revolutionary aims. In the past, the latter have frequently employed the lumpenproletariat against the people, and particularly against the working class. Attacks on strikers and demonstrators under the very eyes of the police and Army, the setting up of reactionary gangs and even the resort to counter-revolutionary terrorism are all anti-popular methods employed by this social scum in support of the ruling class.

The first time they were used was in Toopkhaneh Square in the centre of Tehran for a reactionary sit-in against the Constitutional Revolution (1906–09). Then came the mob assault on the leaders and activists of the Constitutional revolutionaries after the *coup d'état* of Mohammad-Ali Shah (1910–11). Actions during the first years of Reza Khan's rule (the present Shah's father) followed, as did others, during the conspiracy against the working class of 1945–46 and the conspiracy of March 1952. The last and most important one was during the (C.I.A.-directed) *coup d'état* of 1953. The role of the lumpenproletariat was there for all the world to see. In this coup, louts and prostitutes staged counter-revolutionary demonstrations under the protection and guidance of police and Army detachments. Shaban Bimokh and Teyyeb⁴ were the most infamous individuals from this class taking part in these demonstrations. Some of the wealthier degenerates of this class actually rank amongst the rich capitalists because of their exploits in extortion, smuggling, official rewards and so on. While these aristocrats of the lumpenproletariat receive enormous windfalls, the mass of people in this class grapple with terrible deprivation. Their numbers are very considerable. Approximate figures for different sections would be: professional prostitutes 10,000; semi-professional prostitutes (i.e. those who earn only part of their living through prostitution) between 30,000 and 50,000; professional smugglers over 50,000 (the widespread use of drugs, particularly heroin, has forced an enormous number of people to fall into the smugglers' trap, and since heroin addiction is a threat mainly to the young, the regime benefits from the expansion of such habits); professional hooligans, louts and tramps who make a living through extortion, begging, etc., over 50,000. Therefore it is clear how considerable a number of people has been transformed and compelled to live a parasitic existence and become an anti-progressive element.

What is of note here is that, while some sections have grown as a result of increased smuggling, prostitution, etc., the system of dependent capitalism has undermined other occupations which used to be the breeding ground of lumpenproletarian culture, such as bus-conducting. Impudence, violence and foul language were the true picture of this 'profession'. With the formation

of a unified Tehran Transport Company, and the consequent change in the production and economic relations in this sector, the lumpen qualifications formerly needed were no longer required. Bus drivers and conductors today, more than in the past, have acquired proletarian characteristics. Other jobs in which lumpenproletarian traits are on the decline, as a result of large-scale capitalist growth, are the cattle slaughter trade and the vegetable and fruit markets.

In conditions where the revolutionary movement is moving towards mass mobilisation, even the lumpenproletariat, like other deprived sections of society, will find the chance to play a positive role in the revolution. They will become considerably proletarianised during the stage of general mass battles. Nevertheless, after the revolution, the proper reform of this important section of the deprived masses is one of the first tasks of the revolutionary government. With the change in economic conditions and a productive role assigned to members of the lumpenproletariat, the material conditions will be there for uprooting its lumpen culture.

A phenomenon that can be seen in the progressive movement is the inability of some intellectual currents to draw a line between this section of society and the toiling masses. Some intellectuals, instead of learning proletarian culture, tend to imitate lumpen sub-culture. By adopting lumpen characteristics, some intellectuals intend to 'proletarianise' themselves, but all they do is become 'lumpen intellectuals'. Excessive drinking of alcohol, womanising, swearing, the use of lumpen jokes and expressions, together with a romantic expectation of sacrifice, adventurousness and excessive generosity, are all lumpen tendencies found among some intellectuals. While revolutionary individuals and organisations feel no class enmity and hatred towards this section of society, they do nonetheless have to fight relentlessly against it in furtherance of revolutionary aims. This, of course, is exactly like a surgical operation in which malignant parts have to be removed and disposed of. The education of the lumpenproletariat is a fundamental task which has to be faced after the triumph of the revolution.

Notes

1. See *Land Reform in Iran and Its Direct Effects* by the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas, translated and published by the Iran Committee.
2. Research in this and many other fields has now been completed and published by the O.I.P.F.G. The results have yet to be translated into English.
3. A motley collection of nationalist parties and loose groupings who supported Dr. Mossadeq in his fight for oil nationalisation in the period 1950-53.
4. Two very well-known Tehrani louts with a persistent record of extortion, protection racketeering, etc., who were employed by the C.I.A. under the direct orders of Richard Helms. Shaban Bimokh (literally 'the brainless', a title he was proud to have and boast about) became, and still is, a close friend of the Shah, from whom he has received handsome

remunerations. The second, Teyyeb, fell out with the Shah, presumably for not receiving sufficient reward. He was arrested in 1963 and shot on the Shah's orders.

Postscript: Iran after the Fall of the Shah

***Publisher's Note:** The two pieces presented in this Postscript are both taken from the official workers' journal of the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas (O.I.P.F.G.) or Fedaii-e-Khalq. Many issues have arisen in Iran since the ousting of the Shah in February 1979, including the future position of Iran's national minorities (notably, the Kurds), the nature of the country's new system of government, and the future legality or otherwise of left-wing opposition. (The Ayatollah Khomeini criticised in June 1980 both the secular O.I.P.F.G. and the Islamic Mujahedeen-e-Khalq.) In the two extracts that follow, the Fedaii-e-Khalq takes up two other issues: the extent to which the Shah's overthrow also constitutes a revolutionary defeat of the system of dependent capitalism in Iran (which, of course, Bizhan Jazani has analysed at length in this book), and secondly the likely future strategy of the United States in seeking to recuperate the losses imperialism has sustained in Iran. The resolution of both issues will critically affect the future course of the Iranian Revolution.*

Has Dependent Capitalism Been Defeated?

Following the crisis which plagued the Iranian economy since 1976, the expansion of dependent industries slowed down. The capital owned by the imperialists and the dependent capitalist class began to be drained from Iran and invested in other markets where it could expand more easily. During 1977, investment by such capitalists in Iran declined drastically and additionally accumulated profits continued to be transferred abroad. In 1978, and particularly during the second half of the year which coincided with the persistent struggle of the heroic people of Iran, imperialism and the dependent capitalist class, which both sensed danger, transferred almost all their assets abroad. The Government's policy and the policies pursued by the dependent banking system paved the way for this enormous drain of resources from Iran. The enormous credits offered to these dependent firms were often in excess of their fixed assets (i.e. plant, machinery, stocks, etc.), to the extent that, if these capitalists deserted their factories and fled the country, they would only leave their debts behind. This, in fact, is what has really taken place. Most of these capitalists transferred their enormous wealth, accumulated as a result of brutal exploitation of the Iranian workers

and Iran's natural resources, abroad and some of them even fled the country. Such circumstances explain, why after the glorious uprising of February 1979, nothing except firms in debt and deserted bankrupt factories remained in the main industrial sectors of the economy.

The Provisional Government faced a two-fold dilemma on the question of these industries, similar to its problem with the dependent banks.

First, despite its commitment to restart these factories, the Government failed to operate them. This failure clearly indicated the consequences of technological dependence. In general, to operate these dependent industries, a close relationship with the monopolies from the imperialist countries is essential because the existence of these industries is feasible only within the network of international monopolies owned by the imperialists. The required techniques, raw materials and even management of these dependent industries are usually supplied by international monopolies. Consequently, to operate these industries on their former basis, the imperialist relationship between the monopolies and the dependent industries of Iran would have to be revived and consolidated. Furthermore, owing to the fact that the main sectors of industrial activity in the country are located in these industries or are directly or indirectly connected with them, the Iranian economy could not recover unless these dependent industries resumed operation. It was, of course, possible to adopt a fundamentally different policy based on ending the imperialist relationship and changing the direction of Iranian industries altogether. But such policy was in vivid contradiction with the class structure of Bazargan's Provisional Government. The announcement by Moulavi, head of the Central Bank of Iran, will prove our point. He explicitly invited the capitalists who had fled the country to return and do what they had been doing in the past. He also gave an example which clearly indicates the overall direction of the Government's policy of reviving the imperialist relationships of the past. This high-ranking official of the Provisional Government has even invited robbers such as Rezaii to return to their 'fatherland' and resume operations on the old basis.

Secondly, the Government was, and still is, under pressure from the masses who want to see the end of dependence on imperialism.

The demands of the workers and toiling masses are expressed in slogans like 'The dependent industries must be nationalised', and are an obstacle facing the Government in its desire to revive and consolidate dependency and reopen dependent industries.

The workers' soviets and syndicates have palpably felt the burden of economic dependency, and are not prepared to accept anything less than complete freedom from the yoke of the imperialists and dependent capitalists. Needless to say, the Government is trying hard to restart these dependent industries by offering cheap credit, but this has proved so far unsuccessful. The 80-billion Rial (about £500 million) credit, provided by the Government for this purpose, turned out to have almost no effect. Dependent industries and smaller factories dependent upon them remained shut, and about one-third of the total labour force are therefore unemployed.

The Government has clearly failed to operate these industries on their former basis. At the same time, the pressure put by the masses on the Government to nationalise these industries served as the main obstacle to the official policy of consolidating dependency. These factors, therefore, left the Government with no option other than to announce these dependent industries 'nationalised'. This was the policy adopted by Bazargan's Government in its bill 'For the Protection and Expansion of Iranian Industries'.

According to this bill, in addition to industries already in the possession of the state, the car industry, those industries and large mining corporations whose owners had enjoyed illegal privileges or had had an illegal relationship with the former regime (and as a result had accumulated enormous wealth), and those factories and firms which were in debt in excess of their assets were declared 'nationalised'. But privately owned factories and corporations in healthy financial and economic condition have been spared. . .

It is, therefore, legitimate to point out that the Government will be managing industries whose owners had an illegal relationship with the former regime, bankrupt factories, and also heavy industries already under state control. In the first category (those who had an illegal relationship with the former regime), the shares of the individuals involved have come under state ownership. The shares of 51 dependent capitalists have been affected in this way. This is despite the fact that the number of dependent capitalists with illegal ties with the former regime is far in excess of 51. It is interesting to examine the criteria adopted by the Government in nationalising these industries. It is obvious that if the criterion of illegal ties with the former regime is properly and genuinely applied, it would automatically include all dependent capitalists and their industries. But the main question, however, is why has the criterion of dependence upon imperialism not been added to the former criterion. Not only has such a yardstick not been proposed but, in fact, the shares owned by foreign capitalists have been left intact.

According to Article 1(B), only shares owned by individuals who had illegal ties with the former regime would be 'nationalised' and not the whole firm, or shares owned by other dependent capitalists (as well as those owned by foreign capitalists) in the same firm. It is, therefore, only the shares owned by certain individuals in these firms which have been 'nationalised' and not the firms, factories, or mining corporations as a whole.

The Provisional Government of Bazargan, which came to power following the anti-dictatorship, anti-imperialist struggle of the Iranian people, is only verbally interested in the anti-imperialist aspect of the struggle and has all along tried to prevent the Revolution from achieving further progress. The Government of Mr Bazargan refers to the extreme dependency of Iranian industries on international capitalism in the introduction to its bill 'For the Protection and Expansion of Iranian Industries'. But in the text of the bill itself, where the crucial decisions must be made, international capitalism is suddenly ignored. If the influential position of the foreign capitalists can only be explained in terms of their own illegal ties with the former regime, as the preface of the bill quite correctly states, and if these capitalists have

and forces — i.e. the workers, peasants and petty producers — on the one side and imperialism and its internal lackeys on the other. For revolutionaries the prospect of a bright future, free from exploitation and oppression, is the source of their strength and determination, while for the imperialists and their internal servants there is only the possibility of using all their sophisticated means of suppression and brutality. Just as revolutionaries try to understand the movement of history and to adjust and correct their actions accordingly, so the analysts and politicians serving imperialism work hard to stop the movement of history. In such circumstances, their rather small brains are working very hard to understand such a complicated and enormous world.

George Ball, a capitalist politician who has been familiar with the Iranian question for a long time, a so-called expert on Iran, has recently published an article in the *International Herald Tribune* in which numerous pieces of advice are given for the benefit of the imperialists. Knowledge of these is essential for all who intend to combat imperialist plots in Iran.

He wrote: 'What is most beneficial for our interests is the victory of the National Front in coalition with the moderate religious leaders in the present struggle for power in Iran.'

As one can see, this analyst who is at the service of the monopolies is counting on those forces who have shown in the past few years that they were prepared to compromise with imperialism. At the same time, we witness that these forces, backed by imperialism, are using the weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie to their benefit, and are trying hard to consolidate their position by attracting people to their camp. They refer to democracy in a deceitful way and deliberately try to divert attention from imperialism and the danger it poses for our masses.

These gentlemen, who emphasize the need to reconstruct the Army, to protect and invite the return of the dependent capitalist class, and to suppress the various Iranian nations, do so because they realise that, if the masses demand political liberty and demand their democratic rights, this promotes their anti-imperialist struggle, and is intended to deepen this struggle. These gentlemen understand that this struggle for political liberty is not an aim *per se*, but a means in the struggle of the masses against imperialism.

Having said this, how can those forces who work to reconstruct the Army and consolidate the position of imperialism and dependent capitalism, be the defenders and protectors of liberty and democratic rights? At the other end, the Government and its petty-bourgeois leadership are without any concrete plan; they are weak, indecisive, and unstable; and as a result of their internal conflicts have so far failed to take any positive step for the benefit of the masses.

It is obvious that numerous factors have paved the way for these forces, loyal to imperialism, to re-emerge in our society. These factors are: (1) Numerous mistakes made by the Government and the leadership. (2) Plots and conspiracies by imperialism. (3) The penetration by reactionaries of the state apparatus and their conspiracies against the people. (4) The creation of

groups of ruffians with fascist tendencies who are solely and indisputably serving imperialism. (5) Emerging absolutism and the violation of political liberties and democratic rights of the masses.

Having such a situation in mind, George Ball continues:

'The past experience of Iran shows that in a similar situation a man like Reza Khan, the Shah's father, can play an effective role . . . Anyhow, the future of Iran is uncertain, and at present the U.S.A. cannot have any effective influence on the political direction of Iran. What we must follow is a policy of wait-and-see until the appropriate moment arrives when we can effectively apply our influence.'

The content of Ball's advice indicates that imperialism is working on two directions: (1) To support and consolidate the position of forces prepared to compromise with imperialism. (2) To search for someone like Reza Khan in the Army who could play a similar role. According to Ball, imperialism must be alert and able to inflict the fatal blow at the appropriate moment.

In this critical and unstable situation, the Iranian Revolution is faced with two alternatives: either to prolong the Revolution and uproot imperialist domination in Iran, fulfil the demands of the toiling masses, and above all of the Iranian working class (in this case, power must be bestowed upon the masses); or there will be a complete defeat of the Revolution and all-round domination by imperialism.



Middle East Series

Capitalism and Revolution in Iran brings together some of the most important writings of Bizhan Jazani, one of the founders of the Organization of Iranian Peoples' Fedaii Guerrillas (*Fedaii e Khalq*). The OIPFG was at the centre of the armed opposition to the Shah. Today it constitutes the major secular socialist opposition to Ayatollah Khomeini's 'rule of the mullahs'. Jazani, whose writings have here been translated out of Farsi, presents an analysis of Iranian history and contemporary society — the rival activities of Britain and Russia in the early 20th Century, the rise of new classes, and the final consolidation of a dependent 'comprador capitalism'.

His writings have had a profound impact on the emergent Left in Iran. The present government cannot solve the problems of the Iranian working class. Nor can it meet the demands of the country's national minorities. In such circumstances the *Fedaii e Khalq*, whose mentor Jazani was, assumes a strategic political importance. Jazani's writings give the reader an insight into the *Fedaii's* understanding of Iranian society.

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Bizhan Jazani was born in Tehran in 1937. He was imprisoned for the first time at 16, immediately after the CIA coup of 1953 that reinstalled the Shah. In and out of prison thereafter, he was finally detained permanently in 1967 after the secret police had uncovered his group. The essays in this book were written during the long years of imprisonment and torture that followed. He was eventually murdered by Savak while allegedly 'attempting to escape'.

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