

What follows is excerpted from the opening speech of the Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) (CPI(MLM)), which was printed in *Haghighat*, the central organ of the CPI(MLM), Number 1, June 2001.

... This Party has 30 years of history behind it; a 30-year period that was one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of Iran and the world. The generation that came out of this period has seen the [Chinese] Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), liberation movements around the globe, revolution in Iran, the initiation of the People's Wars in Peru and Nepal, dozens of wars, mass struggle and resistance around the world, and the collapse of a social-imperialist superpower.

The starting layers of our leaders and cadres came from the universities (from Tehran to Berkeley); they came from the schools of Kurdistan and from the oil fields of Khoozestan. In opposition to the suffocating claws of goulash communism, Khrush-

chevite revisionism and Tudeh Party reformism, they chose the new, revolutionary path that Mao Tsetung's Red China opened up to the communists of the world. The shining rays of the GPCR gave this generation a new outlook on the future and on the kind of world it must fight for. In this context, our first leaders formed the Organisation of Revolutionary Communists and then the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) (UIC(S)). Many of those comrades lost their lives in battles against the Islamic

Republic of Iran. But the red path that they chose, the foundations that they laid and the orientation that they chalked up for us is a great heritage. Eternal glory to them!

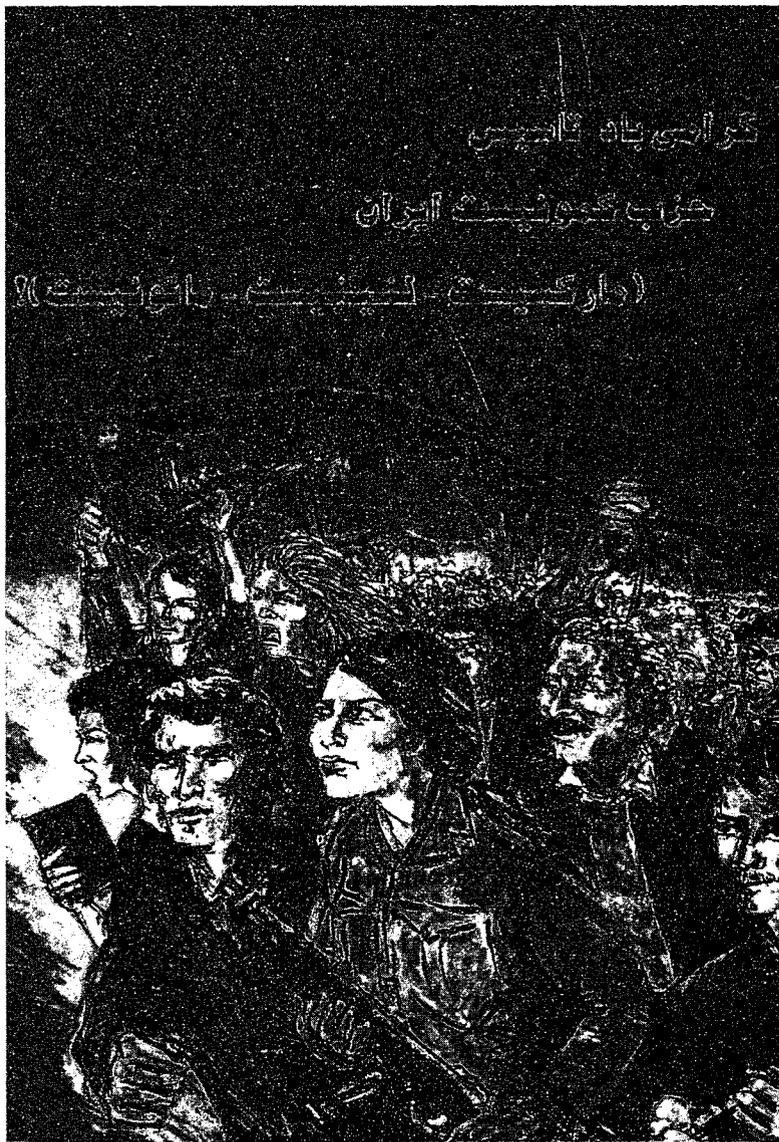
When the UIC(S) stepped onto the field of a big, mass revolution [Iran, 1979], its strengths and qualities fused with the strengths, perseverance and experience of other communist leaders and comrades from different corners of the country, from Kurdistan to Khoozestan; it fused with the leaders and activists of mass movements, workers' movements and student movements; all this added to its communist qualities. We faced the great test of revolution and with all our power we tried to prevent the revolution of the masses from being defeated. Old and new comrades engaged in revolutionary work, in factories, the countryside, universities, the women's movement, and the armed struggle in Kurdistan, in order to sow the seeds of revolutionary consciousness and mobilise and organise the masses in the fight against the reactionaries who had seized power. And when the enemy launched its country-wide, uninterrupted attack on the revolution, we initiated armed struggle and launched the Amol insurrection. In this way, we raised the flag of independent communist struggle and nurtured it with our precious lives. In this struggle and in the enemy's subsequent security operations, we lost the main body of our leadership and a large section of our cadres and members. The enemy carried out constant search-and-destroy operations. Many fellow travellers pulled out. Those who remained had the heavy, difficult task of preserving the UIC(S) and continuing on the path, so that the next generation would not be deprived of revolutionary politics and organisation.

Speech at the CPI(MLM) Founding Congress

Three Sarbedaran leaders, killed in or shortly after the Amol uprising.



Celebrar la Formacion del Partido Comunista de Iran (marxist-leninist-maoist)!



Celebrate the Founding of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)!

Above: Poster of the Founding Congress of CPI (MLM).

Below: A group of Sarbedaran fighters in the forests near Amol in 1981.



The attacks of the enemy in 1983 and again in 1985 broke up another attempt to initiate armed struggle. After that, the need for a more thorough rupture was felt and a new chapter was opened in the life of the UIC(S). The first rupture was to deal with centrism on the question of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and firmly grasp Maoism. The formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, and its *Declaration*, played a vital role in overcoming the crisis within the international communist movement in the aftermath of the coup in China. The existence of this Movement and its *Declaration* was of decisive service in our rupture from centrism and in the consolidation of Maoism in the UIC(S). On the basis of this ideological leap we were able to rectify the eclecticism in our political line. We carried out intense internal struggles to rectify our line and strategy. In this process, the assistance of our international comrades and the shining example of the People's War in Peru were factors that gave us tremendous help in arriving at a correct ideological and political line. The great and victorious product of this period was the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as our guiding ideology and the establishment of people's war as the strategy for seizing power in Iran.

The red line that links up these different periods in our 30-year history is perseverance in the interests of the people and in the cause of communism. Falling down, rising up again, committing errors, making breakthroughs.... ours was a trajectory full of ups and downs, sometimes harsh ones. When we raised the flag of proletarian revolution in Iran, staying on a revolutionary path was no easy, smooth affair. When we were reduced from a large, nation-wide organisation linked to the masses to a small one hunted by the enemy, and then reduced to an organisation in exile with our links to the masses broken, many thought we were finished. But in front of the amazed eyes of those who, after the annihilation of several layers of our leadership, preached liquidation to us, we stayed organised and reconstructed the UIC(S) on a communist basis. At a time when the big so-called left organisations broke apart under the rubble of the collapse of the East and anti-communist propaganda, the UIC(S) deepened its communist line.

This organisation and its people have emerged from a big test. Perseverance and firmness has been one of our characteristics. This is a Party that defeats never demoralised and that endured hardship because it is well aware that the main purpose of Marxism is to change the world.... ■