



COMMUNISM I. IN PERSIA TO 1941

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i. In Persia to 1941

Origins, 1334-38/1916-20. The Persian communist movement was born among Persian immigrant workers in the Baku oilfields. In the years 1323-25/1905-07 some of them had founded Ferqa-ye ejtemā'iyūn-e 'āmmīyūn-e Īrān (F.E.A.I.; Social-democratic party of Iran; Chaqueri, 1978b). During World War I the more radical members of the party formed a clandestine organization, Ferqa-ye 'adālat (Justice party), which devoted its efforts to agitation against the "imperialist" war. After the fall of the czar 'Adālat joined forces with Bolshevik organizations in the Caucasus, recruiting Persian workers and other immigrants to join in the Russian civil war against the Whites. Its program included fighting czarism, "the principal enemy of the Iranian people"; extending the revolutionary movement to Persia; and "avenging the usurpation of the Constitution" by the Persian ruling class (Sultanzade, in *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 30, 24 December 1920, p. 2; tr. Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 242-46; Ibrahimov, pp. 100-29). 'Adālat published several newspapers in Azeri and Persian as part of a vast propaganda campaign among Persian immigrants in the Caucasus and Central Asia, with the aim of recruiting them for the "Iranian Red army." It also sent activists to Tabrīz, Zanjān, Qazvīn, Rašt, and other major towns in northern Persia to revive the old F.E.A.I. after a period of



decline and to establish new branches (Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 27-39). The party, which had originated among workers in Baku, maintained close ties with the Persian labor movement from the beginning. The first Persian workers' union had been organized among printers in Tehran during the Constitutional Revolution in 1326/1908 (see [constitutional revolution of 1323-29/1905-1911 ii](#)); it was revived in 1336/1918, during the struggle for the eight-hour work day (*Asnād* XI, pp. 115-16, 140-41), and formed the base for later communist activity among workers.

In Persia the party directed its efforts at “revolutionizing” the country, particularly the Caspian coastal area, where the popular Jangalī movement had led resistance to czarist and British occupation during the war years. The leader of this movement, Mīrzā Kūček Khan (Jangalī), was badly defeated by the British in 1336/1918-19 and was subsequently invited by Caucasian Bolsheviks to collaborate in extending the “Red revolution” in the east. The numerical strength of ‘Adālat at that time is not known; it has been variously estimated at between 6,000 and 10,000 (Sultanzade, in *Zhizn’ natsional’nostei* 30, 24 December 1920, p. 1; tr. Chaqueri, 1979, p. 243; idem, in *L’internationale communiste* 13, 1920, pp. 2549-50). Judging by the scope of the party’s activities, however, its numbers could not have exceeded 2,000. On 29 Ša‘bān 1338/18 May 1920 Soviet naval forces landed at the Persian Caspian port of [Anzali](#) in pursuit of remnants of the White armies; their presence reinforced ‘Adālat substantially (Fakrā’ī, pp. 225-35; Chaqueri, 1983, pp. 9-34). One immediate outcome was the declaration at nearby Rašt, on 18 Ramažān 1338/5 June 1920, of the short-lived Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran (Ḥokūmat-e jomhūrī-e šūrawī-e Īrān, S.S.R.I.), with Mīrzā Kūček Khan as president. Shortly before, on 10-12 Rajab 1338/1-3 April 1920, as the Russian civil war was drawing to a close, ‘Adalāt had held a conference in Tashkent to elaborate its program and formulate bylaws. “Democratic centralism” was adopted as the organizational principle, and the delegates called for “collectivization of the means of production . . . creation of workers-peasants’ councils under the direction of the party,” and the transfer of party organizations to Persia itself (Šamīda, pp. 43-68; tr. in Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 41-44).

Phase 1 (1338-39=1300 Š./1920-21). The last goal was achieved only a few days after the declaration of the S.S.R.I. The first ‘Adalāt congress on Persian soil was convened at Anzalī on 6-8 Šawwāl 1338/23-25 June 1920. The main outcome was declaration of the new Ferqa-ye kāmūnīst (bāļšovīk)-e Īrān (F.K.I.; Communist party of Iran). Fifty-one voting delegates (twenty-four from



organizations in Persia, twenty-seven from the Caucasus and Central Asia) and four observers from the communist parties of Soviet Azarbaijan and Russia were present (pace Ravasani, p. 258). V. I. Lenin and Nariman Narimanov of Soviet Azarbaijan were elected as honorary chairmen of the congress. Six reports were presented, on the internal and external situations of Persia, party organization, agrarian policy, party publications, tactics, and party organs (Sultanzade, in *L'internationale communiste* 13, September 1920, pp. 2549-50; idem, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 14, November 1920, pp. 225-30; cf. Ravasani, pp. 258ff). In debating the revolutionary program to be adopted, however, the new party soon split into two irreconcilable factions: “national-revolutionary” versus “purely communist.”

In the absence of Ḥaydar Khan ‘Am(ū)oḡlī (see Supplement), the veteran revolutionary *mojāhed* (freedom fighter) of the Constitutional period and leader of the F.E.A.I., the national-revolutionary faction was led by two other Caucasian Bolsheviks, Abukov and V. I. Naneishvili. Abukov, arguing in favor of “class collaboration,” recommended that it was the duty of “the active militants” of the movement to regroup “the dispersed revolutionary forces in one combat unit.” He identified the British as “the great enemy of the communist movement” and invited Persian communists to attack them, in order to serve “the cause of world revolution.” In this enterprise, “should khans [tribal chiefs and great landed proprietors] be of any use, they are assured of our backing; should the bourgeoisie rise, it will receive our support” (Sultanzade, in *L'internationale communiste* 13, September 1920, pp. 2549-50; idem, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 14, November 1920, pp. 225-30). Naneishvili, who represented the Caucasian bureau of the Bolshevik party, submitted that the Persian party should collaborate with the “bourgeoisie,” which, being “more conscious and better organized, can mobilize and carry along the vast popular masses in the struggle against the British.” He further emphasized that “all the revolutionary forces must be directed against the British. There can be no other tactic for us. Persia is not mature for communism” (Sultanzade, in *L'internationale communiste* 13, September 1920, pp. 2549-50; idem, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 14, November 1920, pp. 225-30). The two Caucasian leaders assumed that Persia had much the same class structure as a European society and thus failed to clarify what they meant by “bourgeoisie”; presumably they were referring to those politicians known in Persia as “nationalists,” for example, the former prime ministers Mošīr-al-Dawla and Mostawfī al-Mamālek. They stressed that “hesitant” elements in Persia should understand that “Soviet power



threatened neither the bourgeoisie nor the landowners Therefore, no demonstrations should be tolerated against the landlords or the bourgeoisie.” This national-revolutionary faction had but two slogans: “Down with the British!” and “Down with the government of the shah!” (Sultanzade, in *L'internationale communiste* 13, September 1920, pp. 2549-50; idem, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 14, November 1920, pp. 225-30).

Opponents who supported a “purely communist” program favored the “sovietization” of Persia along lines followed by the Bolsheviks in Central Asia. Although agreeing that short-term strategy should aim at overthrowing the government of the shah and expulsion of the British, the proponents of “sovietization” insisted on “the struggle against khans and the big landlords.” It was their views that predominated in the communist-party program adopted at the congress (*Asnād* VI, pp. 94-105; Chaqueri, 1986, pp. 13-14). It included an outline of the “concrete tasks of the proletarian dictatorship” in Persia: to liberate the workers and peasants from exploitation through the establishment of “Soviet democracy”—the most advanced form of democracy—for which purpose members should “elevate their level of culture and involvement”; to establish a “Red army” with a “class character” as an instrument of “proletarian dictatorship”; to solve the “acute” problem of Persia’s “national and religious diversity” through establishment of a federated union; to avoid offending the religious beliefs of the masses, who were said to be characterized by “backwardness and ignorance”; to establish throughout the country a free educational system, imbued from nursery school through university with communist ideology “in the interest of the masses’ liberation from the chains of slavery and oppression”; to nationalize factories, mills, mines, irrigation, banking, and public transport; to develop a national transportation network; to promote a cooperative system for artisans and small producers; to abolish private landed property and transfer *waqf* (endowed) lands to peasant producers; to develop a national housing plan under the supervision of both the central government and local councils; and to regulate the conditions of work and promote public health through progressive legislation (*Programma persidskoï kommunisticheskoï partii*, pp. 6-12; tr. in Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 69-79).

The adoption of this program caused serious friction between the two factions, especially in Gilān, where “purely communist” activists, collaborating with leftwing Jangalīs led by Eḥsān-Allāh Khan, soon weakened party unity and raised the specter of suppression by the central government. Both factions



thus appealed to Lenin; (Avetis Mikailian) Sultanzade (Solṭānzāda) personally discussed the problem with the Soviet leader and reported that he supported the “purely communist” tendency (1924, pp. 85-87), but the other faction also claimed to have gained his support (*Donyā* 4, 1968, pp. 57-59).

In the meantime, in September 1920, a few months after the ‘Adālat congress, the Congress of the Peoples of the East was convened at Baku. At the end of the sessions a group of Persians who supported the “national-democratic” tendency elected a new central committee of the F.K.I., with strong support from the Caucasian bureau of the Bolshevik party (under the influence of Josef Stalin), and disowned the principal proponents of the “purely communist” line, Sultanzade and Pīšavarī (Ja‘far Javādzāda). While the “second” central committee struggled for recognition by the Comintern, these two men upheld the “first,” which elected a representative to the executive committee of the Comintern (Chaqueri, 1980, pp. 139-40). Sultanzade, under the pressure of adverse political conditions both in the party and in Gīlān, soon modified his line, however. Given the “almost total absence of the class-conscious proletarian element” and “the incredible ignorance and humility of the pitilessly exploited peasant masses” of such eastern countries as Persia, he argued that after all the communists “must lean on the petty bourgeois strata.” Only this class, which had suffered great losses during the war, could, together with the “vanguard division” of workers and peasants, lead the “social revolution” (*Zhizn’ natsional’nostei* 41(97), 24 December 1920, p. 2; tr. Chaqueri, 1986, pp. 16-18).

The “second” central committee, led by Ḥaydar Khan ‘Am(ū)oḡlī, attempted meanwhile to further the “democratic” aims of the Anzalī congress. Peter E. Skachko(v), a Soviet sinologist, produced a set of theses on the socioeconomic situation in Persia (*Zhizn’ natsional’nostei* 7 (105), 17 March 1921; tr. Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 81-90), in which he proclaimed that there was no modern proletariat, the peasantry being the principal producing class; he did, however, acknowledge that colonial conditions in the country had led to the evolution of a lumpen-proletariat in the big towns. In Skachkov’s estimation the struggle for liberation and progress in Persia was to be waged between the “counterrevolutionary class of big landlords” and their British supporters, on one hand, and the “potentially revolutionary classes,” including the “lumpen-proletariat,” the vast class of small and middle merchants, and the peasantry, on the other. The economic interests of the petty clergy also seemed to him to be linked to those of the petty bourgeoisie (see [class system](#) v, vi). For the



“second” committee, therefore, the Persian revolution was not to be primarily communist, or even socialist, but one of “national liberation.” As for the immediate tasks facing the party, particularly in connection with the armed struggle against the central government in Gilān, the “second” central committee called for formation of cadres, mobilization of all revolutionaries, extensive propaganda for the party program, intensive efforts to establish workers’ unions and artisans’ cooperatives, creation of a “national-revolutionary army,” overthrow of the shah’s government, and establishment of an “indivisible, Soviet republic” that would include the petty bourgeoisie in the power structure (*Zhizn’ natsional’nostei* 7(105), 17 March 1921; tr. Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 87-88). In pursuit of these aims, Ḥaydar Khan arrived in Persia in April 1921 and came to an agreement with Mīrzā Kūček Khan. As a result, the faltering S.S.R.I. was once again proclaimed, under the combined leadership of Mīrzā Kūček Khan and the “second” committee (*Krasnyi Iran* 80, 24 May 1921, p. 1).

In the meantime, two parallel developments had begun to undermine the efforts of both Persian communist factions. On one hand, the Soviet Union had reached an understanding with the Tehran government, and in February 1921 the Irano-Soviet Friendship Treaty was signed. On the other, the British had signed a trade treaty with Moscow, the preamble of which stipulated that both Britain and the Soviet Union would refrain from hostile propaganda and activity against each other (Ullman, p. 474). The first Soviet ambassador to Tehran, Theodor (Feodor) Rothstein, thus exerted heavy pressure on Persian communists and Jangalīs to end their armed struggle and come to terms with Tehran (Faḵrā’ī, pp. 356-62). Mutual suspicion between the two groups arising from Rothstein’s intervention led to a skirmish between them the details of which are not clear. Although Ḥaydar Khan was killed (Faḵrā’ī, pp. 356-62), by that time the “second” committee had been recognized by the Comintern, with the proviso that Sultanzade and Pīšavarī be included as representatives of the Khorasan regional committee, active since 1337/1919 and ostensibly run from Ashkhabad. The latter published its aims, the most important being abandonment of a “purely communist” revolution, and called for “proletarian leadership” of the national-liberation movement (*Asnād* I, pp. 64-69).

Owing to the differences between the two central committees, paralleled by those between the Bolshevik central committee and its Caucasian bureau, it was relatively easy for the Persian government to bring the Persian communist party under control. A combination of external political pressure,



internal party conflict, and military persecution led, at the end of October 1921, to final defeat of the Jangalis by a superior force supported by both Britain and the Soviet Union (Chaqueri, 1983, pp. 69-85). The liquidation of the Jangalī movement, the new diplomatic détente between Tehran and Moscow, and especially Soviet adoption of the New Economic Policy caused communist-party leaders, newly “reunified,” to espouse a line of action reflecting the new realities.

Phase 2 (1301-06 Š./1922-27). At a meeting on 5 Bahman 1301 Š./25 January 1922 representatives of the Comintern, the Caucasian bureau of the Bolshevik party, and the various central committees agreed on a new composition of the central committee in Persia. The cornerstone of the new approach was acceptance of, and operation within, the existing Persian political framework, that is, the new government dominated by the commander of the army (*sardār-e sepah*), Reżā Khan, whom the Soviets recognized as “representative of the Iranian national bourgeoisie” (Chaqueri, 1980, p. 141). During this phase the communist party conducted its activities in semiclandestine fashion, recruiting and educating new cadres in Persia and striving to spread its revolutionary message and influence among workers, artisans, intellectuals, and peasants. The principal instrument of this effort was the newspaper *Ḥaqīqat* (Truth), which began publication on 9 Jady (Dey) 1300 Š./30 December 1921 under the editorship of Moḥammad Dehgān; the paper was declared the “supporter of workers and labor unions,” and its editor vowed to express “the interests of workers and peasants, preach class struggle, and fight, in the most vigorous manner, against the existing regime.” Lead articles were written by Pišavari, who used the pen name Parvīz (*Asnād* VII, p. 2; *Bayāt*, p. 117). *Ḥaqīqat* was forced by the government to suspend publication after the 105th issue had appeared on 4 Saraṭān=Tīr 1301 Š./25 June 1922 (pace Ṣadr Hāšemī, *Jarāʿed o majallāt* II, pp. 224-25; cf. Sultanzade, in *Novyi Vostok* 2, 1922, pp. 345-53; tr. in Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 250-60).

In the ensuing period the communist party made a concerted attempt to achieve a *modus vivendi* with the government of Reżā Khan. In March 1923 a more moderate communist newspaper, *Kār* (Labor), began publication, under the editorship of Abu’l-Faẓl Lesānī, who expressed praise for Reżā Khan’s “struggle against the landed aristocracy” (41, 4 Du’l-qa’da 1341=28 Ḳordāḍ 1302 Š./18 June 1923, p. 1). Moḥammad Āḳūndzāda, the communist-party candidate for the port of Anzalī, was to meet Reżā Khan (*Donya*@, 1970/3, p. 53; it is not known whether they actually met), no doubt with the



encouragement of the new Soviet ambassador, B. Z. Shumyatskiĭ, who recommended Reżā Khan to Persian communists as a “progressive” man (Donyā, 1968/4, p. 103). Sultanzade, leader of the leftist faction in the communist party, also declared, in 1303 Š./1924, that Reżā Khan enjoyed “great popularity,” not only as “the founder of the national army,” but also as an “esteemed politician” (pp. 90-91). Despite this conciliatory attitude, Reżā Khan pursued his repressive policies until all labor unions and newspapers with communist tendencies had been crushed. The breaking point for the party must have come in December 1925, when Reżā Khan chose to establish a dynasty, rather than the republic on which both the Soviets and the party had counted (Sultanzade, in *Izvestiya*, 10 December 1925, p. 4; Chaqueri, 1984, pp. 79-80).

One of the main tasks confronting the party during its second phase was helping to organize the small and scattered industrial population of Persia. The first steps in that direction seem to have been taken in 1339/1920, when unions were organized among workers in bakeries, the postal and telegraph services, tailor shops, and shoemaking workshops in the Tehran *bāzār*; they were federated within the framework of the Central council of labor unions (C.C.L.U.; *Šūrā-ye markazī-e etteḥādīyahā-ye kārgarān*), headed by Dehgān. The number of unionized workers was reported at that time as 10,000 in Tehran, (i.e., 20 percent of the working population there) and 20,000 in the country as a whole, concentrated mainly in Tehran, Gilān, and Azarbaijan (Sultanzade, in *L’internationale syndicale rouge* 1/12, April-May 1922, pp. 58-60; Dehgān, in *L’internationale syndicale rouge* 1/12, April-May 1922, pp. 74-75). Many of these unions were, however, more akin to precapitalist guilds than to modern trade unions. The C.C.L.U. joined the International Red Labor Unions (Profintern) in Moscow, which invited Persian delegates to its congresses and published periodic reports on labor conditions in Persia (Chaqueri, 1978^a, pp. 7-23, 75-105). In the early 1920s Persian labor unions engaged in occasional strikes, often with economic motives but at times also with political demands, for example, the teachers’ strike, which lasted twenty-one days and terminated in the fall of Premier Aḥmad Qawām’s cabinet and its replacement with that of the liberal nationalist Mošīr-al-Dawla Pīrnīā in January 1922 (Sultanzade, in *L’internationale syndicale rouge*, 1/12, April-May 1922, p. 60; *L’internationale communiste* 25, 1923, pp. 122-23; *Asnād* VI, p. 117). By 1304 Š./1925, however, the labor unions had also succumbed to increasing repression.



The influence of the communist party on Persian domestic politics was marginal in this period. It is difficult to arrive at even an estimate of party membership, as the archives of the international communist party (presumably held at the Marxist-Leninist Institute at Baku) are still inaccessible. Despite some inroads among workers and artisans, there seem to have been few more cadres in 1304 Š./1925 than in 1301 Š./1922; severe repression had taken its toll. By the time the party was reorganized in late 1306 Š./1927 all hopes of accommodation or conciliation with Reżā Shah had been dashed.

Phase 3 (1306-10 Š./1927-31). The second congress of the Persian communist party, known as the Urmia congress, though it may have been held in the Ukraine in the autumn of 1306 Š./1927 (Efteḳārī, pp. 28-29), was dominated by the left wing, the members of which were severely critical of the leadership since 1301 Š./1922. Sultanzade assessed the history of the party since its foundation in June 1920: It had “participated in numerous revolutionary events,” its organizations had been “dismantled several times,” and its press and labor unions had been “subjected to serious persecution,” yet, “in spite of the efforts of the government of Reżā Shah, we have survived, as the [second] congress demonstrates.” He claimed that “during the past seven years the party [had] learned a lot, acquired revolutionary experience . . . [despite] periods of defeat and division.” As a result, the second congress represented “once more a unified party” (*Die kommunistische Internationale* 51, December 1927, p. 2517; tr. in Chaqueri, 1979, p. 167). As for the crucial question of the party’s attitude toward the shah, representatives at the second congress indirectly criticized the Soviets for having fallen victim to the “clever hypocrisy” of this “friend” of the U.S.S.R. and subtly reproached them for having been deceived by his pretense of “leftwing democratism and republicanism.” The “Address of the Communist Party of Iran to Iranian Workers” adopted by the congress (*Asnād* X, pp. 85-115) was focused more on an indictment of Soviet experts on Persia, who had provided a positive assessment of the new shah, than on an explanation of British policy in Persia.

In recognition of the predominantly agrarian character of the Persian economy, in which industrial workers were not yet numerous, the congress emphasized the necessity for close collaboration and intensive work with the peasantry. Referring to unsuccessful peasant-soldiers’ uprisings in Khorasan, Gīlān, and Azarbaijan in 1305 Š./1926 (Chaqueri, 1983, pp. 174-88; Arfa, pp. 188-92, 197), the delegates concluded that, “to ensure the victory of the



agrarian revolution, it does not suffice that peasants struggle alone and seize power in their villages . . . one has to dominate the towns as well”, “the seizure of power in the cities is possible, above all with the [help of the] revolutionary segment of the population . . . the workers, artisans, and petty bourgeoisie”; “another condition of the success of the agrarian revolution is the penetration of revolutionary ideas into the army and the passing of troops to the side of the people in struggle” (Sultanzade, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 51, December 1927, pp. 2517-23; *Asnād* IV, p. 169). Following this strategy the communist party was to elaborate a program of “national revolution” embracing the three mentioned social elements. In order, however, not to repeat the “bitter experience” of the Chinese communist party’s coalition with the Kuomintang, in which each in turn suppressed the other, the second congress set the strict condition that the front organization must be dominated by communists (Sultanzade, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 51, December 1927, p. 2519; *Asnād* IV, pp. 169-70).

As its immediate tasks the second congress called for overthrow of the monarchy and abolition of special privilege; establishment of a “popular, revolutionary, independent, and federated republic” in Persia; confiscation of all large landed estates, including private and *waqf* lands, as well as crown and other government property (*kāleša*, *dīvānī*, *arbābī*); nationalization of factories, oilfields, and the installations of the [Anglo-Persian Oil Company](#) (A.P.O.C.); and cancellation of all treaties detrimental to Persian independence. The party also planned to create an agricultural bank to extend low-interest loans to peasants, a national irrigation system, a cooperative system to provide financial assistance to artisans and handicraft producers, construction of a national rail network, and assistance to nomadic tribes in settling into an intensive agricultural and pastoral economy (Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 183-85).

In addition to demands for democratic liberties and social legislation, the congress charged the party with creating a rural network of “Red itinerant” salesmen, who, by providing peasants with consumer goods, would serve as “a sort of agitator-organizers” of cooperatives in rural areas, enabling the party to gain a foothold there. Work among youth, women, and industrial workers was also to be intensified (Sultanzade, in *Die kommunistische Internationale* 51, December 1927, p. 2522). In international relations the congress acknowledged that “the liberation of Iran is objectively facilitated” by the replacement of the czarist empire by the U.S.S.R. and exhibited awareness that it had to “adapt itself to the international situation,” that is, to Soviet foreign policy (*Asnād* I,



pp. 102-03).

After the conclusion of the congress the party manifested a new vigor, especially intensifying its activities among Persian students in western Europe (see below), conducting a campaign for the return of **Bahrain** to Persian sovereignty (Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 187-88), and attempting to win over industrial workers (see below). The revitalization of the party was also reflected in the leaders' participation in the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, in the summer of 1928, at which Sultanzade and Ḥosayn Šarqī, party first secretary, contributed to formulation of policy on colonialism. Sultanzade in particular forcibly expressed his disapproval of the “schematic” analysis of colonial lands by the Comintern functionaries, who viewed all such countries as similar (Sultanzade, in *International Press Correspondence* 74, October 1928, pp. 1359-60). Šarqī “strongly objected to the part of the theses” presented to the congress in which those “grouped around Reżā Shah” were designated as “national forces” (*International Press Correspondence* 74, October 1928, pp. 1469-70).

The unity with which the Persian party emerged from the second congress does not seem to have lasted very long, however; conflicting attitudes toward the Majles surfaced during the election campaigns in 1307 Š./1928. The central committee published a manifesto containing twenty-nine demands, the most important being for preservation of national independence and resistance to intervention by capitalist states; development and reinforcement of friendly relations with the U.S.S.R.; struggle against the “imperialist war” (presumably against the U.S.S.R.); abolition of privileges accorded to imperialist powers in Persia; establishment of democratic liberties; legislation favoring workers; distribution of state and *waqf* land and water resources among the peasantry; protection of the nation's financial independence; adoption of an economic policy favoring the bourgeoisie and home industries; and radical reforms in all domains (Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 195-97). Shortly afterward, however, the committee issued a second declaration, rejecting the earlier manifesto as a “negligent formula . . . opportunistic and a grave error” for having put forward demands “uniquely corresponding to the interests of the Iranian bourgeoisie.” The committee declared its conviction that “there was nothing to be expected” of the parliament under the conditions prevailing in Persia (*Setāra-ye sorḡ* 1-2, April-May 1929, pp. 93-95; Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 198-99).

The second congress does seem, however, to have generated considerable activity among workers, not only in the factories that were gradually being



built in the second half of the 1920s, but also in the tightly controlled oil industry in the south, which was run by the A.P.O.C. (*Peykār* 7, 1931, p. 1; Chaqueri, 1978a, pp. 40-42; *Setāra-ye sorḡ* 9, 1931, pp. 31-37). In that industry Persians were hired exclusively for menial jobs, technical and managerial positions being reserved for Indians and British respectively. It was therefore not very difficult for the communist party to mobilize the mass of humiliated and displaced nomads and peasants. After a beginning in secret in 1304-05 Š./1925-26 mobilization efforts finally bore fruit in 1307 Š./1928, when a clandestine union of oil workers prepared for action (Chaqueri, 1978a, pp. 52-54). On 11 Ordībehešt 1308 Š./1 May 1929 Persian workers at the A.P.O.C. went on strike, thus breaking the industrial peace that had reigned thitherto. Their accumulated grievances were expressed in the following demands: representation of workers, especially in connection with the discharge of employees; increased pay for laborers to “Rs. 45 per mensem, which wage was formerly paid in 1923”; a six-hour day and paid vacations; either company housing or rent allowances; equal status for Persian and Indian clerks and artisans; settlement of disputes between the firm and Persian employees in Persian courts; and investigation of all grievances by the Persian police (U.K. Foreign Office 371/13783, May 1929, pp. 130-34). At the request of the A.P.O.C. Persian “authorities acted with promptitude and energy” to end the “lightning strike,” sending troops to Ābādān, arresting forty-five leaders, and dealing “drastically” with the strikers. The effort by communist-party activists was thus effectively countered by “the Governor-General’s suppressive measures” (*Times*, 8 May, 1929, p. 16; Chaqueri, 1978a, pp. 52-59, 213-22).

The communists continued their long and patient efforts among workers, however. The next major strike took place in Isfahan in 1310 Š./1931, at the Waṭan textile factory, where laborers worked day and night shifts of fifteen and nine hours respectively. Working conditions were so bad that not even drinking water was provided, let alone hygienic facilities; workers were fined for arriving late to work. These conditions were “ideal” for the development of a union among textile workers, and, after a considerable period of preparation, on 11 Ordībehešt 1310 Š./1 May 1931 the strike committee decided to walk out three days later. Their goals were freedom for labor-union activity and the creation of a workers’ mutual-aid fund; monthly salaries instead of piecework rates; an eight-hour work day with a half-day of rest each week; abolition of fines and personal inspection (*taftīš*); indemnity for disability and double wages for overtime; no work on national holidays; and amelioration of poor hygienic conditions. This strike lasted only one day.



Twenty-five workers were arrested and imprisoned for two months; their leader, a communist-party activist, was sent into internal exile (*Setāra-ye sorḡ* 12, 1310 Š./1931, pp. 21-29; *Nahẓat* 1, 1932, p. 3; cf. *Asnād* VI, pp. 167-68; *Peykār* 9, 13, 14, 1931, in Chaqueri, 1978a, pp. 43-47, 60-67).

While party activists in Persia experienced considerable frustration, owing to Reżā Shah's policy of repression, vigorous efforts were being made to recruit students who had been sent by the government for higher education abroad, mainly to Germany and France. Immediately after the second congress a brochure announcing formation of the Revolutionary Republican Party of Iran (R.R.P.I.) was distributed in the West. The R.R.P.I. addressed the "Iranian nation," blaming "the rich and the aristocracy" of the country for the "misery and poverty" of the people. The brochure invited the people to overthrow the Pahlavi monarchy and replace it with a "national regime." Although its proposal for a class alliance was in conformity with the principles adopted at the second congress (see above; *Asnād* VI, pp. 137-38; Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 561-67), historical evidence shows that the R.R.P.I. had already come into existence by the beginning of 1306 Š./1927 (*Asnād* VI, pp. 139-41; Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 568-72), when it was affiliated with the Anti-Imperialist League, based in western Europe. Aḡmad Asadov (Dārāb) and Mortaẓā 'Alawī served as delegates to the first congress of the League, which was held in Brussels in February 1927. They introduced a vehemently anti-Pahlavi resolution, which was, however, modified by the congress to fit the exigencies of current Soviet foreign policy (*Asnād* VI, pp. 139-41; cf. Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 575-78). In 1929 Asadov was expelled from Germany (Chaqueri, 1979, p. 559), but communist activities among Persian students there continued under 'Alawī's guidance. Many of the scholarship students who were recruited in Europe, including [Taqī Arānī](#), Īraj Eskandarī, Reżā Rādmaneš, Mortaẓā Yazdī, and Moḡammad Bahrāmī, subsequently played decisive roles in the communist movement in Persia (*Asnād* IX, pp. 93-94; see ii, below).

These recruiting activities and distribution of *Setāra-ye sorḡ* (Red star), the new theoretical organ of the Persian communist party, led to organization of a conference of Persian communist students in Cologne in February 1931. Delegates resolved "to uphold the standard of liberty and revolution [and] . . . to use all in our power to overthrow the regime of robbers . . . [as] Persia must belong to the laboring masses" (Chaqueri, 1980, pp. 209-11). Immediately afterward the newspaper *Peykār* (Struggle) was launched in Berlin, with the goal of extending political propaganda against the Pahlavi regime to a wider,



nonstudent readership. The publication of these two journals aroused the anger of Reżā Shah, who threatened to sever diplomatic relations and trade with Germany unless those responsible were expelled. As a result ‘Alawī was summarily deported to Austria, and publication of *Peykār* in Germany was halted, though a few more issues appeared under his guidance in Vienna; publication ceased entirely after ‘Alawī left for the Soviet Union (Chaqueri, 1980, pp. 209-11). Beside students, workers, and peasants, the Persian communist party also sought to recruit members of the armed forces, recommending that communists and sympathizers remain in the services after termination of their tours of duty (*Setāra-ye sork* 7-8, 1930, in Chaqueri, 1979, pp. 292, 294-95). ‘Abd-al-Şamad Kāmbaġş, Colonel Moġammad-‘Alī Mobaşşerī, and Colonel ‘Ezzat-Allāh Sīāmak are among those known to have been recruited in this period.

The strikes and recruiting activities among Persian students abroad alerted the government to the resurgence of the communist movement and led to sterner enforcement of repressive measures. The government felt obliged to adopt anticommunist legislation, on 18 Ķordād 1310 Š./9 June 1931 (U.K. Foreign Office 371/15356, 16 June 1931, pp. 31-33). The efforts of the Persian communists also annoyed the Soviet government, which was seeking to improve relations with Tehran. Although ‘Alawī, for example, was given asylum in the U.S.S.R., he was not permitted to continue publication of *Peykār*. As for *Setāra-ye sork*, it ceased publication after a severe ideological attack by an official of the Soviet foreign service, who proclaimed it insufficiently Leninist and accused it of failing to serve either the Persian communist party or the Comintern and of peddling a “liberal” line (“Ranjbar” [G. C. Gel’bras], in *Revolutsionnyĭ Vostok* 1-2, 1933, pp. 372-77; cf. *Asnād* IX, pp. 104-10).

Despite the scarcity of detailed information on the fate of Persian communist leaders in the U.S.S.R., it is known that they, too, were severely criticized and censured. Sultanzade was the object of vehement attacks in two articles by “Ranjbar,” who labeled him both an “anti-Leninist adventurist leftist” and a “right-wing deviationist” (*Revolutsionnyĭ Vostok* 1, 1933, pp. 54-73; 2, 1933, pp. 74-90). He was a prime target because in his writings after the second congress he had systematically criticized Soviet officials concerned with Persian affairs (1930, chap. 6; Chaqueri, 1984, pp. 226-27), bluntly attributing the defeat of Persian revolutionary forces to the support the government had received from Great Britain, whereas the revolutionaries had had “to count on their own forces for the moment” (1930, p. 116; cf. *Asnād* VIII, p. 171). These criticisms



constituted sufficient grounds for excommunication from the Soviet-led communist movement and led eventually to Sultanzade's death. During the Stalinist purges of the 1930s he was accused of being a German agent and shot, on 16 July 1938. Most of his comrades from the central committee, including 'Alawī, perished in concentration camps (Chaqueri, 1984, pp. 226-27; *Asnād IX*, p. 93). Allegations against these men continued to be repeated in Soviet histories of Persia until the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, when all were cleared of the charge of treason and rehabilitated.

The dismantling of the Persian communist party and the liquidation of its leaders in the Soviet Union under Stalin did not result in total elimination of the communist movement in Persia; some of the old cadres and leaders survived to form the Tudeh party in 1320 Š./1941 (see ii, below). The purge did have two significant immediate consequences, however. First, the original leadership, composed of workers, was supplanted by intellectuals from middle-class backgrounds. Second, the relatively independent spirit of the Persian communist party, which was rare, perhaps unique, among the communist parties of the Third International, was destroyed. The communism of 'Adālat, originally transplanted by Persian workers to Persian social soil, though it was gradually transformed and adapted to the exigencies of Persian politics, had remained tied to the ideological specificity of Russian Marxism.

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