



COMMUNISM III. IN PERSIA AFTER 1953

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Whereas in the previous period Persian communism had been embodied primarily in the Tudeh party, which followed the ideological and political dicta of the Soviet Union (see [ii](#)), after the [coup d'état](#) of 1332 Š./1953 it was characterized by ideological and organizational diversity, largely owing to broader trends within the international movement. In particular, tensions between the Soviet Union and China, as well as Albanian opposition to both, had a major impact on the communist movement in Persia. Furthermore, repression at home limited communist activity mainly to guerrilla groups. Against the background of revolutionary ferment that dominated the third world in the 1960s clandestine groups were organized in Persia, as in many Asian and African countries, according to the principles formulated by such successful revolutionaries as Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara. They emphasized the role of intellectuals in pioneering armed insurrection against “oppressive states under the domination of capitalist imperialism” (Aḥmadzāda, pp. 22, 54). Furthermore, in the 1950s and 1960s the shah’s harsh policies led to a broad political movement among Persian students in Europe and the United States, where they founded communist groups of different tendencies. In 1339 Š./1960 the radical [Confederation of Iranian Students](#) was



organized as a trade union for defense of the rights of the students abroad, but it soon became a political organization in opposition to the regime and advocating a progressive government through overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty. The most active elements within the confederation differed little in their views from the radical leftist groups. The propaganda campaign conducted by such expatriate organizations helped to expose in the Western media many flagrant human-rights violations by the Pahlavi regime. The development of the Persian communist movement after the coup d'état can be divided into four phases.

First phase (1332-38 Š./1953-59)

The coup d'état in which the nationalist government of Moḥammad Moṣaddeq was overthrown and the shah brought back to Persia was followed by a period of military government under General Fażl-Allāh Zāhedī. The Tudeh party, which had benefited enormously from the political tolerance and liberties granted during the Moṣaddeq era was suppressed (Guérin, p. 57; Tully, chap. 7). During the first five years of martial law in Tehran, which was under the military command of General **Teymūr Baḳtīār**, the party and its powerful organization of military officers (Sāzmān-e afsarān; see [ii](#)), led by Ḳosrow Rūzbeh, were almost totally crushed; many of the members were imprisoned, and some of the most prominent, including dozens of officers, were executed. Most of the rest fled to the Soviet bloc, though a few small groups went underground; their activities were generally restricted to participation in sporadic nationalist rallies sponsored by other, still functioning elements of the former National front (Jabha-ye mellī), which had been reorganized as Nahzat-e moqāwamat-e mellī (National resistance movement; see, e.g., Jazanī, pp. 68-70). The transformation, in February 1958, of the Farmāndārī-e neẓāmī (Office of martial law) into a permanent security and intelligence service (Sāzmān-e eṭṭelā'āt wa amniyat-e kešvar, widely known as SAVAK), led to a period of embittered silence among opposition groups. Nevertheless, clandestine Tudeh networks, often consisting only of isolated individuals in contact with centers in Tehran and some of the provinces, continued low-profile operations (Jazanī, pp. 87-90). Rūzbeh, the leader most eager to reestablish contact with the exiled party leaders, was arrested in 1337 Š./1958 and executed. Outside Persia, on the other hand, the presence of a large cohort of Tudeh activists in the Soviet bloc encouraged the central committee, under its newly elected first secretary, Reẓā Rādmāneš, to resume operations in 1957; they included publication of the newspaper *Mardom* (The people) and the



theoretical journal *Donyā* (The world) in Leipzig, as well as broadcasts from East Germany (1959-70) and then from Bulgaria of a radio program entitled *Peyk-e Īrān* (Messenger from Iran) in Persian, Kurdish, and Turkish (Ṭabarī, pp. 165-86, 212-17).

In the period of instability following the downfall of the Hashemite monarchy in neighboring Iraq in 1337 Š./1958 the Tudeh networks were able to communicate with their exiled leaders through Iraqi territory. Nevertheless, among these informal groups some were extremely critical of the leadership and its adherence to Soviet interests and eventually repudiated the party in favor of what they claimed was “genuine” Marxism-Leninism. Many of the communist organizations that subsequently appeared in Persia and abroad had their origins in these disaffected groups. Eventually the Tudeh central committee abandoned efforts to establish ties with the networks because they had been thoroughly infiltrated by SAVAK, which had also organized false “communist” networks, reputedly with the aid of Tudeh member ‘Abbās Šahrīārī, in order to entrap leftists (Sāzmān-e čerīkhā, pp. 54-67; Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn, 1353 Š./1974, pp. 11-13, 116; Jazanī, p. 95; Ṭabarī, pp. 188-89).

Despite the repression, which continued until the Revolution of February 1979, a number of writers and intellectuals had been active in disseminating progressive social and political ideas that helped to prepare the intellectual groundwork for leftist thinking in the 1960s and 1970s. They included such translators of European works as Maḥmūd E’temādzāda (Behāzīn), Moḥammad Qāzī, Karīm Kešāvarz, Bāqer Mo’menī, Manūčehr Hezārḳānī, and Kāzem Anšārī; scholars like Mortazā Rāvandī, Moḥammad-Ja’far Maḥjūb and Amīr-Ḥosayn Ārīānpūr; poets like Aḥmad Šāmlū (Bāmdād), Mahdī AkaĀ²wān-e Ṭāleṭ (Omīd), Sīāvoš Kasrā’ī; and novelists like ‘Alī-Moḥammad Afḡānī, Aḥmad Maḥmūd, Maḥmūd Dawlatābādī, and Šamad Behrangī.

Second phase (1339-49 Š./1960-70)

After the election of John F. Kennedy as president of the United States in 1960 the American government demanded political reforms and liberalization from the shah. The National front, consisting primarily of Moṣaddeq’s former followers, including leaders of the National resistance movement, took advantage of the new political climate to organize a *šūrā* (council) of prominent politicians to run for the Majles in the summer of the same year. Political unrest and relative instability in the country also provided the opportunity for former members of the Tudeh party to become more active



within the national front, and several previously clandestine Marxist-Leninist study groups, composed mainly of university students, also began to function openly, both within the front and outside it. During this short period the national front was generally unsuccessful in furthering its constitutionalist aims, however. Growing conflict between the shah and his opponents, including the grand ayatollahs, culminated on 15 Kordād 1342 š./5 June 1963, in a political and religious revolt, which erupted immediately after the arrest of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Rūḥ-Allāh Komeynī); it was suppressed with much bloodshed. The shah's subsequent decision to use his autocratic powers to impose land reform and other modernizing measures and, in February 1963, to suppress the national front and ban all political opposition effectively destroyed the moderate political movement in the country and fueled the growth of the radical Marxist-Leninist and Islamic groups that would eventually bring down the monarchy (Abrahamian, 1989, pp. 81-86).

The international climate, especially in Latin America, Vietnam, and Palestine, contributed to revolutionary fervor in Persia. During the next seven or eight years a dozen covert political groups dedicated to revolutionary agitation or armed struggle were organized (for political and social justification of the guerrilla movement, see Aḥmadzāda, 1989; Pūyān). All were discovered and suppressed by SAVAK. A large number of religious groups were also determined to overthrow the regime. The most important of them, Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn-e ḳalq-e Īrān (Organization of freedom fighters of the people of Iran), was organized on the pattern of Marxist-Leninist groups. Among the latter a split in 1354 Š./1975 led to the birth of one of the most radical of Persian communist guerrilla organizations (see below). Most of the communist groups formed in the 1960s were, however, composed mainly of intellectuals with little influence on society in general. Although some became quite large, all were suppressed by SAVAK, and many of their leaders and members were executed or served long prison terms. Only the Mojāhedīn and the Fedā'īān (see below) were able to continue their activities into the 1970s. The most important groups in this period included the following.

Sāzmān-e enqelābī-e komūnistī-e Īrān (SAKA; Communist revolutionary organization of Iran), led by Ḥamīd Sattārzāda and Bāqer Emāmī (Jazanī, pp. 102-04).

Gorūh-e perosa (Process group), also known as *Gorūh-e jarayān*, founded by Maḥmūd Tawakkolī, who left the Tudeh party in 1333 Š./1954 because of its opposition to Moṣaddeq; particularly outstanding members of this group were



Parvīz Bābā'ī and Moṣṭafā Šo'ā'īān (Jazanī, pp. 104-07; Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn, 1353 Š./1974, p. 121).

Gorūh-e Nīkḵvāh (Nīkḵvāh group), a Marxist group named for one of its founders and leading members, Parvīz Nīkḵvāh. Other founding members included Aḥmad Maṣṣūrī, Maṣṣūr Pūr-Kāšānī, Fīrūz Šīrvānlū, and several others educated primarily in Great Britain; they attempted to initiate activities in Persia along the lines of Sāzmān-e enḡelābī-e Ḥezb-e tūda (Revolutionary organization of the Tudeh party; see below), but they were accused of participating in an attempt on the shah's life on 21 Farvardīn 1344 Š./10 April 1965 and were arrested (Jazanī, pp. 154-58). After several years in prison Nīkḵvāh abandoned his leftist views and became a political propagandist for the government; he was executed in the early months of the Islamic Revolution.

Gorūh-e Kūroš-e Lāšā'ī (Kūroš Lāšā'ī group), affiliated with Sāzmān-e enḡelābī-e Ḥezb-e tūda (see below; Jazanī, pp. 148-51).

Sāzmān-e rahā'ībakš-e Īrān (Iranian liberation organization), a Maoist group including Sīrūs Nahāvandī, Maḥmūd Jalāyer, and Parvīz Wā'ezzāda (Jazanī, p. 150).

Gorūh-e Bahman Qašqā'ī 'Aṭā' wa Īraj Kaškūlī (Bahman Qašqā'ī and 'Aṭā' and Īraj Kaškūlī group), which was in contact with Sāzmān-e enḡelābī-e Ḥezb-e tūda and recruited some Qašqā'ī tribesmen for an unsuccessful guerrilla uprising in 1343-44 Š./1964-65 (Jazanī, pp. 159-60).

Gorūh-e Torbat-e Ḥaydariya (Torbat-e Ḥaydariya group) the members of which included Manūčehr Dāmḡānī and Behrūz Rād (Jazanī, pp. 168-69).

Gorūh-e Felasṭīn (Palestine group), led by Šokr-Allāh Pāknežād, Ḥosayn Rīāḥī, and Mas'ūd Baṭḥā'ī; fifty-four members were arrested in the winter of 1349 Š./1970 (*Bāḡtar-e emrūz* [Beirut], 5 Āḡar 1349 Š./26 November 1970, p. 4; Jazanī, pp. 169-71).

Gorūh-e setāra-ye sorḡ (Red-star group), founded by 'Alī-Rezā Šokūhī, Maḥdīzāda, and Ḥosayn 'Ezzatī (Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn, 1353 Š./1974, p. 126).

Gorūh-e Jazanī (Jazanī group), an important Persian communist group, organized in the early 1960s and named for its leading figure, Bīžan Jazanī. Some of these men were former members of the Tudeh party youth



organization who had resumed political activism under cover of the national front in the early 1960s; they included Ḥasan Żiā' Żarīfī, 'Abbās Sūrakī, Sa'īd Kalāntarī, and 'Azīz Sarmadī. The group was discovered by SAVAK, and most of its members were arrested on 17 Dey 1346 Š./7 January 1968 and sent to prison; two members, Moḥammad Şaffārī Āštīānī and 'Alī-Akbar Şafā'ī Farāhānī, eluded the police and escaped to Palestinian training bases in Iraq and Jordan in 1347 Š./1968. After completing a course in guerrilla warfare they returned to Persia and resumed their activities with new companions (*Bāktar-e emrūz* 65, Ḳordād 1354 Š./June 1975, p. 2; Jazanī, pp. 165-68).

Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn-e kalq-e Īrān. After the suppression of the revolt of 15 Ḳordād 1342 Š./5 June 1963 (see above) a group of religious youth in Maḥdī Bāzargān's Nahzat-e āzādī-e Īrān (Liberation movement of Iran), an offshoot of the national front, became disenchanted with peaceful political activity and in mid-1344 Š./1965 formed a group patterned on leftist guerrilla movements but ideologically committed to integration of the Islamic creed with modern social and historical doctrines adopted from Marxism-Leninism. Later, in 1349-54 Š./1970-75, members received military training at Palestinian bases (Abrahamian, 1982, pp. 489-93; idem, 1989, pp. 111-12).

The Tudeh party. In this period the Tudeh party was also reorganized. Its exiled leaders attempted to forge links with members and cells in Persia, but they were largely unsuccessful, owing to SAVAK infiltration. Although the party was also active among students abroad, it was unable to make headway in the Confederation of Iranian Students, because of opposition from supporters of the national front and rival leftist groups. The Confederation had evolved into a broad-based political organization, with branches in nearly every western European and North American country. It was the main arena for indoctrination of all politically oriented young Persians abroad, especially those opposed to the shah, and its demonstrations and rallies often attracted the sympathy and support of students and other citizens of the host countries. It was thus able to function as a powerful international propaganda and lobbying organization.

The heightening of Sino-Soviet tensions eventually led to a split within the Tudeh party and subsequent formation of two rival parties. *Sāzmān-e enqelābī-e Ḥezb-e tūda* (Revolutionary organization of the Tudeh party) emerged in 1340-42 Š./1961-63 among young Tudeh members critical of party policies and encouraged by the Cuban experience to free themselves from the traditional affiliation with Soviet communism. The organ of this group, *Setāra-*



ye sork (Red star), published in Europe in the early 1970s, promoted Maoist doctrine, in which third-world countries were defined as semifeudal and semicolonial and peasant revolution was recommended in the absence of an urban proletariat. Among the founders of the organization were Mahdī Kānbābā Tehrānī, Majīd Zarbaḳš, Moḥsen Rezwānī, Bīžan Ḥekmat, Kūroš Lāšā'ī (see above), Bīžan Čehrāzī, and 'Alī Ṣafā'ī. They attempted to send political agitators into Persia, but the latter were discovered and arrested by SAVAK. Other members were sent to Kurdistan to be trained in guerrilla warfare in camps operated by the anti-Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalāl Ṭālebānī and also to Cuban and Chinese centers. In 1348 Š./1969 a splinter group calling itself Kādrhā (Cadres) became active in translating and circulating Maoist writings and managing a Persian-language program on Peking radio (Tehrānī, I, p. 171; Ṭabarī, pp. 234-38; Jazanī, pp. 148-51). After the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party in 1956 three former Tudeh leaders, Ġolām-Ḥosayn Forūtan, Aḥmad Qāsemī, and 'Abbās Saḡā'ī had fled from the eastern bloc to France, where, on 10 December 1963, they announced their opposition to the Tudeh leadership. They subsequently joined Sāzmān-e enqelābī (see above), but disagreements over policy led them to organize Sāzmān-e Mārksīst-Lenīnīst-e tūfān (Storm Marxist-Leninist organization) in France in 1965 (*Rāh-e tūfān*, Bahman 1362 Š./February 1984, p. 3; Abrahamian, 1989, p. 453); it was originally identified with Albanian and Chinese opposition to the Soviet Union and then with Albanian opposition to both communist powers. The Tufan leaders remained loyal to Mao's philosophy of revolution in the third-world countries, however. They published *Rāh-e tūfān* (Way of the storm) and were particularly active among Persian students abroad.

Third phase (1350-60 Š./1971-81)

The third phase was characterized by the predominance of communist ideological tendencies among Persian students at home and abroad, despite severe censorship and repression during the final years of the monarchy (see, e.g., Alaolmolki, pp. 218-33). It opened on 19 Bahman 1349 Š./8 February 1971 with a guerrilla action at Sīāhkal, in Gīlān province, by Gorūh-e Sīāhkal (Sīāhkal group), composed of militants; among them were a few who had survived from Gorūh-e Jazanī. A month later thirteen of the participants were arrested and executed (*Bāḳtar-e emrūz* 2, Ordībehešt 1350 Š./May 1971, p. 1). Ṣaffārī Aštīānī (see above) was killed in a confrontation with security forces on 2 Mordād 1351 Š./24 July 1972 (*Bāḳtar-e emrūz* 29, Sahrīvar, 1351 Š./September 1972, p. 4). Jazanī and other imprisoned leaders were shot by SAVAK, on the



pretext that they had attempted to escape but in reality because of their contacts with the fighters who remained free (*Bāktar-e emrūz* 65, *Ḳordād* 1354 Š./June 1975, p. 1).

This phase culminated during the Revolution of February 1979, when the major communist organizations flourished at home and the most activist members of the Confederation of Iranian Students and communist organizations abroad hastened to Persia and joined or established dozens of communist organizations, circles, and parties. These groups represented a variety of radical ideologies and modes of revolutionary mobilization, including the way of the pro-Soviet Tudeh party (known as line 1), the guerrilla mode of mobilization (line 2), hard-line Maoist tendencies (line 3), and a form of the new left (line 4), as well as Trotskyism and other tendencies. In the final months of 1357 Š./early 1979, for example, eleven communist groups, all opposed to the Tudeh party and its Soviet links and to the guerrilla strategies that had predominated in the 1970s, attended a unity conference but were unable to find permanent common ground (*Dīdgāhhā-ye waḥdat*, *passim*). This phase ended in late 1359 Š./early 1981, when thousands of members of these groups and their sympathizers were arrested or executed by the Islamic regime. The most significant groups in the third phase included the following.

Sāzmān-e čerīkhā-ye fedā'ī-e kalq-e Īrān (Organization of Iranian people's commando guerrillas) resulted from the merger in 1350 Š./1971 of two underground communist groups, the first consisting of remnants of *Gorūh-e Sīāhkal* led by *Şafā'ī Farāhānī* (see above), the second, more interested in urban guerrilla tactics, led by *Mas'ūd Aḥmadzāda* and *Amīr-Parvīz Pūyān*. The new organization initiated its activities with the assassination of the head of the military tribunal, General *Zīā' Fārsīū*, on 18 *Farvardīn* 1350 Š./7 April 1971, and armed robbery of several banks. *Şafā'ī Farāhānī*, *Pūyān*, and *Aḥmadzāda* expounded the essential tenets of the *Fedā'īān*: guerrilla warfare, "armed propaganda" (*tablīg-e mosallaḥāna*) for the revolution, and rejection of all "reformism" and compromise of the kind followed by the Tudeh party. In particular, *Aḥmadzāda's* pamphlet *Mobāraza-ye mosallaḥāna ham esterātežī ham tāktīk* (Armed struggle, both strategy and tactics), inspired by the ideas of Mao, Guevara, and Régis Debray, later served as a manual for urban armed struggle. His views remained dominant until the summer of 1355 Š./1976, when the secret head-quarters of the group were surrounded by security forces and almost all the leaders, including *Ḥamīd Aşraf*, who led the *Fedā'īs* in



the period of 1351-55 Š./1972-76, were killed. After that the more moderate views of Jazanī came to predominate (*Payām-e dānešjū* 3, 1977, pp. 23-25), and criticism of the Soviet Union and the Tudeh party was replaced by cooperation with the “socialist camp” against the regime (*Sāzmān-e peykār*, 1359 Š./1980, p. 18). This ideological shift encouraged some members to leave the organization and join the Tudeh party. One of them, Tūraj Beygvand, wrote two pamphlets criticizing the “theory of armed propaganda” as a deviation from Marxism-Leninism; they were published by the Tudeh party in 1357 Š./1978. These departures seemed to put a virtual end to the organization. On the eve of the Revolution it numbered not more than a few dozen members, but its record of courageous action had attracted great sympathy, especially among young people, and in the enthusiasm immediately following the victorious Revolution tens of thousands of them joined, making it the largest communist organization in Persia. *Kār* (Labor) was the organization’s political organ, published weekly beginning on 19 Esfand 1357 Š./10 March 1979. Some of the older leaders, who supported immediate armed struggle against the new regime, soon became disenchanted with the new leadership, which was more hesitant. In the early months after the Revolution Moḥammad Ḥormatīpūr and Ašraf Dehqānī left the organization, announcing their support for Aḥmadzāda’s views (Dehqānī, *passim*). They formed a group, based in Kurdistan, and remained active as guerrillas for several years. In June 1980 the organization split into majority (*akṭariyat*) and minority (*aqalliyat*) factions over the nature of the new government. The majority tended to follow the Tudeh party in supporting the government and defining its policies as anti-imperialistic. The minority, on the other hand, returned to the original militant policy of the organization, opposing the Tudeh party and insisting on challenging the Islamic regime. Both factions remained faithful to a pro-Soviet line, however. Two years later the majority split into two smaller groups; one, led by Farroḳ Negahdār, favored a prompt merger with the Tudeh party, whereas the other, led by ‘Alī Keštgar, considered such a move premature.

Sāzmān-e enqelābiyūn-e komūnist (Organization of communist revolutionaries) and *Etteḥādīya-ye komūnisthā-ye Īrān* (Union of Iranian communists). The former was founded in 1348 Š./1969 by activists in the Confederation of Students in California; the original leaders included Ḥamīd Kawṭarī, Siāmak Za’īm, and Fereydūn ‘Alīābādī. The party publication, *Komūnist* (Communist), followed a strong Maoist line in 1970-76. This group established a new student confederation named Eḥyā’, made contact with militant Persians in Arab countries in 1976, and joined with remnants of Gorūh-e Felastīn (see above)



under the name *Etteḥādīya-ye komūnisthā*, following the Chinese and Albanian ideological line. Its organ was *Ḥaqīqat* (Truth; 1356-57 Š./1977-78 in exile and after the Revolution in Tehran), but *Komūnist* continued as a theoretical journal. *Etteḥādīya-ye komūnisthā*, which established itself in Persia after the fall of the shah, was one of the eleven organizations at the unity conference, and, after a period of hesitation over support for this or that faction, it resorted to armed insurrection against the new Islamic regime. Its members operated a base in the northern forests, calling themselves *Sarbadārān* after a Persian group that had rebelled against the Mongol rulers in the 13th century. In the autumn and winter of 1360 Š./1981 they staged an unsuccessful assault on the town of Āmol; they suffered heavy casualties, and in addition dozens of members, including Ḥosayn Rīāḥī, Farāmarz Ṭolūʿī, ʿAlīābādī, and Zaʿīm, were arrested and executed (*Enqelāb-e eslāmī*, 8 February 1983, p. 3). A remnant of *Etteḥādīya* split off in late 1357 Š./early 1979 under the leadership of Moḥammad Amīn and Aḥmad Taqwāʿī and published a journal entitled *Zaḥmat* (Toil) in Tehran. This group joined a coalition with some other groups, under the name *Waḥdat-e enqelābī* (Revolutionary unity).

Sāzmān-e waḥdat-e komūnistī (Organization of communist unity), originally formed after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 by a group of leftists active in the Confederation of Iranian Students in Europe who had moved to Iraq and other Arab countries. There they were active under the name *Jabha-ye mellī-e kāvār-e miāna* (National front in the Middle East) and revived the journal *Bāktar-e emrūz* (Beirut and Iraq, Šahrivar 1349-Dey 1355 Š./September 1970-January 1976) in Persian and also published *Īrān al-ṭawra* (Revolutionary Iran) in Arabic. In 1977 this group changed its name to *Etteḥād-e komūnistī* (Communist union) and later to *Waḥdat-e komūnistī* (Communist unity). It was both anti-Stalinist and anti-Maoist and for a while cooperated with the *Fedāʿiān* guerrillas in Persia (see above). After the Revolution its activities were largely confined to raising theoretical issues and challenging the views of other communist groups in its journal *Rahāʿī* (Emancipation; 1357-68 Š./1978-1989; its supporters abroad published *Andīša-ye rahāʿī* (The thought of emancipation) from Esfand 1362 Š./February 1983 (for the history of this group see *Gorūh-e etteḥād-e komūnistī*).

Gorūh-e ārmān-e kalq (Group for the people's aspiration) was a lesser organization that cooperated with the *Fedāʿiān* in the 1970s; six of its leaders, including Homāyūn Katīrāʿī and Hūšang Taragol, were executed in 1350 Š./1971 (*Bāktar-e emrūz* 19, Ābān 1350 Š./October 1971, p. 1).



Gorūh-e Gol-e Sorḳī (Gol-e Sorḳī group) took its name from the poet Ḳosrow Gol-e Sorḳī, its best-known member, who, with the filmmaker Karāmat-Allāh Dānešīān, was arrested in November 1973, tried before a military tribunal for conspiracy to assassinate the shah, and executed (*Bāḳtar-e emrūz* 50, Esfand 1352 Š./March 1974, p. 1).

Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn-e ḳalq-e Īrān, Marxist-Leninist faction (see above). Before the Islamic guerillas of this organization were able to launch operations a large number of them were arrested, in August-September 1971; many of the leaders, including Moḥammad Ḥanīfnežād, Saʿīd Moḥsen, Aṣḡar Badīʿzādagān, and ʿAlī Bākerī were executed. There were still enough members, however, to carry out the group's aims; they began urban guerrilla operations in January 1972 and, despite the loss of additional members in sporadic clashes with security police, continued their efforts. In 1973-74, Moḥammad-Taḳī Šahrām and Bahrām Ārām, members of the Central Committee, along with a number of other cadres repudiated their previous religious orientation and adopted Marxism-Leninism as their exclusive ideology. According to their own analysis, it appears that they launched a terrifying campaign in this period to brainwash the susceptible members while eradicating those who remained loyal to their original Islamic ideology. They purged over 50 percent of the cadres and murdered and burned Majīd Šarīf Wāqefī, a leading member of the Central Committee who opposed the separatists (*Sāzmān-e Mojāhedīn [Marxist]*, 1976, pp. 14-24; *idem*, 1978, pp. 10-15). After these events those members who remained faithful to the original ideology of the organization were unorganized until late 1357 Š./1978, when Masʿūd Rajawī and Mūsā Ḳīābānī were released from prison and assumed leadership. The Marxist faction, on the other hand, was led by Moḥammad-Taḳī Šahrām and Bahrām Ārām, who announced its ideological position in October 1975; it became known as the Marxist-Leninist Mojāhedīn (Abrahamian, 1989, pp. 145-69). Armed operations continued, including assassination of five American military advisers and some high-ranking Persian police officers (Alaolmolki, p. 226). This group published *Qīām-e kārgar* (Revolt of the workers) and *Īrān al-jamāhīr* (The Iranian public, in Arabic) abroad, where it maintained close relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) and other Near Eastern leftist groups that permitted use of their broadcasting and publishing facilities. In the urban fighting of 1354-57 Š./1975-78 forty members of the faction were killed by the government forces. After the Revolution the survivors reorganized as *Sāzmān-e peykār* (see below).



Sāzmān-e peykār dar rāh-e āzādī-e ṭabaqa-ye kārgar (Organization for the struggle for emancipation of the working class), generally known simply as *Peykār* (Struggle), resulted from reorganization of the Marxist-Leninist faction of the *Mojāhedīn* (see above). In the summer of 1357 Š./1978 a council of representatives from that organization revised the old program of urban guerrilla struggle and adopted a policy of encouraging armed mass uprising. At that time both the leadership and the name of the organization were changed (*Sāzmān-e mojāhedīn [Marxist]*, 1357 Š./1978, p. 2; Abrahamian, 1989, p. 146). Ḥosayn Aḥmadī Rūḥānī, Torāb Ḥaqṣenās, and ‘Alī-Rezā Sepāsī Āštīānī were among the leaders of the reorganization, but two small groups refused to accept the changes and carried on as *Gorūh-e nabard barā-ye āzādī-e ṭabaqa-ye kārgar* (Group for the combat for emancipation of the working class) and *Etteḥād-e mobāraza dar rāh-e ārmān-e ṭabaqa-ye kārgar* (United campaign for fulfillment of working-class aspirations) respectively. All three participated in the unity conference of 1357 Š./1979 (see above). *Peykār* was usually considered the most extreme of the Persian communist groups in this period because of its hard-line opposition to the Tudeh party and the Soviet Union and its ideological criticism of the *Fedā’iān*. In contrast to most other leftist groups, it also opposed the new Islamic regime from the beginning. At the outbreak of the Persian war with Iraq it launched a campaign of antiwar propaganda (*Peykār* 73, Mehr 1359 Š./October 1980, app., pp. 1-4), which resulted in execution of some of its members. The party’s political organ was the weekly *Peykār*, of which 127 issues were published (Ordībehešt 1358-Aban 1360/May 1979-October 1981). Because it preached secular opposition to the ruling clergy, *Peykar* was one of the main targets of suppression by the government; it was annihilated through imprisonment and executions, and the remaining few members in exile have not succeeded in reviving it.

Sāzmān-e razmandagān-e āzādī-e ṭabaqa-ye kārgar (Organization of working-class freedom fighters) was organized on the eve of the evolution by Marxist intellectuals, including Afḵam Aḥmadī, who had been involved in clandestine political activities in the mid-1970s and had opposed both the Soviet line and the guerrilla doctrine of “armed propaganda.” It participated in the unity conference of 1357 Š./1979. Outside Tehran it was also active in Kurdistan and *Ḳūzestān* and eventually absorbed the *Mojāhedīn* splinter group *Etteḥād-e mobāraza dar rāh-e ārmān-e ṭabaqa-ye kārgar* (see above). The party organ was *Razmandagān* (Fighters), of which thirty-five issues appeared between Esfand 1358 Š./March 1980 and Ābān 1359 Š./November 1980. Extended debates between this organization and *Peykār* on matters like the class basis



of the new regime, the meaning and dimensions of the social-imperialism thesis, and Persia's war with Iraq typified the political and doctrinal controversies among Persian communist groups in the early 1980s. The problem of the war, as well as several other issues of strategy and tactics, caused internal dissension, and one section of the membership joined the Tudeh party, another Peykār, and a third *Ḥezb-e komūnist-e Īrān* (Communist party of Iran; see below).

Ḥezb-e ranjbarān-e Īrān (Laborers' party of Iran), was formed on 5 Dey 1358 Š./26 December 1979 from nine Marxist groups, mostly Maoist in orientation, that had been active against the shah's regime outside Persia. The most important was *Sāzmān-e enqelābī-e Ḥezb-e tūda* (see above), which followed the "three world" doctrine and opposed both the United States and the Soviet Union; it supported the anti-imperialist policies of President Abu'l-Ḥasan Banī-Şadr. When he was ousted in 1360 Š./1981 this party was banned along with other leftist groups, and several of its leaders were executed. Its political organ, *Ranjbar* (The laborer; published in Tehran 1358-60 Š./1979-81), continued to appear occasionally abroad. Hūşang Amīrpūr, Maḥmūd Bozorgmehr, Majīd Zarkaş, Moḥsen Reżwānī, and 'Alī Kaškūlī were among the party's leading figures (see *Miz-e gerd* 3, 1366 Š./1987, p. 128).

Komela (People, Masses, the Kurdistan workers' revolutionary organization). In the mid-1960s the remnant of *Ḥezb-e demokrāt-e Kordestān* (Democrat party of Kurdistan) living in Iraq had organized *Sāzmān-e enqelābī-e Ḥezb-e demokrāt-e Kordestān-e Īrān* (Revolutionary organization of the democrat party of Iranian Kurdistan). Esmā'īl Şarīfzāda, 'Abd-Allāh Mo'īnī, and Mollā Āvāra were among its leaders. The new party sought to emulate the Cuban model, establishing guerrilla centers and initiating armed struggle in Persian Kurdistan. In 1347-48 Š./1968-69 the revolt was suppressed, and these activities ended in failure; analysis of their experience led members like Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Karīmī, Şo'ayb Zakarīyā'ī, Fo'ād Solţānī and Yūsof Ardalān to reject the revolutionary avant-gardism of Cuba and to adopt a Maoist line instead. After being released from prison at the beginning of the Revolution of February 1979 some of the guerrillas organized *Komela* and once again engaged in armed struggle for Kurdish self-determination. It became the second most powerful group in Kurdistan, after *Ḥezb-e demokrāt-e Kordestān* itself, which was led by 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Qāsemlū.

Rāh-e kārgar (The worker's way) was founded after the Revolution by a number of young intellectuals who had been released from prison. Although



in the early 1970s they had been affiliated with a variety of religious and secular groups, including *Hezb-e melal-e eslāmī* (Party of the Islamic nations), the *Mojāhedīn*, the *Fedā'īān*, and *Gorūh-e Felasṭīn* (see above), they came to share a Marxist-Leninist ideology critical of other leftist groups and began publication of *Rāh-e kārgar* (Tehran, Tīr 1358 Š./June 1979), which eventually lent its name to the group itself. The party's criticism of the Tudeh party's persistent fidelity to the Soviet Union, of the supposed intellectual adventurism of *Fedā'īān* factions, and of the ideological extremism of *Peykār* identified it with the "fourth line" among Persian communists. Its leaders considered the new Islamic regime "fascist," while respecting the extraordinary ability of the clergy to mobilize the masses (*Tawzīh*, p. 34). The group considered Persia a victim of American and Iraqi aggression and therefore cooperated with the government on this issue (*Rāh-e kārgar* 54, 22 Ordībehešt 1359 Š./12 May 1980, p. 14). Unlike its main rivals, however, it did not have a broad power base, and some of its leaders, including 'Alī-Rezā Šokūhī, Ḥosayn Qāzī, and Mahdī Kōsrowšāhī, were executed in 1360 Š./1981.

Trotskyisthā and *Hezb-e kārgarān-e sūsiālist* (Trotskyites and Workers' socialist party). The first Trotskyite group in the history of Persian communism was organized by some Persian students in London in the 1960s; it subsequently joined the Fourth International of Trotskyites. The group found sympathizers in other European countries and in the United States and issued two publications, the theoretical and political organ *Kand o kāv* (Exploration), which first appeared in December 1974 in Great Britain, and *Be-sū-ye āzādī* (Toward freedom), published by Nāṣer Pūrqomī in London until the Revolution, when a new journal, *Če bāyad kard* (What is to be done?), began to appear in Persia, in Dey 1357 Š./January 1979. This group combined with another Trotskyite group, which had originated in the United States under the leadership of Bābak Zahrā'ī, to form *Hezb-e kārgarān-e sūsiālist*, which published the organ *Kārgar* (The worker). Soon afterward, however, internal dissent over the nature of the new regime and party positions on matters like the Persian war with Iraq and occupation of the American embassy, caused a split. Zahrā'ī supported Khomeini, and his faction continued its activities openly until it was suppressed, along with other leftist groups, in 1360 Š./1981. The Trotskyites were not very influential among Persian leftists.

The Tudeh party. The party leadership met in East Germany, in Leipzig, in January 1979, just before the fall of the shah, and declared its full support for the Revolution and Khomeini (Eskandarī, pp. 158-61, 190-93, 207). At the same



meeting Īraj Eskandarī was replaced as general secretary by Nūr-al-Dīn Kīānūrī, who played a definitive role in guiding the party until the collective arrest of its leaders in winter 1362 Š./1983 (see, e.g., Ṭabarī, pp. 260-66). At the beginning of the Revolution the Tudeh party had been active in Persia through its clandestine participation in Etteḥād-e demokrātīk-e mardom-e Īrān (Democratic unity of the people of Iran), led by the noted writer and translator Maḥmūd E'temādzāda (Behāzīn); publication of the clandestine *Navād*; and its many sympathizers among artists, writers, and journalists. After the Revolution most of the leaders, who had been living in exile since the coup d'état of 1332 Š./1953, returned, and veterans imprisoned for decades were released. The party resumed its overt activities and soon attracted many of its former partisans and affiliates. Despite criticism from other leftist and nationalist groups, it adopted a policy of almost unconditional support for the Islamic Republic, which it defined as revolutionary and anti-imperialist; Tudeh also voted for the new constitution (see constitutional law of the Islamic Republic). Party support included cooperation with the government on all kinds of political and security issues; on 31 Šahrīvar 1359 Š./22 September 1980 the party central committee issued a leaflet entitled *E'lāmīya-ye komīta-ye markazī-e Ḥezb-e tūda-ye Īrān* (Communiqué of the central committee of the Tudeh party of Iran), in which it even encouraged members to report to the security authorities all information about groups and individuals opposing the regime. Although Tudeh, which had been the leading communist party in Persia during the 1940s, was experiencing competition from several radical communist organizations that were more attractive to younger generations, it still retained great influence. Its leaders hoped to pave the way for ultimate seizure of power by reactivating its old membership and infiltrating the civil and military ranks under the new regime. It also benefited from the decisive split in the rival Sāzmān-e fedā'īān-e ḳalq (see, e.g., Ṭabarī, pp. 295-312).

Fourth phase (since 1361 Š./1982)

In 1361 Š./1982 the government, after making use of the Tudeh party to help eliminate much of the rest of the leftist opposition, targeted the party itself and arrested almost the entire leadership and many of the most active members, including a group of high-ranking military officers like Admiral Bahrām Afzālī, commander-in-chief of the navy. By 1364 Š./1985 most of these figures had been executed; a few surviving members, led by 'Alī Kāvārī, reorganized the party abroad and continued to publish *Mardom*. Some dissident members in exile founded a new organization, Ḥezb-e demokrātīk-e mardom-e Īrān



(Democratic party of the people of Iran), under the leadership of Bābak Amīr-Ḳosravī and Fereydūn Āḍarnūr, following a social-democratic tendency (see *Rāh-e arānī*, subsequently retitled *Rāh-e āzādī*, published in Paris since 1987).

In 1361 Š./1982 some survivors of groups like Peykār, Razmandagān, and the Fedā'īān joined members of Komela and a small group called Etteḥād-e mobārezān-e komūnist (Union of communist militants) in an attempt to found Ḥezb-e komūnist-e Īrān (Communist party of Iran; *Pīšrow* 5, Ordībehešt 1362 Š./May 1983, p. 1) as a proletarian party ideologically opposed to any kind of “revisionism” (Kongera, *passim*). Since then Komela has defined itself as the Kurdistan branch of the Persian communist party, though its membership has always been primarily Kurdish. Its organ is *Pīšrow* (Vanguard), published first in Persian Kurdistan, then Iraqī Kurdistan; the secretary general is ‘Abd-Allāh Mohtadī, and Maṣṣūr Ḥekmat is a leading member. The communist party has published the journal *Komūnist* monthly since 1362 Š./1983 and also, in western Europe, *Bolshevik* in English. The exiled survivors of Rāh-e kārgar, reorganized as Sāzmān-e kārgarān-e enqelābī-e Īrān (Organization of revolutionary workers of Iran), resumed publication of *Rāh-e kārgar* in France and Germany and in 1984 also launched a theoretical organ in Paris. They have attracted former members of other leftist groups and have maintained a symbolic presence in Iraqī Kurdistan, near the Persian border; they have even made efforts to gain a foothold inside the country. Some Trotskyites are also still active abroad, publishing *Sūsīālīsm wa enqelāb* (Socialism and revolution) in England in 1984-86.

Tufān (see above) and Ḥezb-e kārgarān wa dehqānān (Workers’ and peasants’ party), which had split off from it in 1356 Š./1977, reorganized as Ḥezb-e kār (Labor party) and joined Šūrā-ye mellī-e moqāwamat (National council for resistance), which was organized in Paris by exiled opponents of the Islamic Republic in 1981 (Abrahamian, 1989, p. 243). The minority and two majority factions of the Fedā'īān have experienced further splits in exile.



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