
Whither Iran?

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Section 1

Election of 22 Khordad of 1388 (June 12, 2009)

Once again Iran has captured world attention. The 10th presidential election period has presented a new element in Iran's politics not seen in the previous exercise of universal suffrage in the country: massive mobilization of the people. This became evident throughout the election period in the larger than usual crowd gatherings at election rallies in support of the current president, Mr. Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad, and his main challenger, Mr. Mir Hussein Mousavi. All social strata were drawn into this process to one degree or another. The election turnout has reportedly surpassed 80 per cent.

The electoral process in Iran set the people in motion on divergent paths; live TV political debates among the candidates became heated, but absent from the debate was any substance with regard to empowering the people to deal with social, economic, and political problems. The need for the organization of students, youth, women, national-ethnic groups, and working people of the city and the countryside that would unite the entire country's political tendencies is the only recourse for maintaining national unity. Action organizations like shoras (councils) can act based on broad consensus in the interest of the country's sovereignty and meet the needs of populations in economic, social, political and cultural areas. Instead of offering any real prospect for self-organization of populations, each candidate claimed to be a better manager, a better servant of the people of Iran.

The debates did not have any national or international focal points. Each challenged the other's statistical numbers and figures with regard to inflation or this or that economic indicator; credentials of various known personalities and the validity of university degrees of others were questioned or defended. There were personal attacks and finger pointing before TV audiences, estimated at one point as high as 50 million in a country of nearly 70 million.

The debates occurred in a political atmosphere already charged by widespread discontent among the population over economic, social, political, and cultural shortcomings; economic shortcomings that have been exacerbated by the impact of the current financial crash and the recession of the advanced economies - the biggest since the great depression of the 1930s - as well as cultural shortcomings which are resented by many as the enforcement of cultural values of one section of the population over the others for the last 30 years. The election debates among the population supporting the rival candidates were mainly peaceful and without violence. The debates produced less elucidation than heated friction.

With the people set into motion, the momentum gained during the election campaigns by all of the opposing camps did not stop at the ballot count for Friday (22nd of Khordad 1388) June 12th election. A spectrum of hardened political tendencies with a history as long as the Islamic Republic itself was represented by these rivals and none of the challenger candidates wanted to stop - the supporters of the challengers certainly did not wish to end their show of political action either.

The challengers saw a once in a lifetime opportunity to utilize the unexpected but massive support they had mustered, to speak for the country and to try to unseat not only the sitting president, but also to break with what they termed as a political monopoly of the ruling faction: Enhesartalabha (monopolists). The main challenger claimed victory prior, during, and after the ballot count. Cries of an election foul, fraud, and even a coup d'état were raised even before the incumbent president was declared as winner by landslide and reinstated. The stage was thus set for a confrontation of unprecedented magnitude between different sectors of the ruling class.

The current factional dispute of the contending ruling factions indicates levels of conflict unseen since the first president of the Iranian republic (Bani-Sadr) opted for leading a campaign to overthrow rivals through massive criminal terror bombings in 1981 (1360) with the help of a centrist formation (Mujahedeen). That confrontation and dispute achieved the death of scores of government leaders and thousands of government supporters and thousands more from the members and supporters of centrist and other tendencies.

This vicious cycle of terror, bombings, and executions shut down independent politics for the length of 8 years during the Iran/Iraq war (1980-1988) and came to end with another round of mass executions in the summer of June 1988 (1367). The political suppression resulted, among other things, in the suppression of weekly Kargar, and the banning of independent working class tendencies - such as our own independent socialist tendency that maintained open, legal and peaceful propaganda and activities. During this wave of crackdown many of our leaders were imprisoned for long durations, including the author of these lines. The ban on Independent revolutionary nationalist and working class politics has been maintained as a key feature of politics in the Islamic Republic ever since.

During the current round of factional disputes, eclipsing the disputes of 1981 (1360), all central clerical and non-clerical leaders of the republic have lined up with opposing factions. The power struggle is out in the open.

Popular entry into the factional disputes has reinforced the need to revive the gains of the revolution with regard to freedoms of press and assembly; the right of independent revolutionary nationalist and working class tendencies to organize on the same level as those ruling class factions that are tied to capitalism. Without independent mobilizations and organizations of working people of the city and countryside, along with their chief allies among the youth, students, women and ethnic-national minorities, the maintenance and extension of the historic fight for national sovereignty will be at serious peril.

Left to its own logic, this factional dispute does not promise any better ending than the previous one. While no one can foretell the future, the injection of massive amounts of popular energy into the current disputes of the ruling factions does not rule out the potential for pitfalls and disastrous results.

This dispute represents a new birth of Mashrooteh (mash'ru'te; Parliamentary government after the Western model) politics through proxies of former and current leaders of the Islamic Republic confronting Mashrooa (mash'ru'aa; Religious or divine law). Given the history of Mashrooteh politics, especially during the revolution of 1979 and the ensuing years afterwards, not to mention the meager level of independent organization within the working class and its allies among students, women, denizens of rural areas and minority nationalities, the likely consequences of this continued factional dispute appear ominous.

The biggest danger now is due to the clear vacuum of independent national politics in country. A lack of crucial direction and leadership to lead the masses in advance or retreat during these events, at the right time for strengthening Iran's struggle to secure its right to self determination, to expand political liberties, and to create popular organizations among students and workers to secure the unity of broad populations, is clear. The potential for unifying broad populations is being greatly hampered by the disputes between factions of the ruling class. Iran needs the unity of its broad populations, which has been heretofore divided between supporting the Mashrooteh and Mashrooa outlook, to achieve and strengthen independence, freedom and social justice: the common goal of the popular masses.

Currently, the series of massive mobilizations at election rallies has turned to post-election clashes by smaller bands and largely peaceful demonstrations. This was spurred by a combination of factors: the rejection by the defeated candidates of the election results, coupled with the call to immediate action to undo a coup d'état; advanced warnings with regard to post-election disturbances; and finally, the imposition of security measures by the government at the end of Election Day.

That is how many youth were hurled into violent actions after the election. Some pictures of fire and smoke from tires, motorbikes, buses and buildings have been reported by foreign journalists of western countries massing in Iran. This is the same media that advances imperialist interest, and provides coverage for world powers eager to see a breakdown of the unity of popular masses in Iran.

Between Monday June 15 and Tuesday June 16 and the following days we have been able to witness the extent of current disputes among the population, which affects a very large cross section of Iranian society. A Post-election peaceful march on Monday called by the main challenger turned more massive than expected. The march was composed of upper middle classes and ordinary people. The main opposition candidates attended and briefly spoke at this march through a bullhorn. The size of the march was reminiscent of pre-revolution million-person marches. The unifying role of the working classes to stand above the factional disputes and unite the nation around goals of national sovereignty by addressing the demands of youth, women, ethnic-national minorities, the middle classes and small business, is yet to be seen.

The anti-government protest rally on Monday was followed on Tuesday by a massive turnout of hundreds of thousands at a pro-government rally condemning violence and hooliganism. This march had much fewer representatives of the upper middle classes;

leaders of Majlis (parliament) spoke at this march. An independent reporter that attended both marches reported the mood in each case was one of genuine caution and reserve.

“Hooliganism” referred to actions taken at a pasdar-baseej building that was attacked by some demonstrators and set on fire, as well as attacks on some other buildings by ‘angry’ demonstrators. Beating with batons and tear gas by security forces has been reported. Extralegal and security forces have broken into students’ university dormitories in Tehran, and clamped down on the residents – actions which are currently under investigation by Majlis. Selective arrests (in some cases followed by the release) of challenger figures have been reported. Street clashes that have resulted in more than 20 deaths have been reported. Shooting from within antigovernment marches, resulting in the death of a mother and daughter behind the door of a childcare facility, have also been reported.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 was born from the rallies of millions with demonstrations that confronted the Shah and US-backed shoot-to-kill orders of the army with flowers that led to a fraternization of the army and the air force ranks with the demonstrators and strikers. This paved the way for the victory of the insurrection on February 20 and 21. It is therefore the duty of government to approach the current mass demonstrations of the Iranian populace with its security forces holding out flowers to the population, rather than batons, tear gas, arrests and bullets. The Iranian population’s willingness to unite around a common platform for strengthening national sovereignty, political liberties and social justice, far outweighs the significance of current divisions among the ruling class.

A chorus of pro monarchy, right wing, liberal, and sectarian centrist and ‘left’ tendencies has proclaimed that a new Iranian ‘revolution’ has begun. Royalists, prize winning ‘human rights’ advocates and a spectrum of centrist tendencies are now advocating the reactionary stance of imposing or tightening new sanctions against Iran by imperialism.

Section 2

Why Washington Hates Iran and Its Current Diplomatic Gambit

It is common knowledge that Iran is despised by Washington, by the Zionist colonial settler state of Israel, and by the other imperialist centers of the world. This hatred is rooted in the revolution of 1979, which stands as one of the most massive revolutions of modern history. Washington’s hatred of Iran expresses the opposition of world imperialism towards this revolution. It is hatred that has been on display for three decades. It has had the opposite affect in the Middle East and in South West Asia, however, where Iran is currently revered and loved by large populations.

Iran’s “controversial” quest for nuclear technology to diversify and increase its electric

output is supported by the absolute majority of humanity, as represented by the Non-Aligned Movement and beyond.

With the revolution of 1979, for the first time in its modern history, Iran's ruling politics changed track from Mashrooteh to Mashrooa. No wonder the imperialist ire at Iran has included racist hysteria against Islam, portraying Iran's historical advance by its revolution as a regressive return to the darkness of the Middle Ages.

This hatred is further compounded by the fact that the rise of an Islamic movement in Iran has been replicated in Lebanon during the last two decades. The traditional political leaderships were bypassed by Islamic forces willing to stand up to Israeli occupation in that country. Hezbollah is a force of considerable magnitude in the regional calculus.

That is also true of Palestine. The disintegration of traditional revolutionary leadership in the Palestinian movement provided an opening for Islamic forces to continue on the path of resistance to Israel and to vie for leadership. The result has been a strengthening of Hamas and its winning leadership in Gaza and widespread support for its agenda among the Palestinian and Arab populations.

Many observers in the US and Western Europe have indicated that free elections in countries that count as allies could very well replicate these victories of Islamic forces, a possibility that is greatly feared in places like Egypt and beyond.

The increasing weight and influence of Iran in the region is a fact of major importance. Prior to the revolution, Iran was the central and strategic partner of Washington in the region. The passage of three decades from the revolution has placed Iran, this time opposed by the US, into a strategic position once again.

This occurs at a time when Washington has failed to convince the populations of the US and the world at large of the merits of its wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan, now extending to Pakistan. Israel's wars in Lebanon and Gaza have had similar regional and international repercussions. People of the Middle East have rejected the ravages of US and Israeli wars, which have caused huge devastation: the death toll runs in the hundreds of thousands with many more being injured, there are millions of war refugees, and material destruction amounting to tens of billions of dollars.

The support for the fight to secure the right to self-determination among the oppressed countries and peoples of the Middle East and South Asia has been boosted by US and Israeli military conquests and adventures. Likewise, the sentiment against these wars has increased worldwide.

The United States and its 21st century wars of occupation in the oil-rich Middle East have broken the framework of a region constructed around the plans of British imperialism after World War I. Kurdish nationality in Iraq has secured regional identity after more than half a century since its short-lived success in the republic of Mahabad in

Iran. The war that is now expanding into Pakistan brings into question the existence of a country that is attached to the US built Pakistani army.

The Washington campaign against Iran for the last 30 years - which has broken off diplomatic relations, blocked Iranian assets in the US, and imposed various rounds of sanctions - has not stopped Iran from moving forward.

The Iranian revolution of 1979, due to special circumstances of its development, became the spring board for something that was most unexpected: the greatest development of capitalism in the country's history. This came as a shock to the gang of royalists and the segment of capitalists and landlords that were thrown out of Iran. As far as capitalist development, Iran was cruising, and in their absence it was cruising faster than ever in its history. Iranian capitalism was never able to go back to this pre-Revolution model, nor was it able to stabilize given the weakness of imperialism, native capitalism, and a worldwide crisis of international capitalism.

We must not misunderstand: the greatest cycle of capitalist development meant more people than ever before in the history of Iran were getting rich – even super rich. These occurrences became a source of envy for the entire model of semi-colonial capitalism throughout the region. The rich in the region all envied Iran's 'model' for the quick acquisition of wealth through land and other speculations. Meanwhile, the profits amassed by the rich in Iran created an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. Further capitalist development was not able to address the key tasks of industrialization and agriculture. In a country that needs development in every conceivable area of health, education, urban and rural development, industry, agriculture and defense, the Iranian state advocated policies that revived the old capitalist state apparatus after the revolution. Oil income was apportioned to various projects among the ruling group during the Iraq war, and the hand of economic development was extended to the private sector by the government after the war. These policies, having failed to produce the desirable results expected by the broad populace, forced the rulers to initiate direct allowances from oil money to the needy in the forms of cash payments which some labeled as 'loans'.

During this period, extending to 3 decades, the pre-revolution anatomy of the Iranian capitalist class has had to undergo significant mutations. Currently, economic enterprises tied to Pasdaran and other Bonyads (foundations) have risen above the private sector and claim, more efficient models of capitalist management. At times these entities have their own ports for import and export, creating a new schism of economic policy among the ruling class factions. The royal economic think-tank, which was revived by the successive governments as the main controlling center of the rentier state's appropriation and planning for almost 3 decades prior to the current presidency, was demoted to an advisory role last year.

Iranian capitalist development and the extension of capitalist relations, which received a major boost after the Iraq war, became a demon to imperialism. Washington would look to Iran and see its own face, as if it was waking up each morning and looking with hatred at itself in the mirror. The first option for Washington was to lie about Iran, and then to

lie more about Iran, something of which the US media and television have done plenty and continue to do so. In addition to sanctions, the other option for Washington was to plan, prepare, and attempt to execute a war of invasion in Iran, which was only welcomed by the defeated royalists and Mujahedeen. The final option was to pray for a change in Iran that would meet the imperialist concerns, something that was reported to be a regular event during the President Bush Administration.

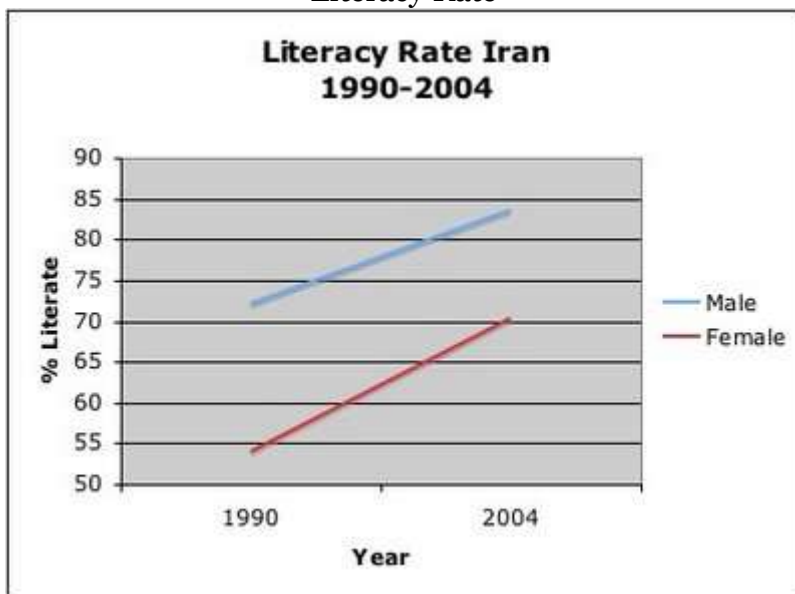
Meanwhile, Iran escaped from the dark, torturous dungeons of the Shah and a suffocated self-identity into a moment of national consciousness, awareness, and pride. Peasants were transformed into farmers. Villages gained electricity, bathhouses, libraries, and access to healthcare. Roads and travel by automobile expanded. Internal air travel became a common option. Magazines and books appeared in the languages of national minorities. Ordinary folks would travel in the region regularly for religious duties or tours. Schools and universities multiplied. Women came to represent 62% of university students. Farsi became the fourth most utilized language on the Internet for bloggers. All of this meant a great leap forward in culture. Iranian art found its special place in the world through photography, painting, music and cinema.

The 8-years of resistance against the US-backed invasion of Iraq became a wellspring of untapped energy within Iranian working people. Peasant youth armed and joined the war front by tens of thousands. So did many more from factories and city neighborhoods. The human toll was stupendous and by some accounts is anywhere from a few hundred thousands to a million. The destruction caused by this war ran into hundreds of billions of dollars. But the living came back with honor and pride; the confidence of an armed man who had stood up to an imperialist-backed invasion. That changed the attitudes and place of working people in their social settings. The new farmer would not easily take orders from anyone; nor would the worker. The veterans of the Iraq war were the veterans of the first Iranian-won war in three centuries.

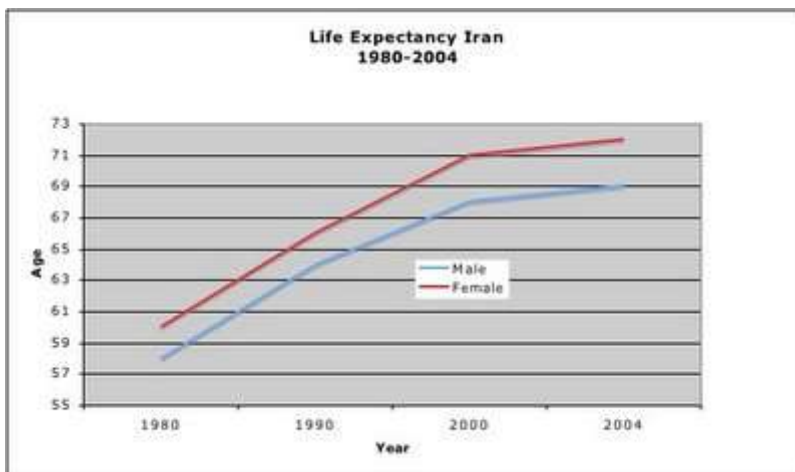
The impact on women was most pronounced. Compulsory wearing of the veil was issued as an imperative that had resulted from factional disputes in the government. It did not go without unintended consequences. While the leadership in the beginning of the revolution only saw women's potential to become good mothers, teachers or maybe nurses, veiled women were technically free to go anywhere in society - and that is precisely what they did. They became doctors, scientists, engineers, teachers, artists, writers, salespeople and yes, even taxi drivers. More and more women joined the workforce.

Veiled women opened the flood gates of access to a society traditionally closed to them, now able to move beyond the confines of their homes. And yes, they are currently the most unemployed section of society in a country that has chronic double-digit unemployment. They became, more than ever before, one with their country and its historical battle to gain the right to self-determination. The latter is a historical battle that acts as the stepping stone for them to gain full unity, equality and liberation in society.

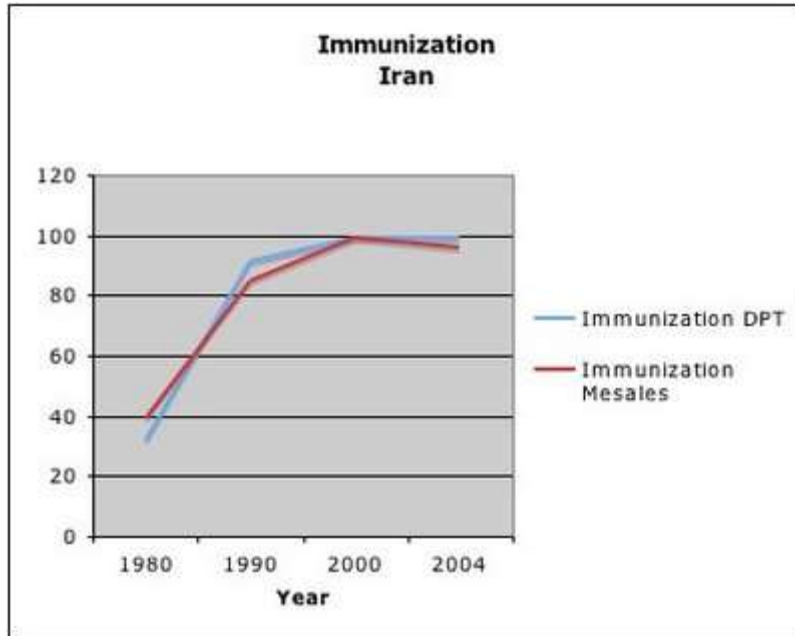
Literacy Rate



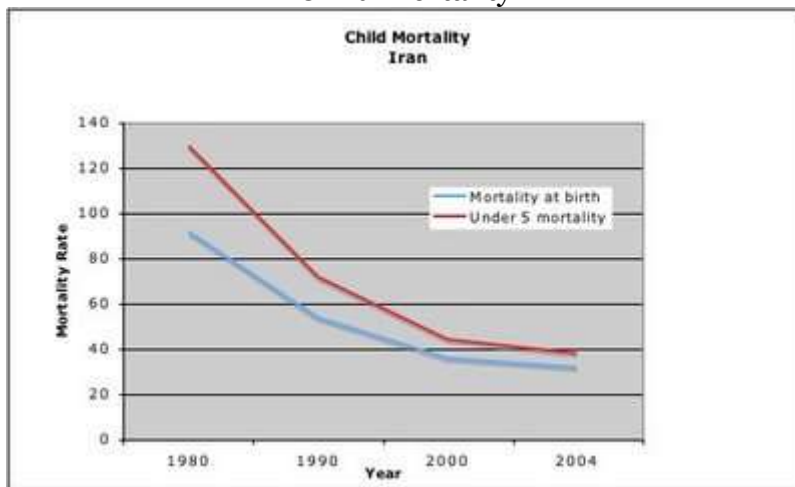
Life Expectancy:



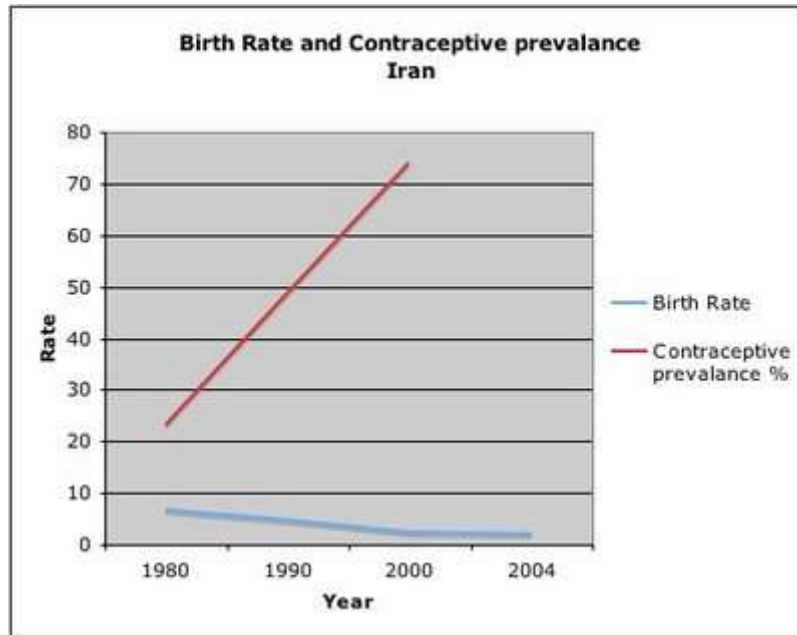
Immunization



Child Mortality



Contraceptive availability and Birth Rate



Source: from World Bank through <http://ihsan-net.blogspot.com/2007/12/left-liberal-islamophobia-watch-iii.html>

Iran's progress, thanks to its mighty revolution and its increasing strength in the Middle East and South Asia region, has forced Washington to come up with a new approach. Gone are the days of the Shah of Iran and the secure allies of US interests in the region. The US policy of cultivating an overt threat of war, imposing sanctions and labeling Iran as 'axis of evil' has given way to a more sober realization of the need for diplomacy. The plan of diplomacy requires recognizing the Iranian revolution of 1979 through acknowledging the gains and leaderships resulting from it, rescinding all sanctions, and freeing blocked Iranian assets in the US. The current US administration has refused to indicate any inclination for accepting the validity of the Iranian revolution. Its current stance of promoting discredited royalists in its TV and press, and encouraging Mujahedeen supporters' "anonymous" telephone calls from "Iran" demanding sanctions, has not indicated any substantial change in Washington policy.

Section 3

Imperialism and Iran's Capitalism: Why Iran Lagged Behind the West

Why did Iran lag behind the West? Four or five centuries ago, the Iranian standard of

living matched that of Western nations and many other developed parts of the world. Was it “Jabr Joghrafi” (geographical fate) as our popular singer artist suggests?

Capitalism became the Iranian system long after its progressive days had passed in its Western birth places, when it had entered the epoch of its decline in the 20th century. Capitalism did not come to Iran like the eagle, but rather as a vulture: the scavenger to which Malcolm X once referred during a discussion on racism and the advent of capitalism in Western Europe and North America, an event that was part of the classical revolutions of the 18th century. Capitalism, as an economic and social system, came to the colonial and semi-colonial world as a vulture arrives to suck on the blood of the weak.

Iranian capitalism was born meek, weak, and incapable of leading its historical tasks, much like the rest of the semi-colonial world. In Iran, politically, this weakness was stamped into ruling class politics as a deeply rooted split between the Mashrooteh and Mashrooa, which are at constant odds with each another.

Over a century ago Iranian capitalist leadership, once it was old enough to walk on its own, was compelled to hold hands for balance – one with the savage monarchy, the other with the foreign colonial and imperialist centers of power and plunder. It mattered neither how much support and power it received from the popular masses, nor how many victories were scored against the internal and foreign foe. This is how it acted during the rise of Enghelab Mashrooteh (Constitutional Revolution) before World War I and the ensuing movement for Nationalization of Oil some four decades later after World War II. Once it scored victory, it always reached with one hand for internal royalty and with the other for external imperialism, constantly turning its back on the popular masses.

The establishment of semi-colonial capitalism in Iran was the end result of a transformation under the impact of all-powerful Western capitalism in the more than two thousand year-old Asiatic system. It was part and parcel of a global transformation of human social organization that took place among the regions and countries outside the centers of the development of capitalism.

Capitalism started as an international system during the 16th and 17th centuries, and conquered political power in Western Europe and North America alike through the 18th century revolutions. Further development of this system spurred and finalized the division of the world between oppressor and oppressed nations, during an epoch of its decline, defined as imperialism.

The answer to the question posed by many Iranian youth as to why Iran did not become a multi-national state like Switzerland, or developed countries like France or Japan, in terms of productivity and social organization, is that Iran joined the club of semi-colonial capitalism - much like the rest of the oppressed world, during its history of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. There was no other historical alternative available to Iran.

At the time of Enghelab Mashrooteh, Iran did not possess the economic and social engine that could provide its society with a Western European-like thrust into productivity and capitalist democracy, which would have greatly precipitated a forward leap of culture. In the early 20th century, during the first oil drillings in Iran led by a George Reynolds, he reports that for the Azeri workers “even the introduction of the lowly wheelbarrow was startling, a major innovation”. As history has indicated, Iran did not possess steel production for over half a century after the Enghelab Mashrooteh. Iran had to throw off the yoke of internal autocracy and foreign imperialism in order to step onto the road of development that the country and its people needed.

In what can be summed up by the law of uneven and combined development, ancient tribes of Iran armed themselves with the western gun, and Iranian society combined economically, socially, politically and culturally with the latest artifacts of western capitalism during a process stretching over a couple of centuries. As one example of this interpenetration of opposites, old Asiatic forms of Iranian society underwent the most violent change, disfiguration, or annihilation, starting from the central state and spreading to the city and countryside under the whips and directions of penetrating capitalism. The end result was the current semi-colonial system of capitalism that generations of our ancestors and current generations have inherited.

The painful whips of this historical transformation in the end proved liberating, for they produced a nation and a working people capable of taking hold of political power in Iran and able to use it for the benefit of Iranian society at large. This fact has been demonstrated to one degree or another by the national liberation movements of Iran, from Mashrooteh to the current revolution of 1979. Capitalism has provided the historical setting that serves as the precondition for Iran to gain its right to self-determination, against a host of international adversaries represented by imperialism.

For Iran to have become a society along the European model, it would have had to start with its Enghelab Mashrooteh during the epoch in which the anti-British revolution of 1776 took place in America. That is the time during which the old Asiatic Iran had its early contacts with Western capitalism, and the state began to obtain modern warfare equipment from various European powers; a time when the country was still forced to wait for the creation of nation in the modern historical sense, a nation that would be capable of initiating national liberation.

The above is important because with the political swings of Iranian history towards Mashrooteh politics, we have simultaneously found a great myriad of literature nurtured under the rule of Mashrooa that falsely defines Iranian backwardness as the result of softness in getting rid of its religion. Omnipresent themes like “why Iran lagged behind the West” falsely convey such messages.

As with the introduction of capitalism everywhere else, Iran had to endure pain and blood for its entry into international capitalism. Iran took humiliating beatings at the hands of Russian and British colonialists, who had already achieved their capitalist development during the 19th century. Iran’s history became one of losing wars because it had to tame and accept capitalism. This is the process illustrated by the successive

military losses to Russia in Ghafghaz (Caucases) that resulted in the treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828), as well as the separation of North West areas and Iran's defeat at the hands of just two fleets of the British navy that were manned by a force of less than 1000 in Bushehr in 1857.

It was capitalist transformation that created the modern nation of Iran. The nation formed and rose up through numerous battles, from the Tobacco boycott campaign (1890) to the appearance of campaigns of national scope against the Qajar dynasty during the final part of the 19th century. Islamic nationalist forerunners like Jamal din AsadAbadi and others formulated this new political thought, and promoted Iran's utilization of science and technology to withstand the onslaught of western colonialism. This process ultimately led the nation and country to adopt a new speech, a capitalist speech: Mashrooteh.

Section 4

Mashrooteh Locking Horn with Mashrooa

The current divisions within the Iranian ruling class and the subsequent power struggle have not appeared suddenly from thin air, nor are they simply the result of novel conjuncture. They are deeply rooted and woven into the very fabric of capitalist politics of the country, much like a permanent political inflammation that never goes away, and now and then produces acute flare-ups. The result has been a historical division between supporters of Mashrooteh (mash'ru'teh; Parliamentary government after the Western model) versus Mashrooa (mash'ru'aa; Religious or divine law).

Iranian or non-Iranian scholars of Iran have invariably used the terms modernist and traditionalist or fundamentalist to explain the above tendencies or factions. We shall deliberately use Mashrooteh and Mashrooa for our designation of the current power struggle, as that is how these political tendencies were first named when they were born. In addition we have no intention to mislead readers into thinking that Mashrooa, labeled as traditionalist by the official scholars, does not believe or have the orientation for modernism. At the level of content these tendencies represent identical historical motives and goals of capitalism, to which they both owe their existence. In addition, clergy and non-clergy can belong to each of these tendencies as demonstrated by history.

The deep division of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa is a hallmark of Iranian capitalist politics: a sharp division rooted, in the final analysis, in the historical inability of Iranian capitalism to address the democratic tasks bestowed upon it, the task of providing a solution to industrialization and agriculture; uprooting of unemployment and poverty; meeting the various demands of youth, students, women, and minority nationalities, as well as working people of the city and the country side. To sum up: its inability consistently to support, achieve, and secure Iran's national independence and freedom.

During the decline of constitutional revolutions in the beginning of the 20th century, the Mashrooteh coalition produced its major splint, Mashrooa, as its corollary component.

When Mashrooteh arrived at a blind alley during the decline of Enghelab Mashrooteh, it produced a reaction among its leading ranks that blamed the problem on a moving away from Sharia (Shar'ee'a, Islamic religious law) and a turn to adopting western political thought. That is how the nation's political leadership, its very voice, was slurred from early on. Political leadership was divided into incompatible parts where the common base served as a platform for each side to despise the other. Yet each was the reason for the other's respective creation, and the two could not exist alone. Capitalist politics of Iran thus became the unity of opposites.

While Islam was much older than western political thought, it was Mashrooteh that conceived Mashrooa in its womb and not vice versa. Mashrooteh was the active force, the prime component. Mashrooa was the product and secondary component. That is how Iranian capitalist thought was born and how the structure of its DNA was codified. Mashrooteh politics reigned in Iran for over 7 decades.

Mashrooa was suppressed and almost forgotten when its leader, Sheikh Fazlollah Noori, a prominent Shiite cleric, was put to death by the Mashrooteh leadership in July of 1909. This hanging, however, did not alter the genetic code of capitalist politics in the country. Mashrooteh had already produced its opposing offshoot in Mashrooa. This specific political makeup of a deep split within Iranian capitalist leadership is bound to remain for as long as Iranian capitalist rule persists.

Upon Mashrooteh's defeat it became fashionable among the intelligentsia to blame the defeat on clergy or Islam. The rise of Reza Khan and the brutal royal autocracy of father and son, which stretched to rule over half a century of Iran's history, took advantage of the wave of public opinion of Intelligentsia, poets and writers. It consolidated its drive for a brutal dictatorship by taking advantage of the reactionary campaign of the liberal bourgeoisie against Mashrooa and Islam in 1920s. This is an issue that modern political discourse among the Iranian academia, historians, journalists and political leadership of centrist tendencies has denied or grossly misrepresented.

Much of the Iranian intelligentsia and writers carried the same bias for decades under Pahlavi rule. It was only the celebrated Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (1923-1969), the valiant intellectual, mentor, writer, and head of the then suppressed Kanoon Nevisandegan (Writers Association) under the 2nd Pahlavi dictatorship who took issue with this misconception. Al-e-Ahmad opened a new chapter in the approach to understanding the country's history, one that was free from an obfuscating anti clergy bias. Al-e-Ahmad already displayed the credentials of separation from the Tudeh Party, and was courageous enough to disobey Stalin after World War II.

The break of continuity in revolutionary thought imposed on world history by the degeneration of the first workers' state in Russia had destroyed the chances for a proper evaluation of the pertinent historical facts for successive generations of Iranians. Iranian nationalists and working class fighters were robbed of any chance to properly

understand their own history for more than half a century. Taghi Arani, a university professor and leader of the imprisoned “53 Group” who was tied to Dimitrov Comintern of the 1930s, reintroduced Marxism to Iran. He died or, according to some accounts was killed, while imprisoned. Iranian early communist movement was annihilated during the degeneration of the first workers state in the 1920s.

But instead of drawing a balance sheet of modern revolution in Iranian history, Arani introduced a mechanical version of materialism as a ‘scientific’ supplement to the liberal bourgeoisie’s campaign against religion under Reza Khan. By doing so he erected his version of Marxism upon the bloody divisions of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa’s conflicts. This approach determined the main current of Marxism in the country taken by the official pro-Moscow Tudeh party. Many future adherents of Arani’s version of Marxism practiced their mastery of the subject matter by physically annihilating their Islamic counterparts through underground purges prior to the revolution of 1979.

It took more than 6 decades after the death of Sheikh Fazlollah Noori for Mashrooa’s rebirth, first as a partial return in June 1963 (Khordad 1342) and then fully during the 1979 revolution. This period was shaped by the passages of World War I and II, the degeneration of the 1917 Russian revolution and of the first workers state, as well as other events of colossal importance, such as the defeat of the national movement of Iran. This event left Iran defenseless, betrayed by Stalinism and the National Front leadership during the US organized coup d’etat of 1953. After these compromising struggles, Iranian capitalism saw the return of Mashrooa.

With the approach of the 1979 revolution, the crown jewel of modern Mashrooteh that is Jebhe Melli (National Front), was discredited by way of its past conduct of a quarter of a century. Mohammad Mosaddegh had turned his back on the successful revolt of 30 of Tier (July 1952), which paved the way for the success of the US-engineered coup d’etat (August 1953). Mosaddegh’s conduct at his trial after the coup did not leave him any legacy. Mosaddegh did not offer a manifesto at his trial that could trail blaze a map of liberation for a new generation, thus he could not and did not become a determining figure for Iran’s future.

The revolution of 1979 then coincided with the absence of any sizable revolutionary nationalist or working class leadership, due to the historical international and national crisis I have here referred to briefly.

Under these circumstances, the revolution of 1979 became an occasion for the main political track of the country to switch, for the first time, from Mashrooteh to Mashrooa. This rotation of Iran’s political axis effectively put an end to seven decades of the political supremacy of Mashrooteh.

Mashrooa, for the first time in the country’s history, had sided with the popular masses to overthrow the Shah and end the monarchy through the celebrated anti-Shah position of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Siding with the popular masses all the way to the point of overthrowing the established monarchy was unprecedented in the history of Iranian capitalism, for the aforementioned reasons. The depth and breadth of mass movements galvanized by the revolutionary strikes of oil workers caught US imperialism off guard. Once the political track of the country switched from Mashrooteh to Mashrooa the rest was history: the Islamic Republic was born as the new government of Iran.

Mashrooteh politics never recovered from this loss, determined by its rival's siding with the popular masses; nor did it change its core politics, practiced during the past seven decades up to its moment of defeat at the hand of its historical nemesis. Instead, without the mass base whose support had now migrated to Mashrooa, Mashrooteh sought an immediate accommodation with imperialism. In fact, it posed itself as special expert in the area. It argued that the revolution had gone too far into unacceptable areas, lecturing that Mashrooa leaders did not understand the true dangers of the revolution, as exemplified by the frank statements of Mehdi Bazargan. This posture exemplified the weakness of Mashrooteh representatives, as they desperately began trying to carve positions of power for themselves. The Provisional Government of Mr. Bazargan was appointed on February 5 of 1979 and lasted until November 4 of 1979.

When displaying policies, postures and tone of opposition that denigrated the revolutionary process on TV and in the press, Mashrooteh politicians looked crude and grotesque to the masses of people. They opposed the populist committees and grassroots organizations that had sprung up in neighborhoods, shoras in workplaces, pasdaran and any parallel institution, choosing instead to reify the existing governmental armed forces left over from the past regime. They posed as experts and defenders of what was left of the state apparatus under the Iranian monarchy. They would tell horror stories of leftists trying to throw factory managers into acid tanks and actively poisoned politics against independent non government tendencies - horror stories that they repeat to this day when they speak of memoirs of the revolution, as exemplified by Mr. Sahabi.

Mashrooteh politicians had the leadership of the provisional government and won many positions at shoraye enghelab (The Revolutionary Council), including the head of this shora by some accounts. They were at the helm of the government led by the late Mr. Bazargan. They expected business as usual, and felt governance to be the natural domain of Mashrooteh. But they had left one crucial consideration out: millions of youth, students, women, nationalities, and working people of the city and the countryside who were vibrant and confident from the sweet victory of revolution: this was now the true face of Iran. Mashrooteh, however, had no authority with this great mass. If it hadn't been for the selection of their key representatives and interests by the founder of the Islamic republic, they would have stayed on the sidelines of history and been left to oblivion.

To gain support for their edicts and plans among the population they had to call for the founder of the new republic to come back to Tehran. This was a bind from which they could not free themselves: Mashrooteh politics needed Mashrooa authority for survival.

The new leadership that had gained state power through revolution was faced with the many factional disputes of Mashrooteh-Mashrooa from day one. Mashrooa politicians became the gravitational center of the new ruling group, and as former friends and colleagues were becoming rivals and antagonists, the exit of the Mashrooteh politicians from the government began in earnest.

The Mashrooteh camp would hurl charges of intellectual and political fascism resulting from the Mashrooa seizure of power in the country. The fashionable theme of Mashrooteh thinkers in this period was the impending sound of footsteps of fascism in the country. Mashrooa would respond and characterize the opposing camp as lockstep liberal conciliators with imperialists. Mr. Sanjabi, the Iranian foreign minister, quit the government in opposition to what he called “the return of Iran to the middle ages,” provoking an early response by Mashrooa clerical politicians that Jebhe Melli was mortad (apostate).

Sanjabi’s exit from government was actually carried out by one person and one tendency, namely Jebhe Melli. But it had a world of meaning to it: Iran did not have any genuine secular movement committed to advancing the interests of the unity of the country and working people of the city and the countryside in any part of its ruling coalitions. The indisputable fact is that Mashrooteh politicians were committed to a factional power struggle and did not advance the interests of mellat, or working people and the masses. The rejection of the Mashrooa coalition, whether voluntary or involuntary, inevitably led to Mashrooteh joining a Western campaign, i.e. imperialism, against the revolution. It placed such personalities and factions into collaboration with monarchists abroad. This trajectory was followed by Bani-Sadr, Mujahedeen, and many more groups from the ruling factions, the centrists and remnants of Iranian Stalinism. Each of these tendencies and personalities moved in their own way, but they all arrived at the same political spot: an abandonment of the progressive orientation of mellat and its battle for the right of self determination. They became new icons among the diasporic politics abroad.

The departure of Sanjabi showed everyone who was willing to see that the Mashrooteh tendency had arrived at a blind alley of history. Mellat (nation) had bypassed Mashrooteh with the overthrow of the Shah and nothing could undo it. As a result, Mashrooteh could no longer provide any viable political alternative. Mashrooteh’s hope for its revival could have only come from the experience of the masses vis-à-vis the policies of Mashrooa that could ultimately produce new strains of Mashrooteh. These conditions could have provided enough time for the working class to break out of the dead-end of Mashrooteh-Mashrooa politics and to arrive at a revolutionary nationalist alternative.

The precedence for such an independent policy existed in Enghelab Mashrooteh through Markaz Gheibi (The Invisible Center). That example never reappeared in Iranian history after the avalanche of degeneration that ended the revolutionary years of the first workers state. Due to its proximity the impact of this event blocked all apparent roads to an independent politics of mellat and the working class, an independent policy that could provide Iranian society with a bridge to attain unity, to step out of the

divisions of Mashrooa and Mashrooteh, and to achieve finally all the demands of freedom and independence in the establishment of a government devoid of capitalism, a government of workers and farmers.

Sanjabi's path was followed by Bazargan who represented the stronger Islamic strain of the National Front for this period of history. In the end Nehzate Azadi's Islamic banner could not change the main calculus. The government of Nehzate Azadi was pushed out of power during the protest action of students at the US embassy, which in turn touched off a spontaneous mobilization that transformed what had begun as a relatively small student protest into a large-scale and total "seizure of the den of spies" (November of 1979).

When the "liberal" government was ousted, Mr. Bazargan complained that he was used like a chauffeur to drive Mashrooa politicians into the government after the revolution, only to be immediately discarded. Due to the force of the Sanjabi trajectory, this tendency remained, held on to its positions within the parliament, and continued the policies of Mashrooteh. Ultimately, with passage of time and more factional disputes, there was no escape from the logic of the Mashrooa-Mashrooteh conflict after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. An edict was issued by the founder of the Islamic Republic banning his brand of Mashrooteh (Nehzat Azadi) politicians from holding office in the republic. The Mashrooteh banner could only be carried by new personalities from within the existing coalition of Mashrooa in the Islamic Republic.

With his government terminated within the first year of the revolution, Bazargan still hoped that he would be called upon to run the government once again, ideologically confident that only Mashrooteh politicians had the bureaucratic skill and knowledge necessary to run the government. Moreover, he had written extensively on Islam during the Shah's rule with the belief that the clergy had ruined the religion, and that the onus was thus upon him and other men of "enlightened" Western university education to explain Islam anew. From this path, carved by the permutations of National Front politics, Shariati emerged to put entirely new touches upon the interpretation of Islam. He defined and divided Islam into good and bad, into Alvai and Safavi; and he placed the clergy in the Safavi category. This was the ideological rock bed and parallel for yet another permutation of the youth movement of Nehzate Azadi to Mujahedeen and the politics of Islam minus clergy; society and government minus reaction. This was a goal that stood above the fight for national independence and freedom from imperialist domination.

The main outlines of the new regime concerning all major policies after the revolution were worked out in conjunction with and during the factional disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa, amidst the political dynamics of the first ten months of the revolution. The two camps fought bitterly to define and lead government policy and to occupy the various government seats. Provisional Government leadership, in conjunction with the Mashrooa politicians, instituted the annihilation of the most promising elements of the Iranian revolution; namely, the elementary sprouts of workers' councils and integrating nahads (institutions) such as committees, Sepah (mobile guard, short for Sepah-e Pasdaran) and jahad (construction brigades) into the Mashrooa arm of Iranian

government. The institutionalized blocking of empowerment and self-government of the various social strata was the greatest weakness imposed upon a society grappling with the struggle for national independence and freedom.

Factional disputes dictated the direction of social policy, which broke down the unity of women, unity of Iran with the ethnic-national minorities and general populations that had accepted different moral codes and cultural values during a century-long evolution of Iranian capitalism. An example of issues addressed and affected by the deep conflicts of contending ruling factions in the beginning of the revolution included an entire range of issues dealing with the state apparatus left from the royal regime: to which rank should former military officers be demoted, promoted, or even purged entirely from the ranks of the army? How and why should hejab (women's veil) be practiced? Hejab was first introduced in government, then in schools, and later in all public places.

Mashrooa representatives were striking at the power base of Bazargan that headed up the Mashrooteh faction in the army and government, also looking to destabilize its presence in any other place that a subterfuge was required. The introduction of hejab did not consider the desire for unity represented by the women's movement, nor did it emanate from any such movement. It was issued as a result of the dynamics within Mashrooteh and Mashrooa disputes. It did not take, as its end goal, elevating the position of the majority of Iranian women who practiced the wearing of the veil under the Shah and were driven from restaurants, meaningful jobs, and society as a whole. It is not uncommon even today to find articles in the press indicating that women who fully practice wearing the veil in universities cannot obtain good grades from professors. During the recent election campaign, supporters of challenging candidates would point to the female supporters of the current president in full hejab and tell them they belonged in a zoo.. The solution truly required by the women's movement, or by any other social strata in other cases of exploitation, would only be delayed and continue to linger as an unresolved kernel.

That was true also of official government policy concerning the issue of minority nationalities, which lacked the right to teach and to advance their own languages, as well as their national rights in general. The weaker Bazargan faction proposed negotiations to find support in Kurdistan, while Mashrooa promoted suppression as it did not need the support of those areas and rather wanted to unify the power of the state under its coercive direction across Iran. In this sense, Mashrooa policy, without knowing it, stepped into the tracks of a different type of government that had occurred earlier in Iran: namely, the government of Reza Khan that carried the wholesale suppression clerical influence in government, judiciary and society, and is so justifiably despised to this day by the Mashrooa politics.

Reza Khan conducted a campaign suppressing all nationalities by sending his Cossack brigades across Iran to subdue Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens amongst others. This campaign robbed many nationalities of their identity, land, livelihood, language, and culture. It introduced a systematic oppression of nationalities in Iranian history for the first time. His officers that led this campaign would then provide a pool of government cadre to fill the posts of the interior ministry and city governments.

Islamic activists of Pasdaran, and their cadre who originated in the revolution against the monarchy, faced a similar dilemma due to the lack of proper national policy by the central government. They rushed to the territories of these minority nationalities to cleanse the field of political rivals and crush any movement under such leaderships. These activists leading military and civilian campaigns in these territories would provide a pool of cadre for the ensuing years and decades, to fill many government posts. A skeletal network of the Mashrooa cadre was thus able to form within the government: the security forces, the Islamic revolutionary prosecutions and its courts, judiciary and industry. The traditional Mashrooteh leadership expectations for renewed calls to run the government a second time suddenly found no more room for realization. History thus bitterly taught Mashrooteh that, after all, they were not so special, and that their Mashrooa counterparts could in fact all too well perform the tasks of running a capitalist state.

With regard to labor policy, the representatives of Bazargan had the higher class instincts. They spearheaded the lockdown of the leading oil workers, when one of their leaders, Mr. Moinfar, became the oil minister and proceeded with a series of arrests handled by the Islamic revolutionary prosecutors. All this took place within the first 10 months of the Bazargan government, when the dynamic of the Mashrooteh and Mashrooa conflicts defined and institutionalized government policy in the Islamic Republic.

But within this political climate, the policy of selective arrest also became institutionalized. Managers of industries aligned mostly with the Mashrooteh spectrum spearheaded the arrests of socialist workers, time and again, through the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecution. These arrests never led to any trial or prosecution, and would end in the release of the prisoner in question in each case after a few months.

The forced resignation of Bazargan and the ensuing shift in government ended the chapter of open factional struggle between Mashrooteh-Mashrooa representatives. Nehzate Azadi's departure from the government meant that the banner of factional disputes had to be picked up by new figures and political tendencies in the country, figures that would show no clear or visible ties to Jebhe Melli or Nehzate Azadi. The first president of the republic, Bani Sadr, a former supporter of Jebhe Melli that had switched sides to support the founder of the Islamic Republic, eagerly filled the government post and became intent on continuing factional disputes in increasingly larger dimensions.

The invasion of Iraq on September 22 of 1980 changed the Iranian political scene dramatically. The Iraqi Baathist regime represented a mortal foe for Mashrooa politics in Iraq. This was a second major salvo fired at the governance of Mashrooa politics in the region. The first was the criminal invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR to prop up a pro-Moscow government facing an Islamic insurgency.

Imperialists, Moscow, and all the major powers lined up in support of the Iraqi invasion. This boosted the morale of the recently defeated Mashrooteh faction in Iran who blamed Mashrooa leadership for provoking the war. Bani-Sadr did not hesitate a moment to

pick up the Bazargan mantle and go after strengthening the state bureaucracies, opposing all the new nahad-ha (institutions: referring in Farsi to committees that had sprung up from the revolution) and most importantly pasdaran as the war was being waged.

His plan, which he never found a chance fully to realize, was to limit military response to the air force and army, and eventually broker a cease fire with Iraqi forces occupying areas in western and southern Iran. He would then use the occupation as leverage to settle the account with the Mashrooa hold on political power in Tehran. However, his factional disputes with Mashrooa leadership displayed their own dynamic and speed. Before he could broker a cease fire, which the population would never allow, he was ousted from the government and began leading a campaign of terror bombing in the country. He created the most deadly flare-up of Mashrooteh-Mashrooa conflict in recent history.

This flare-up was so deadly that the ruling group would not be willing to touch or fathom such factional disputes again. The factional disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa were driven underground within the ruling group.

The cycle of violence, bombings and executions issued from Bani-Sadr's campaign went so far as to put an end to all independent working class tendencies in Iran. Kargar was the last independent socialist weekly, and was banned in 1982 just before the liberation of Khoramshahr. After mobilization forces had been able to break the stronghold of the Iraqi occupation and invasion in Khoramshahr, more suppression followed. The wholesale arrest of Tudeh leaders and members, as well as a number of leaders and members of Fadayeen Aksariat followed. The author of these lines was unfortunate enough to experience this entire period from the confinements of prison for more than 6 years.

Independent working class politics were shut down in the country. This situation removed any chance for breaking out of the factional disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa.

The most immediate impact of shutting down independent tendencies took place in the war effort. Iran made no more qualitative progress in the war after the victory of Khoramshahr. The war had dropped its social banner of liberation by ending independent working class politics, which is the kernel of any national liberation movement. In doing so it had shut down its strongest artilleries and heavy weaponry, the political banner that guides and leads a war, and thus prolonged the war to 6 more years of basic standstill. The war finally ended after 8 years, under circumstances that led the founder of the republic to compare his agreement with peace and UN mandates to drinking hemlock.

Termination of the war left the Iranian population, in spite of its sacrifices, essentially empty-handed as far as social position was concerned. Workers would return from the front only to be at mercy of firings. The government plan sought amelioration of this

situation by offering scant few financial and business opportunities to only some of the war veterans.

At the beginning of the revolution, when the revolutionary council was set up, the leadership had instituted a fine of 500 Toman (at the time about 50 dollars) for any members of council who would show up late to the meetings. The leadership was composed of the best and the brightest of clergy and non-clergy; some with years of persecution under the Shah. The members of council were all honest believers that virtue and ethical monetary practices would bring about a great economy and future for Iranian society.

The Sazandegi (construction) Presidency put this orientation into practice amidst the newly suppressed factionalism of Mashrooteh-Mashrooa, immediately after the war. The oil bonuses awarded to members of the ruling group under the various auspices of business or cultural activity through the Mousavi government now were offered to the private sector, which was suddenly brought back into focus. Banks, insurance, and many industries had been nationalized in the first year of revolution. Bridges were built to collaborate with those sections of the capitalist class that had escaped from the country due to revolution.

This was the time that the policies practiced by the provisional government could be carried out without fear and without open factional disputes. Having shut down the literature of the working class movement, the government now promoted the consumption of independent journals committed to the revival of Mashrooteh outlook and policies.

This now-banned working class literature had once promoted civil and political liberties as part and parcel of the main democratic task of society: namely, Iran's fight to achieve its right to self-determination. The new literature by the government-sanctioned press promoted certain freedoms counterposed to the fight for self-determination. It promoted human rights statutes, approved by international bodies under the leadership of imperialism, as the best of brand of freedoms. It was in this period that writers would issue freedom manifestoes without even mentioning once the right to self-determination or the brutal realities of imperialism.

Government policy was laying the basis for a separation of the working class and its allies from mainstream politics and the possibility of the right to self-determination, thereby opening new divisions in society. Mashrooa leadership thus sparked the inevitable revival of its opposition, Mashrooteh politics. This culminated in the presidential victory of Mr. Khatami (5th president of Iran from August 2, 1997 to August 2005), following the 8-year term of Sazandegi. The former was viewed by Mashrooteh political supporters among the intelligentsia as the 2nd of Khordad 'revolution' topping the 1979 (1357) revolution. These governments followed the laid-out trajectory of government policy[, as it had been instituted from the beginning of the revolution, of strengthening management and private sectors at the expense of working classes.

Emboldened by their success, Mashrooteh politicians engaged in open diplomacy to gain the trust of imperialist powers. Within 8 years after the termination of the Khatami period, which was filled with continuous factional disputes of the ruling group, politics in Iran took a huge turn back toward Mashrooa. This time, for the first time, representatives from nahads and political groups representing Mashrooa at the grassroots level stepped forward and won an upset victory in the presidential election. In the absence of any orientation for empowering the working class and the mass organization of its allies among the population, this round of political victory by Mashrooa brought about unforeseen grotesque positions, such as the raising of the banner of anti-Semitism and Holocaust-denial as government policy. This policy had no roots in Iran's history and was imported from right wing movements abroad.

Thirty years of capitalist development in Iran and the many factional disputes, both open and hidden, of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa have paved the way for the current explosion of these factional disputes in Iran. The one sure thing amidst all of these ups and downs is that the current actors of these tiredly predictable factional disputes will not be able to move Iranian society forward without breaking the lock placed upon independent working class politics.

With the current crisis, Iran's imperialist foes fervently hope that these events will snowball, increase speed, and eventually break the back of this peaceful and oppressed nation. Iran's friends, who have learned to admire the Iranian people for singly and empty handedly overcoming the brutal, armed-to-the-teeth dictatorship of the Washington-installed Shah, once again look to the Iranian people to overcome this crisis. A correct judgment and expectation; for it is only the Iranian people who can resolve this crisis by turning it into a wellspring, one that will irrigate the fields of future revolutionary struggle and sustain the country as it enters the fourth decade of its revolution.

Section 5

Iranian Opposition After Coup D'état of 1953 and Its Collision with the Revolution of 1979

The changes in the development of Iranian capitalist politics amounted to the exhaustion of Mashrooteh politics when history had arrived at the gates of the 1979 revolution. Would this exhaustion be overcome by the new strains of its politics during the lifetime of Islamic Republic? The last 30 years' history has given a negative answer to this question.

Mashrooteh politics does not have an affinity with mass movement. It has constantly been limited to posing as better statesmen and better international negotiators. During the recent history under discussion it has always placed the cart before the horse. It has not strived to win the leadership of popular masses before exercising its so-called skill sets at government.

At the same time, it has committed its spectrum to various 'human rights' and other campaigns, at each instance counter-posing its demands to the right of Iranian self-determination. In this election campaign its representatives have been quick to call for "international" observers to judge Iran's election process!

The National Front and Stalinist shadow was cast upon the Iranian opposition that was formed and developed under the brutal dictatorship of the Shah in the aftermath of the 1953 Coup d'état. Many of its best sons and daughters perished in the Shah's dungeons.

The Revolution of 1979 caught this opposition by surprise. This did not translate immediately to a visible politics of the country and into something that would be grasped simultaneously by the independent political tendencies of the 1979 revolution. These independent tendencies could not fathom the creation of the Islamic Republic. Their political response to the new Republic was confronting it as 'fascism' and 'reaction' and preparing terror bombings in the case of some, or in the case of Tudeh and Aksariat jumping on the band wagon of government. The collision of these forces with the revolution went unnoticed by their leaders and members. The aforementioned collisions were reflected in Iran's art and literature after the revolution.

Such as the lone guerrilla trying to shoot a police officer in a popular film, *Nan va Goldan* (Bread and Flower Pot), reenacting the armed action of an opposition figure during the Shah's time, but now the actor refused to shoot the officer in the movie. The actions of the opposition during the Shah's time were, in other words, unreasonable to the generation after the revolution.

The literature captured more thoroughly and truly the stature of the former oppositionists. Saeed, a prisoner of the Shah who was released from prison during the revolution in the novel *Sahme Man* (My Share) is preoccupied with why he was included or excluded from this or that armed action of his group before the revolution. He, like many prisoners released at that time, erroneously thought that their release and the revolution were results of "Jimicracy", or President James Carter styled democracy taking hold in Iran. Saeed is eventually caught up by the wave of imprisonment after the period of post-revolution terror bombing, and is executed just like many others who traversed that path.

The Iranian opposition that sprouted after the August 1953 coup d'état came into existence against the backdrop of one of the greatest defeats of national and working class movements in modern history. It was confined to the greenery that sprouts from the cracks within a concrete-surfaced wall. This type of greenery more often than not fails to grow and to become a tree that will bear fruit. A concrete wall is not a plant bed of choice.

The opposition that generated after the coup of 1953, in its totality, was the result of permutations of Tudeh or National Front politics transforming into new strains. That is how Mujahedeen or Fadayeen or scores of other tendencies were born.

On the Islamic side of this permutation it was the old National Front taking its battle with Mashrooa to new heights wrapped in the guise of Islam. That is how an Islam-minus-clergy strain of politics was formed, a situation already discussed with regard to the policies of Nehzate Azadi, and to the appearance of celebrated Shariati as the most authentic voice of Mashroote political thought in the period before the revolution of 1979. It is important to note that the appearance of Mujahedeen politics provided a new opportunity for the campaign against Marxism by which politicians of Mashrooa affixed the positions of Mujahedeen - which represented the most extreme permutation of Mashrooteh hatred of Mashrooa - to Marxism, thus injecting this false notion into the body of Iranian politics.

All these tendencies run up against the same obstacle: the bloody divisions of Mashroote and Mashrooa, and they all tried to circumvent Mashrooa. What better way, then, than to take an Islamic form to achieve this desired result. The clash of these tendencies with the revolution of 1979 headed by Mashrooa was pre-ordained.

Fadayeen took the strains of Tudeh and defined their version of armed struggle through actions that did not achieve much, and more often than not led to armed fiascos, as reflected by the selective documentation published by Islamic Republic think tanks. Many Fadayeen leaders have now expressed the fact that their policy achieved only the death of the central leaders of this tendency, like Jazani in prison. Their central leadership would have survived to see and impact the revolution had they tried to understand the political strain of Tudeh and not to develop that strain into a new centrist tendency advocating armed struggle. They placed the gun above politics and in doing so shut the doors of political evolution to themselves.

During the revolution they aligned with Tudeh and Moscow leadership. They saw a regeneration of Stalinist politics and a viable future there, when in fact they were joining a movement that would leave history with the breakup of the USSR and its satellites in Eastern Europe.

Given the all familiar history of the suppression by the leaderships of nationalist movements like Nasser or Baath with pro-Moscow tendencies, Aksariat set themselves to be part of the same suppression as Tudeh when the suppression of independent working class tendencies occurred in the Islamic Republic. In addition to its support for the Shah, Moscow had done all it could to lose its credibility in Iran by supporting Iraq in the war and before that by carrying out the invasion of Afghanistan. Tudeh leaders made their share of mistakes with their underground officers' group. The results of their conduct hampered the chances for independent working class movements in the country.

The evolution of centrist tendencies that claimed to be Marxist in the period following the coup d'etat of 1953 had one common feature: all of these tendencies subscribed to the capitalist program of Mashrooteh and wrapped this program in their respective arbitrary Marxist jargon. They all eventually found the opportunity to join their liberal bourgeois wellspring during the conflicts of the first 5 years of the revolution and

eventually all ended in the anti-Iran liberal bourgeois 'democracy' block, which is in fact indistinguishable from the monarchists' human rights campaign.

The collision of centrist and other tendencies with the revolution of 1979 is the foundation of the suppression of these tendencies within the Islamic Republic. Nine-tenths of this path to suppression was already traversed by these tendencies themselves when colliding with the revolution. Capitalist repression had only to accomplish the remaining one-tenth.

Following suppression in Iran, Mujahedeen joined Iraq during the war and pressed afterwards for the US invasion of Iran. The so-called Marxist tendencies of Iranian centrist politics adopted a counter-revolutionary defeatist position either from the outset of the war or during the war. The correct politics of material support to Iran during the war and the political independence of revolutionary nationalist or working class tendency was never adopted by these tendencies.

With Mujahedeen joining the Iraqi invasion the Fadayeen of Aksariat took a different path. They simply flew from one branch of ruling class politics to another. They departed the Mashrooa support wing only to land upon the Mashrooteh and became an icon of diasporic politics. Following suppression in Iran and for sometime thereafter they had their leaders and cadres join the now forgotten government in Afghanistan as Marxist teachers. Thereafter, they migrated to Western Europe, dropping their confused Marxist jargon and adopting academic sociology as the political preparation for Iranian 'reform' and 'revolution' under Mashroote and Republicanism.

In addition to the tendencies formed in Iran after the coup of 1953 there came into existence a host of other tendencies abroad that were clustered around the Confederation of Iranian Students. These tendencies followed a similar path in terms of colliding with the revolution, each in their own way.

It is important to underline the fact that at the time of Confederation politics abroad the author was the editor of the independent Payam Daneshjoo published in the US. This tendency was expelled from the Confederation in the mid 1970s for not being a supporter of the National Front or various Stalinist stripes in existence at the time. The Students Confederation did not live up to reasonable democratic norms expected of a student union. The leadership of the Confederation promoted various campaigns of physical violence and slander among the student population abroad.

Organizationally, all tendencies aforementioned lacked democratic norms required for development of a revolutionary political program. The purging of members through physical annihilation has been reported in a large spectrum of these tendencies like the Tudeh party.

After their collision with the revolution and their subsequent suppression, all these tendencies landed on the same platform held currently by the royalist campaign for a "human rights" revolution in Iran.

Section 6

For an International and National Campaign in Defense of Iran

HANDS OFF IRAN! LET THE IRANIAN PEOPLE DECIDE THEIR DESTINY!

THE RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION FOR IRAN

The Iranian revolution of 1979 is a link in the chain of revolt in the modern revolutions of humanity during the epoch of capitalism. It is fused with this worldwide system in body and spirit. It drives for opportunities and faces obstacles that are shared by all humanity living under capitalism.

The driving forces of the revolution are the same ones discovered and introduced to the human arsenal of knowledge by the revolutions of early 20th century, crowned by the 1905 revolution in Russia that stood at the gateway of the West and the East. This revolution introduced mass strike, workers councils, and the alliance of city workers and rural peasants as the necessary alliance for cleansing the society from autocracy and achieving the agenda of historical democratic tasks. These are the lessons drawn and reaffirmed by all the great revolutionaries of the 20th century. Other revolutions that had to rely on peasants' armies marching into the cities, as in the case of Chinese revolution after World War II, are an exception to this established classical pattern. In the end the Chinese revolution also achieved the same set of objectives in terms of the establishment of a workers and farmers government and initiation of anti-capitalist measures.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 took a page from the above classical history of revolutions, patterned after the 1905 revolution of Russia, when it overcame the royal dictatorship and its imperialist backers by mass demonstrations and mass revolutionary strikes. This success unlocked the gates to a national liberation movement that was closed by the monarchy for a century.

The kernel of development and progress for a national liberation movement of an oppressed country in our epoch depends upon the right of an independent nationalist and working class revolutionary tendency. To protect this kernel there is no option other than providing working class people with rights equal to those of the capitalists in all affairs of society. That is the ultimate safety, security and guarantee for the national heart-beat to function regularly. That is the sole guarantee by which the blocking of social arteries can be avoided and political liberties and mass organizations safeguarded.

To attain this goal, there must be consistency within the fight for the right of Iran to self-determination.

Contrary to the disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa the battle for the right to self-determination in Iran does not require citizens or leaders to become more or less Islamic. They can maintain their levels of piety and belief and still succeed. It does not

require members of clergy to become apolitical or give up any of their seats of government or mosque.

What is required, rather, is placing the right to Iranian self-determination at the center of national policy, and to unite the broadest possible action of mellat (nation) around it. The campaign for the right of Iran to self-determination can and must include the support of all the populations and its various inclinations for Mashrooteh and Mashrooa; secularism and religion. That is why the continuous factional disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa to exclude each other from power are harmful to national unity.

During Enghelab Mashrooteh the leadership failed to allow space for the aspirations of Mashrooa and instead drove divisions leading to the execution of the Mashrooa leader. Mashrooteh, while seeking the support of royalists and foreign powers, looked at Mashrooa as a rival from which it sought to free itself. Mashrooa, meanwhile, was seeking support from the same quarters. All this time, the idea of uniting the nation against royalist and foreign powers, of overthrowing monarchy through the united popular support of the two poles of national leadership did not cross the political horizon of possibility. The victory of Mujahedeen (constitutional revolution militias of 1906) armies that marched from Tabriz and other cities and defeated the royalist reaction in Tehran was shifted by Mashrooteh leadership to saving the monarchy and the rule of 13-year old Ahmad Shah of Qajar instead.

However, the possibility of accommodating the unity of the popular masses through their support of Mashrooa within the revolution did not stay hidden from history. Allowing Mashrooa to enter the territory of politics found support for the first time in the aftermath of the October Revolution in Russia, where the leadership adopted a policy of allowing Sharia courts for the Islamic populations in the soviet republics of the East that had joined with the young Soviet Union. The leadership of the October Revolution of 1917 advocated the right of nations to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession.

Current Mashrooa leadership in Iran should not repeat the same mistake of Mashrooteh in its past periods of ascendance: the criminal mistakes of Mashrooteh against Mashrooa during the Enghelab Mashrooteh, or the Dr. Mosaddegh leadership countering Mashrooa proxy as represented by Ayatollah Kashani.

The right to self-determination of Iran is an all-inclusive demand posed by Iran's history. It is a demand that stands above current political tendencies and leaderships. It can be safeguarded by commitment to the organization of working peoples as outlined in this document. The independent organizations of working peoples, which are the connective tissue of society, are the basis for all freedoms and social justice.

Iran requires a proper international campaign around the demands of "Hands Off of Iran" and "Let the Iranian People Decide their Destiny; the Right to Self Determination for Iran". This is the only way to counter the regressive tendencies inherent in diasporic politics abroad and to combat imperialism nationally and internationally.

We feel the urgency for Majlis to pass a resolution making it illegal for any government representative to deny or question the holocaust; likewise to use anti-Semitic jargon that advocates sending the Jews to this or that continent as a solution to the Palestinian right to statehood and the return to their homelands. Such a resolution is now supported by the Non-Aligned movement or the strategic fight for realizing the goal of united Palestine where Palestinian, Arab and Jewish populations can live side by side with their religions. Iran's battle for self determination must be cleansed from Western European and North American right wing and anti-Semitic movements and their literature. Anti-Semitism is a Western product and in their zeal for blocking international working class policy Mashrooa politicians scored disaster by adopting such government planks. This is not a time in history during which the oppressed can adopt such preposterous propositions and attempt to justify their ignorance of history by the oppression that they face from imperialism. Iran can oppose the prevalent reactionary legislation in some European countries prosecuting those who hold pro-Nazi views. But that can only be expressed upon a firm commitment to fighting anti-Jewish propaganda, a clear rejection of Jewish conspiracy theories that the Jews are running the world, and a complete disassociation from Holocaust denial.

Taking a stance for the defense of Iran's right to self determination can free Iran from the circular disruptions of Mashrooa and Mashrooteh in its foreign policy as indicated by the experience of the last 30 years.

With the success of the revolution Iran was busy propagating various tenets of Islam to the world. Experience has indicated that counter-posing Islam to the right to self-determination will not strengthen the position of the country internationally. Counterposing Sharia to democratic tasks has worked on neither the international nor the national stage. The right to self-determination already includes Iran's right to her chosen practice, to any degree, of Islam. What is important is to defend one's central right to define destiny when facing imperialism. Successive administrations in Iran have failed to put a coherent defense of Iran on the international tribunals with proper attributes.

Current disputes over the 10th presidential elections have revealed that Iran should not make the mistake of continuing to impose a single set of cultural values, held by one section of its society, over the other. While the ruling group is welcome to forcefully broadcast its views with regard to its appreciations of traditions and norms of Islam regarding morality, marriage, temporary marriage, and restrictions on youth, it must at the same time allow for other traditions to be freely exercised side by side without the fear of government prosecutions. The great Omar Khayyam saw in the handle of an old broken jar amidst the rubble, the hand of a lover around the neck of a companion. We need to allow room for all forms of tradition among the youth in our own society without government inspections.

Enough travelers have travelled abroad from Iran to know the non-restrictive social codes of conduct in neighboring countries. We need to create social settings on par with these neighboring countries that in fact are composed from Muslim populations. The policies achieved through factional disputes of the early years of revolution which

counterposed Islam to the demands of unity among women and working people will no longer be productive. They did not serve national unity back then and now they are questioned by large sectors of the population. Leaderships need to realize that the application of Mashrooa moral restriction for three decades has created its antipathy among large sections of the youth that compose major populations in Iran.

Iran's plight for its right to self-determination requires allowing and promoting travel to neighboring countries. The geographical location of Iranian ethnic-national populations connects Iran, through the artificial geography created by the British Empire in the first quarter of 20th century, to kindred nationalities across borders. Relaxing social norms of conduct in the country and achieving a common denominator with neighboring countries is an important step in winning collaboration with all exterior nationalities bordering Iran who are practicing mixed moral and social norms in their countries. It is now time to leave such divisions to imperialist jingoist policy, to the likes of the French President who is now seeking a reactionary ban on Hejab in France, and to have Iranians of various cultural persuasions unite. Let the gravitational pull of an ethnic-national fraternity from Iran reach to its neighboring countries and reverberate in the region and the world.

Cover Iran with Shoras in factories, farms, universities, neighborhoods.

Organize a national congress of working people to draft an economic construction plan to achieve full employment and end poverty; guarantee livelihood for every citizen of Iran.

The Iranian economic debate presented by the government and its many factions during the last 30 years mimics the discussions and goals of the capitalist world: create opportunities for capitalists, so that their wealth creation trickles down to the plates of workers; or have the government intervene and regulate the economy on behalf of the working people. Neither of these plans by the successive governments of Islamic Republic has worked. Another 30 years of these capitalist policies will not yield different results.

The root cause of Iran's problems with regard to social, economic, and political problems lies in capitalism. Not in this or that politician. Not in the greed of this or that individual but in the whole system of profit-making. It is therefore necessary to allow mellat to discuss alternatives to the capitalist policies practiced during the last 30 years. It is imperative to allow mellat and its various strata of workers, students, women, ethnic-nationalities, and small business and professionals to organize.

There is much talk of ratifying and putting into practice a bill for "Az Koja Ovardehi" ("From where did you amass your wealth?"). This was done in the period before the revolution. It does not amount to anything more than cosmetics and will add yet another chapter to the factional disputes of the ruling group. It will not be able to yield

the institution of a proper economic policy requested by the populace facing unemployment, inflation and poverty.

Once the capitalist system became the organizing force of society in its Western birth places, capitalist thinkers (even before they faced working class critique) discovered that if the entire owners of capital are somehow lifted out of society it will not alter the functioning of the system.

If all owners of wealth in Iran, the good and the bad, are lifted out of Iranian society and placed on an imaginary spaceship heading for heavens or hell, their departure will not impact the everyday workings of the economic system.

To alter the operations of the economy in the favor of the absolute majority of the populations, it is necessary to organize the working people and to educate them on how to become masters of production. Such education can come about by experience of the working class with control and supervision of production at the factory level.

Understanding the importance of working class organizations, instead of heading for managerial positions and government posts, we joined working people in factories at the outset of the revolution. The rulers used their organizations of nationalized industries to plan and carry out our suppression, not allowing this exemplary work to show its result. This was true during the Iraq war as well, where our participation in workers' initiatives for compulsory military training had to continue against obstacles created by management and government.

The dispute of the ruling class underlines the needs of workers for independent working class organizations; be it trade unions or shoras. There is need of a national effort of working people to organize on the local and national level, thereby cementing the firm unity of people with all their persuasions and removing the monopoly of capitalist politicians in politics. Allow for the forging of an independent will of the nation in the areas of combating unemployment and poverty. It is necessary to set a minimum guarantee of income of 1 million toman for all workers per month, and a sliding scale of wages with inflation. Two day weekends for the entire working populations; A ban on the employment of minors; Equal pay for migrant workers; Independent organization of the working people.

To attain control over the bookkeeping of the economy it is necessary for the bank employees to supervise and control the banks; working people's supervision and control of the industry. Let there be a seating for workers representatives behind every account serving the management and capital.

All Workers, native or immigrant, have the right and the need for secondary, vocational, and university education; we need to open the country's learning capacities through classrooms, online and televised for all youth and workers.

Put an end to all two tier systems in education (as well as healthcare). That is the only way to counter the current bickering by government politicians on which candidate or government official has a better degree.

Open the Country to All Its Cultural Inclination and Combat Addiction

Iran needs a national mobilization for construction and defense and to open the Baseej to all political persuasions. The Baseej needs to join the populations with flowers and a message of unity and to protect the various cultural persuasions among the populations, and not be a morality police. Thirty years of the practices of the morality police has only served to deepen the gap between the government's cultural policy and the needs of the broad population.

Full employment is the only way to combat addiction to drugs and to fight the drug war organized against Iran from Afghanistan under the forces of US occupation. Legalize narcotics, taryak (opium) and its derivatives, make it accessible through pharmacies and free Iran from the hidden capitalist operations behind distribution of narcotics and alcoholic beverages. Make these vices the centerpiece of a national campaign directed at youth to stay away from alcohol and narcotics. Plan a national campaign of government healthcare specialists aiding the population to free itself from narcotics and alcohol addiction.

Women's Rights

The above approach will allow the unity of all women of Iran with whatever form of cultural exposure that they feel should be their mode of living. "Women control their destiny" should be the cornerstone of policy towards women. That is with regard to travel, family rights, voluntary dress code, equal pay, employment and social benefits. A national congress of Iranian women who support Iranian sovereignty can place all these items on its agenda and discuss this before the entire nation. This is the only way correctly and politically to counter the Western pseudo-campaigns in the name of women in Iran, all of which take a few scanty demands and falsely counterpose them to the Iranian right of self-determination.

Ethnic-National Minorities

In spirit with the law of the land Iran needs to transform the national education system to a multi-language educational system nation-wide, which would mean teaching in the languages of Azari-Turki, Kurdish, Turkmen, Arabic, Baluchi, Gilak, and all the other languages of Iranian society. Make all the languages of Iran fully accessible throughout Iran's national educational system. All ethnic-national minorities should have access to education in their own language anywhere in Iran and wherever they are. In addition to opening a firm avenue for the realization of national-ethnic aspirations of all the populations of Iran, this will create a powerful resource for employment in the country.

Make education multi-lingual,

Make the government multi-lingual!

During the 8-year war against the Iraqi invasion, there was a saying that “the road of liberation of Qods runs through Karbala.” In light of the suppression of independent working class politics in the country and the lowering of the social banner of Iran's military campaign against the invaders, this road never materialized. It is now time to realize that the road running against the imperialist threats and war-mongering within Iran's neighboring countries requires a proper policy that advocates the right of ethnic-national minorities. Iran needs to be a mountain of support for all ethnic nationalities in the region. That is the greatest message of support and solidarity with the Palestinian movement.

To achieve Iran's centrality, to establish its potential force for liberation in the region that is currently suffering from US-led wars, we need to put forward a bold plan of full rights for immigrant workers, their families and their children in education, healthcare and employment. The government must rescind all anti-Afghan policies and grant them equal rights, as with all Iranians in all matters of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Right to Organize and Freedom of Press

To deal with the current crisis Iran needs to avoid all forms of internal confrontation hampering the resolution of current disputes. During the first explosion of the factional disputes of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa in 1980, which led to terror bombing, we proposed ending all executions in order to find the proper political solution to a problem

which was political in nature. Instead, the ruling group shut down our paper. It is one thing to pursue a wrong policy and insist upon it. It is all together another thing to ban friendly criticism of that policy. Such a ban serves the interests of capitalism that has no cure for its system and can only defend it by suppressing criticism directed against it.

During the first major flare-up of disputes of the ruling group in 1980 (1360), which could serve as probing model for the current disputes, those disagreements rolled out of control between the extremes of the Mashrooteh-Mashrooa spectrum, with Mujahedeen and Hezbollah getting involved. The result was so surreal and unpleasant that even today, none of the ruling politicians want to talk about that period and its outcome.

It is now prudent to step away from the extreme poles of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa disputes, and to open the political space for working people. Open the political space of the country to the widest self-organization of the populations that are the foundation for the strength of the country in times of crisis, as well as the wellspring of progress for achieving leaps in productivity of labor and surges in industrialization and agricultural production.

The right to organize and the freedom of press needs to separate itself from the interest of capitalists and serve the interests of working people. We need to step out of the dead-end politics of Mashrooteh and Mashrooa disputes and secure freedoms for independent viewpoints. Open the road of political and cultural freedom to the Mostazafeen (dispossessed).

Currently Iranian society is gripped with a major dispute over who should be the president. Society has lived long enough under the current system for the majority to know instinctively that having this manager or that manager in this or that office does not matter so much. By the same token, deciding which personality is the president; chief manager in the society does not change matters fundamentally. One centimeter of progress in the independent organization of working people is worth more than hundreds of meters in the appointment of managers and presidents who do not represent or support the independent mobilization and organization of broad populations.

The current crisis can be overcome by promoting the idea of covering Iran with Shoras; from neighborhood to neighborhood; from university to university; from factory to factory; and to have the united population empowered to develop solutions at the local and national level.

The practice of capitalist democracy Iranian style has shown that as long as politics is limited to the two tendencies that work to cultivate and express Mashrooteh and Mashrooa the society will run short, time and again, on foundational material that is

supplied by the independent organization of working people. Iran needs to move beyond this system of Western designed democracy and complement it with shoras. During the first decade of revolution the ruling group tried to utilize Shoras and Islamic societies in the universities and workplaces to read and weed out independent working class tendencies, and turned such organizations into the supporting arms of the government. Three decades of experience has taught that it should be the other way around: government needs to promote and protect independent organization of students and workers. Government has no other progressive business than promoting the independent mobilization and organization of working people that are the ultimate guarantee for the well-being of country and the collaborative well being of all political tendencies including Mashrooteh and Mashrooa.

Iran needs to amend and correct its penal code in light of the experience of the past thirty years. A current punishment and sentencing bill before the Majlis suggests lashing as a form of punishment over seventy times in the bill. It is necessary to remove lashing from the penal code altogether. It is necessary to abolish capital punishment. It is necessary to ban wife, sister, and mother beatings. It is necessary to remove all penalties for zena (adultery) and to promote divorce or separation from family as perfect civil solutions. Freedom of press is a requirement for the discussion of the issues before the population; issues that have been resolved for the young generation through life experiences, the arts, and the advancement of culture.

WORKERS AND FARMERS GOVERNMENT

Lastly, Iran needs to declare, define, protect and extend the right of an independent working class political tendency committed to achieving independence, freedom and social justice.

Banning independent socialist political tendencies in Iran was a grave mistake. Branding individuals as “aema tol kofr” (leaders of blasphemy) by Islamic revolutionary prosecution and sentencing individuals because of socialist politics to long imprisonments was turning back the clock of history and opposing the very gains of the revolution itself.

The right to express the politics for the creation of a workers and farmers government must be respected in Iran. Banning this view robs Iranian society of its own history and world history.

Iran needs to open its universities to teach American, European and capitalist history

from the point of view of the working class. Along this line, universities must be open to teach the history of all revolutions: Russian, Chinese, Cuban, as well as all classical capitalist revolutions; and the teachings of the critique of political economy. Working class literature needs to be opened to the youth of Iran.

Nearly two decades ago I stood before the judge and prosecutor of Tehran in Evin prison during a closed door trial that lasted 3 days. The prosecution brief demanded 'Ashad mojazat sharie' (The highest religious penalty) for the charge of being "Masadeegh-e barez-e Aematol Kofr" (A key representative of leaders of blasphemy). At the end of that trial I stated to the esteemed court that long after I am gone, the knife that this court is sharpening for my neck will turn loose and with that you will tear each other to pieces.

Today, I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the current conflicts, and to opening a new chapter in independent revolutionary nationalist and working class rights in Iran.

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On April 11, 1979, debated Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr (first president of the Islamic Republic) before a live TV audience on the topic of Islamic economics vs. socialist economics. The debate was viewed by 22 million people.

Spoke at meetings which were attended by many thousands during the first years of the Iranian Revolution explaining proposals of the independent working class & socialist politics for various social, economic, political, and cultural problems faced by the country.

He currently works as a data architect providing enterprise solutions for data and information technology services abroad.