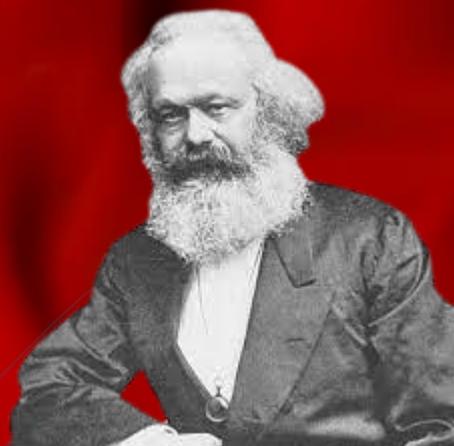


**Polemic with the Internationalist
Communist Tendency: Ambiguities
in Performing Internationalist Tasks**



In Defence of Marxism

Internationalist Voice

Debate is vital, necessary and crucial to internationalists. The revolutionary movement cannot take effective steps unless the internationalists play a dynamic role in the development of this movement. This is only possible through the discussion and confrontation of different points of view within the proletarian political milieu.

Homepage:

www.internationalistvoice.org

Email:

contact@internationalistvoice.org

Communist Revolution
or
the Destruction of Humanity!

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”The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.” Marx

Introduction

The internationalist communist tendency (ICT) is one of the main currents of the communist left, which is rooted in the faction of the communist left of Italy [1]. The ICT, both during the period of the Italian communist left faction and later on, when defending internationalist positions during the black counterrevolutionary period, has sections in different countries and publishes publications in several languages. The ICT, with regard to internationalist positions belonging to the communist left, and for decades in defence of proletarian positions, has a greater responsibility in defending communist positions and Marxism.

In July 1999, when students began to protest the closure of a “reformist” newspaper and became a black army of one of the factions of the bourgeoisie, as well as during the Green Movement’s protests at the results of the presidential elections in June 2009, people practically became a black army of a faction of the bourgeoisie. In our view, both of these protests were reactionary and against the class struggle. Over time, in late December 2017 and early January 2018, we witnessed popular street protests. The protests of late December 2017 and early January 2018 were not reactionary compared to previous protests; it did not turn into the black army of a particular faction of the bourgeoisie, but was a popular protest with weaknesses and strengths. For a better understanding of these protests, we refer to

our article entitled “Street Protests Over Capitalist Barbarism and Internationalist Positions” [2]. The social events, labour protests and strikes, which became more radical every day, in the autumn of 2018, stopped being defensive and took on an offensive form. A balance sheet of the labour protests and strikes has been published in a brochure [3]. The internationalist currents in relation to the events we mentioned have played a passive role and, at best, published a formal essay which was more ambiguous than contributing to political clarity. But the ICT in relation to the recent labour protests and strikes published four articles and tried to play an active role. The published articles are as follows:

- The Crisis and the Rise of Workers’ Militancy in Iran [4]
- Iran: Workers’ Strikes and Protests Continue [5]
- The Class Party in Light of the Struggles in Iran [6]
- Workers’ Strikes in Iran: This Time It Is Different [7]

Apart from the fact that the articles were written from an internationalist horizon, the publication of articles at various points in time has possibly been part of playing a greater part in the process of labour protests. Simultaneously publishing articles in several languages was provided internationalist positions (albeit weak) in the middle of the hubbub on the left of capital in order to inform the public and other class sisters and brothers. Despite the great strengths of these articles, they have weak points and some ambiguities. It is hoped that, with reference to them and learning lessons from them, they nonetheless represent a step towards the transparency of the proletarian political milieu.

The Historical Experience of the Communist Left

The basic question that arises is, why do we insist on the history and historical heritage of the ICT? Does the ICT desire special rights due to its historical heritage? The article writes:

“But if, in the end, ‘lineages’ do not matter, why insist so much on the history of the communist left? Have we not already seen how the Spanish Communist Left rejected any account of its own history that ‘claimed a historical heritage or reliability or a right of seniority’? ... To try to start “from scratch”, to renounce the historical and political experience of the last century, is to disarm ourselves precisely in the face of the most recent and present dangers.” [8]

As the article itself points out, the insistence and emphasis on the lineages and history of the communist left and the ICT mean to rely on historical experiences in order to face up to social events by referring to a sufficiently experienced historical memory and learning from past mistakes when encountering social events and lowering the amount of mistakes.

One of the important issues on which we and the ICT both agree is that the revolutionary organization includes a small minority of the class and is the avant-garde of the proletariat. Its task is political leadership (a political compass) in the class struggle. In other words, the revolutionary organization does not reduce its role to the level of revolutionary publications, but plays an active role in the evolution of the class consciousness and political clarity of the proletarian political milieu. All of this is due to the fact that the revolutionary organization

sets the stage for the international and internationalist Communist Party, and the party's task is to defend the communist programme until the disappearance of social classes. The comrades rightly point out:

“The Party’s tasks are to fight for the communist programme in the soviets but above all to concentrate on the extension of the world revolution until capitalism is wiped off the face of the planet.”[9]

With this description, we come back to the fact that the ICT, despite its active efforts, did not carry out its tasks and functions properly according to the recent labour protests and strikes. Despite the experience and legacy of a century-long history, it has also shown ambiguity in some areas.

Popular Movements or Class Struggle?

One of the uncertainties of the ICT is to confuse popular movements with the proletarian class movement. The ICT announced that the popular protests in late December 2017 and early January 2018 (the reference to February in the text of the ICT was incorrect) inspired the labour protests and strikes in the autumn of 2018, writing:

“The new wave of demonstration began in February 2018, demonstrations in which, with the slogan ‘Reformists, Principlists, the game is up’ clearly showed a tendency to abandon the idea of support for ‘the lesser evil’, and they also

succeeded in getting rid of the religious slogans that had previously been mixed up with their movement.”[10]

It is true that religious slogans were not raised in the popular protests in late December 2017 and early January 2018, and that the protests also took an anti-religious form. It is also true that the protests were targeted on both sides of the regime. But stating that the protesters clearly expressed a desire to abandon the idea of support for the lesser evil is not a true depiction of the popular protests. Did the monarchist slogans as chanted by some of the protesters not support another evil? The bourgeoisie is not just the bourgeoisie in terms of sovereignty. Incidentally, because of the same protests the royalists took new life, monarchy at least in the interior of Iran belongs to history and Western gangsters, head by the US, tried to align these protests with their imperialist interests.

In the same popular protests, an even more evil slogan was heard, saying “We are Aryan, we do not worship Arab!”, which could have been in line with the collapse and the Yugoslavization of society. This is because everyone in the popular movement, such as the French “yellow vests”, is involved, even the supporters of the National Front led by Marin Le Pen. In the popular protests of Iran, even the supporters of the Iranian Marin Le Pen, namely, the followers of the pro-Aryan superior race, participated. Conversely, the popular protests of the proletariat do not imply conceptual racism, but represent the highest form of class solidarity. In the workers’ strike and protests at the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-industry Company, the employer’s agents attempted to systematically harass an ‘Arab’ worker. The

workers were collectively opposed to the employer's agents, and it was in this context that the workers' representative stated:

“Our alternative is a Soviet, a collective one. We are not person-centred and we do not want individualism. Individualists, nationalists, racists and reactionaries do not associate yourselves with us.”[11]

The comrades continue to unite the popular movements with the proletarian movements and condemn ‘the execution of the Kurdish militants’ along with the suppression of the workers as part of the suppression of the class movement, and say:

“Following that, in spite of the issuing of medieval sentences and the punishment of the Hepco workers with lashes, the beating of workers' representatives, arrests of the representatives of the striking teachers, the execution of the Kurdish militants... the struggles and strikes and the demonstrations of the workers has extended many times over.”[12]

First of all, it should be emphasized that execution is intentional murder; it is a crime which is condemned under any circumstances. But what do Kurdish ‘militants’ have to do with the class movement? When were the activists of the nationalist movement given the title of ‘militants’? Is there a fundamental difference between the gang of toilers of Komala and the Islamic Republic? If that wing of Komala, which considers itself to be a Communist Party and adheres to

conventional bourgeois laws, this gang of toilers of Komala, especially after the arrival of the Trump, is just a tool to apply pressure on behalf of Trump, Western countries and in particular Arab countries? This gang even has an assassination plot for its former friends.

The ICT rightly emphasizes that there are many lies on social media and in the capitalist mass media about the aims of the workers' movement and writes:

“There are already plenty of lies on social media and in the mainstream capitalist press about the aims of the movement, the most common being that the workers are simply demanding the re-nationalisation of the plant.”[13]

The above paragraph raises a fundamental question for any serious person. Why did social media and the mainstream capitalist press, especially in Western capitalism, promote the popular protests in late December 2017 and early January 2018, but remained silent in the case of the protests and labour strikes in autumn 2017? And if they were forced to say something, why was it only confined to re-nationalisation or payment of arrears?

This question shows how the ICT, when it states that workers' protests and strikes are a continuation of the popular protests and street demonstrations of late December 2017 and early January 2018, create a degree of ambiguity and conflate the popular movement with the proletarian movement.

The BBC, Voice of America, Voice of Israel, Radio Farda (the US Congress radio in Farsi) and dozens of other radio and television stations easily talk about democracy, freedom, being against the dictatorship of the clerics, and so on. But they are never going to talk

about the class movement and promote the workers' council. The wage slave is a wage slave anywhere on this planet. Where the Statue of Liberty is located, where 34.5% of the global wealth is located, around 46.2 million people live below the poverty line, according to a report published by the BBC (a media friend of the US) in 2011 [14].

With the rise of popular movements in late December 2017 and early January 2018, there was a risk of the collapse of society, not to mention the fate of Syria, but with the intensification of the class struggle in the autumn of 2018, this risk has reduced. Popular movements and the proletarian class movement are two different movements, and the working class can only respond to the attacks from the bourgeoisie from its class terrain.

Imperial Tensions

We believe that war conditions, even the threat of war, are not good for the growth and development of the class struggle, but class consciousness, along with economic crises, creates favourable conditions for this growth and development. The advent of populism globally and, in the end, the emergence of Trump were not in the interests of the working class, especially in the face of crisis capitalism on the periphery of capital; and, with shrinking sanctions, Iran's industries are increasingly pushing for bankruptcy and making millions of people unemployed. The imperialist tensions between Iranian and American gangsters are to a certain extent in the interests of the Islamic bourgeoisie; however, when Trump came to power, the punishment of the Islamic bourgeoisie soon followed through further sanctions to its detriment. The Islamic bourgeoisie faces serious

problems in advancing its imperialist interests and goals. Before proceeding, let us see how the ICT looks at this issue.

“In this sense Trump is a gift to the regime. With the arrival of the Trump government, the global imperialist line-up has become more transparent than ever. On one side there is the government of the Islamic Republic, which refers to its allies as the ‘Resistance Front’, and which is also supported by Russia and China. On this front, Iran is pursuing its regional imperialist policy by relying on the government of Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah, Hamas and Ansar Allah in Yemen... On the other side of this line-up, is the United States with its regional allies, namely Saudi Arabia and Israel. Regardless of the turmoil and havoc that this heterogeneous triangle has created and keeps creating, it seems that, as in the Bush period, they will eventually unwittingly help Iran advance its policies in the region.”[15]

There are ambiguities in this statement which we will point out. Imperialist tensions are not the product of unconventional states, but rooted in the imperialist policy of gangsters, which is part of capitalism’s metabolism.

The US invaded Iraq in order to maintain its hegemony in the new world order. Colin Powell, with a glass in hand in the thieves’ nest (UN), said that “Iraq has weapons of mass destruction”. The US inaugurated the bloodbath in Iraq to bring China, Russia and Europe under its hegemony. But the invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam took away the Iranian blood adversary and opened the door

to the influence of Iranian gangsters. Subsequently, Iraq actually became the sphere of influence of Iran.

Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel want to play the role of a regional power in their pursuit of imperialist ambitions. In the second term of the Obama administration, Western gangsters agreed to give Iran regional power despite Saudi-Israeli dissatisfaction. In fact, agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) meant the acceptance of Iran as a regional power by the major powers. We examined this issue in a pamphlet entitled *Imperialist Tensions and Agreements, Internationalist Positions and Perspectives* [16]. During this period, the Islamic bourgeoisie was able to be in a better position to advance its imperialist interests.

Saudi Arabia and Israel, and to some extent Turkey, were dissatisfied with the acceptance of Iranian gangsters as a regional power and tried to curtail Iran's influence. An Islamic caliphate, created from an obscure group called the Islamic State of the Levant and Iraq, was transformed into a power by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, with the support of the West, especially the US, in order to counter the influence of Iran. Iranian gangsters have been able to bring Iraq, Syria and, to some extent, Lebanon into its sphere of influence [17].

The defeat of the Islamic caliphate in both Iraq and Syria was carried out with the participation of the Iranians, and even this led to an increase in the influence of the Iranians. Trump promised to take away Iran's regional if he came to power. This was supported by Saudi Arabia and Israel. America's withdrawal from the JCPOA and imposition of catastrophic sanctions against Iran are due to Iran's withdrawal from its desire to be a regional power.

But the imposition of heavy sanctions on Iran, this time, has brought huge economic, security and political problems to the Islamic bourgeoisie of Iran, which faces serious problems in implementing its imperialist policies. The consequences of heavy sanctions for the working class and the class struggle are important to us. Although the sanctions on Iran's bourgeoisie by Westerners is not a new phenomenon, but the Islamic bourgeoisie never had to face full oil sanctions before. The bankrupt economy of peripheral capital in Iran is heavily dependent on oil revenues.

The results of these catastrophic sanctions are seen not only inside Iran but also in Lebanon (Hezbollah) and Syria, even Yemen and elsewhere. On the other hand, Israel, with a green light from the US and Europeans, has repeatedly attacked Iranian positions in Syria, but Iranian gangsters remain silent while being humiliated. Russia pursues its own imperialist interests and wants to maintain balance and harmony in its relations with Iran and Israel. Awareness of the Israeli attacks on the positions of the Iranians in Syria or the positions of Syria itself and the lack of efforts by Russia to prevent those attacks have led to a kind of distrust of Russia recently. It was in this context that the Quds Force (the overseas branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC]) brought Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Tehran on 25 February 2019 without informing Russia and even without knowledge of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With billions of dollars in aid, Iran has been able to sustain the Syrian economy. Now, such assistance can no longer be provided; further, because of sanctions, tanker ships cannot take oil to Syria, resulting in long queues at the petrol station. The US, for the first time, is sanctioning a part of the military of a country and declared the IRGC

to be a terrorist force. On the other hand, the Supreme National Security Council of Iran placed US troops in the West Asia region, known as the US Central Command, on the Islamic Republic of Iran's list of terrorist groups. Despite the imperialist tensions, the US and the IRGC have maintained a direct or indirect relationship until recently.

In 1986, Ronald Reagan, in appreciation of the services of Iranians in securing the release of American hostages in Lebanon and in order to strengthen the relationship with Iran, inscribed a copy of the Bible and sent it to Iran's leaders. This Bible was not brought to Iran by Robert McFarlane, but by the Deputy to the IRGC who delivered it to Hashemi Rafsanjani. This relationship and cooperation continued during the Bosnian War. During the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and the defeat of the Taliban, the IRGC contributed greatly to the American forces, and we are witnessing this cooperation in Iraq. In Iraq, it was much broader than elsewhere [18]. Now the IRGC has been referred to as a terrorist force.

Iran's full oil sanctions, the humiliation of Iranian gangsters in Syria by Israel, the IRGC's inclusion on the US' terrorist list, the efforts of Arab countries to hit Iran's devastated economy and dozens of other factors have exacerbated imperialist tensions. In such contexts, we see movements in bourgeois Islamic institutions. Not only has the Commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Guards been changed, but displacements in various categories of the IRGC have taken place. In addition, the head of the judiciary has been replaced, while sackings and new appointments have occurred on the Assembly of Experts, and so on. All of this represents a kind of preparation for the new conditions. Hussein Salami, after being elected as the new Commander of the IRGC, said:

“We have to expand the realm of our authority from the region to the world, until there is no safe haven for the enemy around the world” [18].

Even a person like Hassan Rouhani, who tries to follow the language of diplomacy and talks about the possibility of negotiating with the US, spoke in another language and called Trump a villain and a cutthroat:

“Undoubtedly, accepting the demands of a cutthroat, who is forcibly and falsely seeking to negotiate, surely it will not get us anywhere. With this cutthroat and his plans, we do not negotiate and accept a such negotiations, because doing so would involve a sense of humiliation and submission” [19].

All these arguments show that, contrary to the arguments of the ICT, Trump is not a gift to the Islamic Republic. The Islamic bourgeoisie hopes, in November 2020, that the Democrats will win the election to some extent and that the pressure from crises resulting from US sanctions will be reduced. But the re-election of Trump is a nightmare for the Islamic bourgeoisie and it will make the situation it faces more difficult.

But the working class and the people pay the price of imperialist tensions. Every day, a part of the middle class is thrown into the lower sections of the community; every day, we see more austerity policies; every day, the living standards of the working class drop. With the rise of imperialist tensions, especially in recent months, the Islamic bourgeoisie has exaggerated foreign threats to advance its austerity

and suppression policies. These will definitely affect the class struggle. As noted above, war conditions, even the threat of war, are not good for the growth and development of the class struggle, but class consciousness, along with economic crises, creates favourable conditions for this growth and development.

Unions Against the Working Class

Trade unions are part of the capitalist state; their duty is to manage the sales of labour in both metropolitan capital and peripheral capital as part of the capital institution. We first look at a paragraph of a text from the ICT:

“In 2008 the Syndicate (‘Sendica’) of the Workers of Haft Tapeh was re-founded. Although its leaders were immediately given one year gaol sentences as “threats to national security” it has continued to exist and elects its own delegates. The current spokesman for the workers is Ismael Bakhshi who has already been arrested many times. In our previous article it was he who we quoted raising the question of forming a ‘shura’ or soviet (council). Since then the movement has developed.”[21]

The first ambiguity of the above paragraph is that the reader thinks a working-class syndicate with a syndicate function is active at the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-industry Company. The fact is that the organization working in the name of the syndicate is neither a syndicate nor in a real sense a labour organization. It cannot continue

in this ways either it should take legal steps and integrate itself into the capitalist state or establish itself as a workers' organization in order to continue its activities.

The second ambiguity of the above paragraph is that the reader has the impression that the syndicate is calling for workers' councils. In other words, there is an irresponsible emphasis on the demand for workers' councils, along with the name of an organization that is neither a syndicate in its functional sense, nor a labour organization, which seeks workers' councils.

The third ambiguity of the paragraph above is that the reader thinks Ismail Bakhshi has been a representative of the syndicate. Bakhshi was arrested not as a syndicate representative, but as a representative of the workers, and is currently in prison for leading the strike, not for leading the syndicate.

The ICT believes that unions are institutions of the capitalist state in workplaces; but despite this, there is no critique nor disclosure concerning the anti-worker nature of trade unions.

Trade unions (even labour syndicates) are the first barricades that the working class will have to conquer in the evolution of the class struggle. The evolution of the class struggle in Iran, when shifting from a defensive form to an offensive form, showed that it will be workers' councils, not unions or syndicates, that will be formed in the future.

Reformism or the Left of Capital

There was a time when it was possible to impose sustained reforms on capitalism, and really a part of the tasks of the parties

formed in the Second International was the attempt to impose these reforms on capitalism. With the arrival of capitalism in its decadent era, there was no longer the possibility of imposing reforms on capitalism, and with the formation of the Comintern, the era of imperialist wars and communist revolutions began. But the ICT has repeatedly used ‘reformist’ in its articles. The comrades write:

“Whilst the multi-coloured opposition to this regime pursues its reformist and nationalist goals, bargaining and begging for their share, the working class is entering the scene.”[22]

In another article, it continues.

“The ruling class as always will use their naked barbaric oppression as well as the usual dirty tricks aided by the reformists of the left of capital.”[23]

We ask comrades, please, introduce the name of one of these reformists on the left of capital to us and others, especially since the comrades are using the plural. Currents which the ICT evaluates as ‘reformist’ have played a major role in smearing the goals and values of communism. The history of Iran’s political milieu has been the history of the left of capital, and especially the history of the domination of Stalinism.

The reason for this was Iran’s relations with its neighbour, Russia. On the one hand, the Comintern declared Reza Shah a national bourgeoisie; on the other hand, Reza Shah, by adopting anti-communist laws in the National Assembly on 13 June 1931, provided

the grounds for the repression of Iranian communists in both Iran and Russia. The noblest communists, who formed the leadership of the Communist Party of Iran and participated in the October Revolution, were executed by the communists' murderer (Stalin). One of the most prominent theoreticians of the communist movement (Sultanzadeh), who formulated the positions of the Communist Party of Iran and then, from a communist perspective, criticized the Comintern, was beaten to death by Stalin. (An article will be published on this in the near future.) Only those who obeyed Stalinism survived and promoted Stalinist narratives of Marxism.

The Concept of Workers' Councils (Soviets)

Capitalism and the bourgeoisie, regardless of the capital of metropolitan or peripheral capital, can withstand a lot of activities and organizations; even far-sighted capital, in line with the long-term goals of capital, recommends some of these measure, but even the expression of workers' councils returns a verdict of "absolute apostasy". The ICT rightly emphasizes that the workers of the Haft Tappeh showed that the future belongs to the councils.

"What happened during the strike in Haft Tapeh, was a bright and promising start of the Iranian working class movement to break away from traditional legality confined to trade union methods. The workers of Haft Tape demonstrated in a most decisive way that the future belongs to soviets."[24]

Unfortunately, the ICT does not give its opinion on “workers’ councils” or, better yet, does not defend them from a communist position; it does not defend throwing slime at the concept of workers’ councils, not only on the right and the left of capital, but even those who hang themselves by the rope of council communism. Those 100 years of rich experience in such periods should be used to show the legitimacy of the positions of the internationalists.

Is the council a form of organization of the working class seeking to raise wages, improve working conditions, provide job security and so on? The way that anti-capitalist workers’ say? What is the difference between workers’ councils and other labour organizations? Was Lenin entitled in July 1917 temporarily to withdraw from the slogan “All power to the soviets!”?

Workers’ councils are the highest form of labour organization. When the class struggle develops at a higher level and the two social classes challenge each other, the bourgeoisie is incapable of continuing to rule, while the proletariat has yet to overthrow capitalism. Under certain historical conditions, namely, when the state of a society has a dual power, workers’ councils will be formed. In such a situation, workers’ councils are formed to take control of factories and neighbourhoods from the bottom up and present themselves as alternatives to capitalist power. Workers also form organizations to defend their councils, which are the earliest spins of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bakhshi explains in more detail that the council formed at Haft Tappeh is not the same as those councils at the highest level. But councilist thought (soviet thought) has been observed among workers,

and this thinking is dominant. Bakhshi's explanation is very clear and does not need to be interpreted. He says:

“When we say that the independent workers’ council was formed in the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-industry Company, some think that this council is the same as the final council, which has reached the highest level. No! We are just beginning and it takes time for even the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-industry Company workers themselves to understand what the work of the council is... I do not claim that the councils of workers from the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-industry Company are exactly in line with the theory and definition of the council, which has been discussed in detail. But, according to the psychology of the intellectual and cultural atmosphere and the realities of the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agroindustry Company workers’ atmosphere, soviet thinking has shown itself and become dominant” [25].

Comrades not only failed to provide a clear description of the concept and the nature of workers’ councils, but they were careless in giving information. The ICT writes:

“Nobody can say that the workers were not carrying out their task when, in different parts of the country, they promoted the creation of soviets as an alternative to the stagnation of the movements of a year ago.”[26]

Claiming that the horizons of the formation of independent labour councils were only introduced by workers at Haft Tappeh, while, in different parts of the country, workers promoted the creation of councils, is not correct. However, the fact that the protests and labour strikes were not extended to other sectors was the main reason for the defeat of workers' protests in the autumn of 2017.

Limits on Strike Extension

Expanding protests and strikes to other industries and sectors is one of the key factors for the victory of labour protests. Workers are more powerful and can easily disrupt the accumulation of capital and show their class solidarity. Labour protests in Iran are a daily phenomenon; but, unfortunately, these protests do not solidify and link up with each other. Except in the case of the National Steel Industrial Group (NSIG) and Haft Tappeh, the correlations were symbolic, as comrades wrote in this regard:

“It cannot be emphasised enough how important it is that this strike is linking up with other strikes and gaining the solidarity of workers. It is encouraging that in the last few days we have witnessed solidarity right across the country, not only symbolically but also on the streets and in industrial units. The slogan of the Ahwaz steel workers’ demonstration, “Foolad, Haft Tapeh, a Happy Unity” illustrates the tireless activities of the workers in this very difficult situation.”[27]

It is an irrefutable fact that the workers of Haft Tappeh fought heroically with riot police during the siege, in the centre of the city,

while chanting the slogan “Bread, jobs, freedom, council management”. This represented the most beautiful class solidarity: the wage slaves shook the streets under their feet, but unfortunately these protests could only demonstrate solidarity and forge relationships with the NSIG. One can talk for hours about the importance and purpose of the strike at Haft Tappeh or the NSIG. Sadly, however, these strikes and labour protests failed to expand to other industries, especially the key industries of Iran, namely, the petroleum industry and the automotive industry. One of the reasons for the collapse of the protests and strikes in the autumn of 2017 was the same limitations in extending the strike to other industries and sectors. Only symbolic solidarity with these worker protests and strikes was introduced in some sectors. Examining these weaknesses and limitations not only fails to undermine the importance of the Haft Tappeh strike, but also enables the proletariat to be in a better position in future battles.

This is the lexicon of the class struggle, when worker protests and strikes begin, especially when the class struggle becomes more radical every day: it must highlight strengths, it must foster the spirit for struggle and emphasize solidarity. But the duty of internationalists is not just about propaganda and agitation. The internationalists are not the followers of the working class, but the pioneering faction of the working class, who outline the horizons and prospects of the struggle in defence of the communist programme. They point out the warnings, weaknesses, limitations, shortcomings, mistakes and, most importantly, the traps and lies that the bourgeois is spreading to the working class, while emphasizing the historical experience of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie’s conspiracies can take different forms, at one point in the form of the suppression of security forces or the risk

of bourgeois right-wing tendencies, and at another point through the left of capital.

The Strike's Failure

The ICT's latest article looks at the failure of the strike by workers at Haft Tappeh. The ICT, as the avant-garde of the proletariat, investigated and analysed this failure. One day before the defeat of the strike, in relation to that memorable and glorious battle by the proletariat of Haft Tappeh, the comrades wrote:

“On 1 December, the 27th day of the strike and protest rallies of Haft Tapeh workers, the government sent a delegation, which, as before, tried to deceive the workers with hollow promises to prevent the continuation of the strike and demonstrations and protest rallies. However, the workers of Haft Tape did not give in and stood against the government delegates and rejected their promises and continued to emphasise the demands, which they had repeatedly stated before.”[28]

One day before the defeat of the strike, comrades were saying that the workers were still insisting on their demands. But, after the strike failed, the avant-garde of the proletariat stated that it has no information about whom these ‘workers’ representatives’ might have been, nor did it know what exactly happened that day or how workers returned to work. The ICT writes:

“There is no information about who these ‘workers’ representatives’ might have been... We do not know what exactly happened that day or how workers returned to work.”[29]

As the ICT does not know how the strike of the workers of Haft Tappeh was defeated, it cites one of the workers involved in it:

“As you know, the scabs, the Supreme Leader's disciples, supporters of official labour movement and of the Islamic councils and those elements who oscillated between the strikers and scabs, are hand in hand with the oppressors of the security forces, the employer and the managements, in direct and indirect forms, imposed breaking strike on the workers.”[30]

From the day of the arrest of Ismail Bakhshi (the strike leader who is currently in prison) and other representatives of this bold strike, the organization of the strike was seriously weakened despite its continuation. It was in such a context that the compromising and treacherous representatives, even while their comrades were being torture in the bourgeois dungeons, went to visit the agents of the state and the employer. Before that, the same compromisers and traitors had acquired the workers’ communication and promotion channel (Telegram Channel). One of the weak points of the recent protests by company workers was the failure to use one of the common traditions of the workers’ movement to “dismantle and install representatives” at any moment at the direction of the workers. If that happened, the

compromising and treacherous delegates would have promptly given up their seats to more radical representatives.

Using this tradition of labourers, both in Russia and in Germany, allowed the compromising and treacherous workers to be replaced with radical workers. Representatives should have reflected on the decisions of the collective struggle. All decisions and negotiations must be public, and there is no room for behind-the-scenes negotiations in the labour tradition. All this highlights the lack of daring and bold leaders, a lack of readiness for police repression and so on.

Despite the failure of the strike and protest at Haft Tappeh, this strike was the most valuable and informative strike in the Middle East of the past 40 years. The achievements of this failure have been far greater than many other victories. The ICT does not address such weaknesses. The main task of the internationalists is to defend the communist programme until the elimination of social classes, not to be a consequence of social events or of the working class, even if this results in more isolation for the internationalists in labour organizations or political milieu.

The Necessity of the International and Internationalist Communist Party

Workers' councils are the highest form of labour organization and cover the whole class apart from its inner tendencies. The workers' councils are the earliest forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the development and expansion of the class struggle and for the victory of the communist revolution, the historical imperative of the

international and internationalist Communist Party is necessary. The ICT also rightly emphasizes this necessity:

“The soviets are only the arena in which the fight for an entirely new way of doing things takes place. Alongside them the working class which is on its way to revolution has to forge an international and internationalist political party which encapsulates all the past lessons of working class struggle into a communist programme.”[31]

Although the ICT correctly highlights the need for the party, an internationalist and international party, without which the class struggle will hit its ceiling and its limitations, it cannot adopt the perspectives of the communist world. Further, the ICT also has ambiguities in this context. First, let us see what the comrades say about this:

“The vanguard, the party, appears as a product of the need to develop and move struggles forward. That is why the class is always creating a ‘party’. In some places, at some times, you can count on good fortune that nuclei of the future party ‘have been carrying out the task’, dedicated to the consolidation and development of a useful program. But most of the time it is not possible... but even then nuclei appear as a party in embryo. We see it now in Iran, but we also saw it in the Argentina of the seventies and eighties: the party arises, because without making a historical balance, without clarity about the universal character of the class (internationalism, centralism), without an

authentic communist perspective, class combativity hits a ceiling. But it is the communist program, the capacity to be useful in struggles, not the 'lineage' of formal organizations, which makes them useful."[32]

We will now examine ambiguities of the comrades.

First, the communists and the internationalists achieve the necessity of forming the Communist Party, not from the conditions and characteristics of the class struggle in a particular country at a certain time, but from global conditions and historical imperatives. When the class struggle is not in a particular country, whether in metropolitan capital or peripheral capital, but at the global level, it is promoted to a high level where current currents are no longer accountable, and the international and internationalist Communist Party must be formed to act a political compass, with political leadership making possible the victory of the communist revolution.

Secondly, comrades provide a mechanical understanding of the formation of the party when they write: "*We see it now in Iran, but we also saw it in the Argentina of the seventies and eighties*". We do not see it now in Iran, nor did we see in the Argentina of the 1970s and 1980s. The class struggle between 1978 and 1980 in Iran was much more developed than the class struggle in the autumn of 2018. Why did not we see this at that time? When the global class struggle was at a higher level in the late 1960s and early 1970s, why was the formation of the Communist Party not the order of the day?

Thirdly, the class struggle is at a global level in a defensive position; and, in recent years, we have seen more and more of a retreat by the international working class concerning its class identity at a

global level; therefore, the formation of an international and internationalist Communist Party is not the duty of the internationalists nowadays. Rather, efforts in this regard, and the theoretical, political and organizational preparation for this important task, are the duties of the day and the vital tasks of internationalists who must work tirelessly in this direction. After the internationalist conferences in the late 1970s and early 1980s, what steps has the ICT take in this regard? What initiative, cooperation or even serious discussion evolved out of the proletarian political milieu? Were the cooperation and debate, and even the theoretical controversy and internationalist conferences, the first steps in this direction?

Fourthly, comrades rightly emphasize the fact that the international and internationalist Communist Party must be centralist. But the fundamental question concerns why the ICT is not centralist and does have a federal form?

We return to the specific conditions of Iran to observe the assessment of the ICT from the specific conditions of Iran, as well as the horizons that are drawn for these specific conditions:

“Iranian workers may have had the strength and fortune to have been able to build a nucleus in a few cities. But throughout the country, they need an immediate coordination of revolutionaries able to launch a clear and understandable message. Moreover, the struggle can hardly prosper if it becomes isolated in Iran. The Iranian workers’ need for a useful political organization to develop consciousness and guide struggles is what we all need. Not in the future but now.”[33]

First, Iranian workers in no city had the opportunity nor ability to build a party nucleus, writing such thing is irresponsible.

Secondly, it is a fact that Iranian society is extremely political and one of the most political countries in the world. But the same political milieu is heavily influenced by the right and left tendencies of capital. The same tendencies played a major role in defeating the class struggle between 1978 and 1980. The same tendencies are great dangers to the evolution of the class struggle. Writing “but throughout the country, they need an immediate coordination of revolutionaries able to launch a clear and understandable message” only expresses the alienation of the political atmosphere in Iran.

Thirdly, what kind of help, support or initiative did the ICT offer to the formation of a revolutionary tendency in Iran’s political milieu?

We have repeatedly emphasized that, in the Iranian political milieu, when the class struggle is defensive or when we are witnessing popular social protests, the risk and danger of the right wing of capital are serious threats, especially since these tendencies are strongly supported by Western and Arab gangsters. The right wing of capitalism not only has millions of dollars of support, but it also enjoys political and even informational support. But with the intensification of the class struggle and the advance of the struggle of the working class, the risk and danger of the left of capital will be greater than the right trends of capital. At that time, the left of capital, particularly its radical wing, will be a serious obstacle to the evolution of the class struggle. So, on the one hand, the disclosure of the bourgeois and counterrevolutionary nature of the left of capital and, on the other hand, helping the formation of internationalist circles and currents,

which is a step in the formation of the future international and internationalist Communist Party, are of particular importance.

If the trade unions are the first barricades that the proletariat is compelled to conquer under revolutionary conditions, the left of capital is also a barricade, whereby the internationalists will only be able to form an internationalist and international Communist Party once they have nullified (made ineffective) the left of capital. Therefore, the struggle against the left of capital is an important part of the task of preparing for the future party.

The ICT, as one of the main currents of the communist left, with the rich experience of defending proletarian positions, has great responsibility in the proletarian political milieu and much potential to interfere in the class struggle. Will the ICT play an avant-garde role in carrying out its internationalist tasks? The looks and hopes are stitched to this side.

M. Jahangiry
27 April 2019

Notes:

[1] The contact information for the ICT is as follows:

- Website: www.leftcom.org
- Email: info@leftcom.org

[2] See the article “Street protests over capitalist barbarism and internationalist positions”

[3] See the pamphlet “Lessons from strikes, labour struggles and internationalist tasks”

[4] <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-11-19/crisis-rise-workers-militancy-iran>

[5] <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-11-30/iran-workers-strikes-and-protests-continue>

[6] <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-12-05/the-class-party-in-the-light-of-the-struggles-in-iran>

[7] <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-12-29/workers-strikes-in-iran-this-time-it-is-different>

[8] As source 6

[9] As source 4

[10] As source 4

[11] As source 4

[12] As source 4

[13] As source 5

[14] http://www.bbc.com/persian/world/2011/09/110913_u04_america_poverty

[15] As source 5

[16] See the pamphlet “Imperialist tensions and agreements - internationalist positions and horizons”.

[17] See the article “The Intensification of Imperialist Tensions-Only the Working Class can Offer a Future”.

[18]. In March 2019, the UK’s Channel 4 broadcast a documentary entitled *Shadow Commander*, which, in some sections, deals with all of information in detail.

- [19] <http://www.bbcpersian.com/persian/iran-48036772>
- [20] <https://www.dw.com/fa-ir/iran/a-48458297>
- [21] As source 5
- [22] As source 4
- [23] As source 7
- [24] As source 7
- [25] Interview with Ismail Bakhshi
- [26] As source 6
- [27] As source 5
- [28] As source 7
- [29] As source 7
- [30] As source 7
- [31] As source 4
- [32] As source 6
- [33] As source 6

Basic Positions:

- The First World War was an indication that the capitalism had been a decadent social system. It also proved that there were only two alternatives to this system: communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.
- In our epoch, the working class is the only revolutionary class. Furthermore, only this social class can deliver the communist revolution and end the barbarity of capitalism.
- Once capitalism entered its decadent period, unions all over the world were transformed into organs of the capital system. In turn, the main tasks of unions were to control the working class and mislead them about its class struggle.
- In the epoch of decadent capitalism, participating in the parliamentary circus and elections only strengthens the illusion of democracy. Capitalist democracy and capitalist dictatorship are two sides of the same coin, namely, the barbarity of capitalism.
- All national movements are counterrevolutionary, against the working class and the class struggle. Wars of national liberation are pawns in imperialist conflict.
- The reason for the failure of the October Revolution was the failure of the revolutionary wave, particularly the failure of the German Revolution, which resulted in the isolation of October Revolution and afterwards its degeneration.
- All left parties are reactionary: Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists and official anarchists etc. represent the political apparatus of capital.

- The regimes that arose in the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc., while being called “socialist” or “communist”, only offered a particularly brutal and barbaric form of capitalism: state capitalism.
- The revolutionary organization constitutes the avant-garde of the proletariat and is an active factor in the development and generalization of class consciousness. Revolutionary organizations may only take the form of revolutionary minorities, whose task neither is to organize the working class nor take power in its stead, without being a **political leadership**, or a political compass, where revolutionary organizations’ political clarity and influence on the working classes are **the fundamental elements for the implementation of a communist revolution**.

Political belongings:

The current status, positions, views and activities of the proletarian political tendencies are the product of past experiences of the working class and the effectiveness of the lessons that political organizations of the working class have learned during the history of the proletariat. Therefore, Internationalist Voice can trace its own roots and origins back to the Communist League, the First International, the left wing of both the Second International and the Third International, and the fractions that defended proletarian and communist positions against the degenerating Third International, which was represented by Dutch-German fractions, and **particularly Italian Fraction of the Communist Left** and the defence of Communist Left traditions.