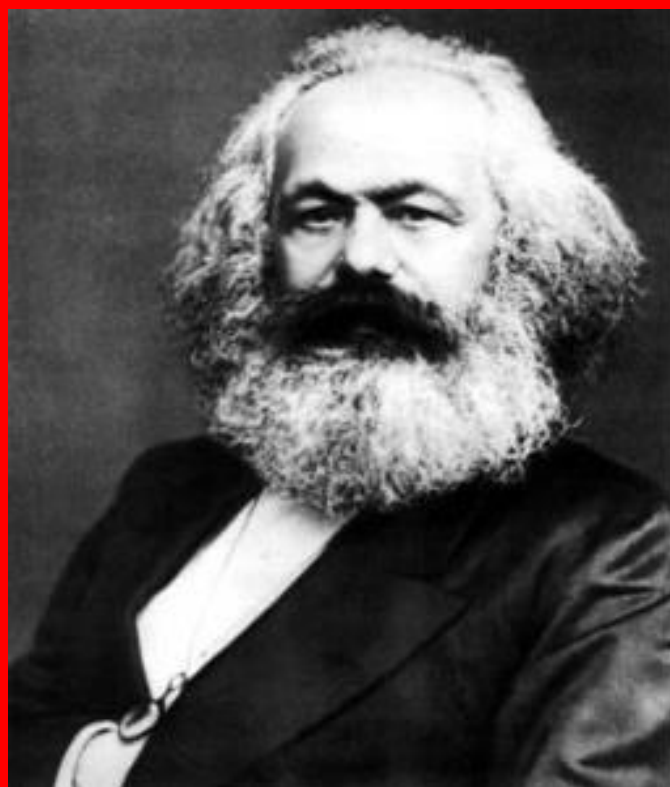


**Worker Communism**  
**Radical Conscience of the Left of Capital**  
(Part 3)



**In defense of Marxism**

**Internationalist Voice**

E-mail: [internationalist.voice@gmail.com](mailto:internationalist.voice@gmail.com)

Homepage: [www.internationalist.tk](http://www.internationalist.tk)

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## **The 1979 Revolution in Iran from the Perspective of the Unity of Communist Militants**

During the developments of 1979 and beyond, the Unity of Communist Militants (UCM) believed that a revolution was underway in Iran. With the exception of the different inner tendencies, namely the political currents entitled “worker-communism”, this belief has been repeated by the heirs of the UCM at various social events. If we put to one side the hyperbole of the heirs of the UCM, the UCM did not play a role in the development of social events during those years and, as such, the other political trends on the left of capital did not affect social developments. However, a review of the ideas and theories of the UCM with respect to the concept of social revolution makes visible the anti-communist, reactionary and bourgeois nature of this political current.

As a first step, we will briefly examine the language of the UCM and its theoretical leader, Mansoor Hekmat, in an attempt to see what revolution was going on in society and, following victory, what social system was intended to replace the capitalist mode of production and how this political current was seeking to respond to what elements in society. One fundamental phrase that was used by the radical phrase tendencies of the left of capital, for example, by Peykar, Razmandegan, etc, referred to these events as an uprising, not a revolution.

The UCM considered the economic crisis of 1976 as the context for the formation of the revolution of 1979 and evaluated the nature of the revolution as a democratic revolution. The aim of the revolution would also be to uproot exploitation and imperialist reaction and it was said:

“With the uprising that occurred in February 1979, the first stages of the present democratic revolution of Iran which was initially formed in the context of the economic crisis in the midst of 1976 tore down the regime of the monarchy, which was the direct defender of exploitation and imperialist reaction in Iran.”[1] [Our translation]

For the moment, we leave to one side the issue of how an economic crisis, in the era of imperialism and also within an isolated state, led to the revolution. We will return to the issue of the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” later. We will now continue to discuss the UCM revolution. The UCM state that during the anti-imperialist and monarchy movement during the revolution of 1979, the leadership was in the hands of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie,. Furthermore, this always takes the name of the petty-bourgeois leadership. This movement overshadowed the developments of 1977-1978, as well as the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and, in the process, replaced the monarchist bourgeoisie with the Islamic bourgeoisie.

We will return to the Kautskyistisk understanding of the UCM and the concept of imperialism in the next part of the discussion: “imperialist super-profits”. First, we will consider Mansoor Hekmat and his anti-imperialist emotions, especially his anti-American fever, which was too high in regard to the nature of the anti-imperialist revolution of 1979.

“One of the manifest aspects of our revolution has been its open anti-imperialist character. Imperialism in general and U.S imperialism, as the dominant imperialism on the politics and economy of Iran, in particular, has been a target of the Iranian revolutionary proletariat’s protest.” [2] [Our translation]

Since the UCM and Mr Hekmat were unknown in the political milieu of 1977-1979, the fiery anti-imperialist and anti-American of the UCM and its leader could not have played a role in Iran. However, as a political current, no matter how weak, the UCM was looking for answers to the question of how the anti-imperialist revolution (namely the revolution that was underway) and the class struggle were represented in this movement. In this regard, Mansoor Hekmat said: “We are specifically seeking answers to questions that the class struggle and the current revolution put forward to us.” [3] [Our translation]

The main question for Mansoor Hekmat was how and in what way to accomplish the achievements of the anti-imperialist revolution. The consolidation of the new order under the guise of defending the gains of the revolution against imperialism, is not limited to this current and all currents of the left of capital played a significant role in the consolidation of the new order and the stability of the Islamic bourgeoisie, but with a radical phrase and revolutionary titles. We have previously examined this issue in detail. [4]

We have also clearly seen in the previous sections that according to the UCM, in 1979, other classes, not merely the working class, were demanding revolutionary developments in the anti-imperialist revolution. One of these classes, the “petty-bourgeoisie” and Khomeini’s “petty-bourgeois leadership”, has been evaluated. With regard to the role of the anti-imperialist revolution, Khomeini believed that the UCM and Mansour Hekmat had stated:

“Khomeini, who owes his respectability among the masses not to Islamic jurisprudence but to his active presence in anti-monarchist struggles, himself only adores establishing Velayat-e-Faghih [Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists] and attaining a privileged position for the clergy in the hierarchy of power.”[5]

Unlike the political folly of those on the left of capital, which had transformed a criminal, such as Khomeini, into an anti-imperialist militant and created respect for him among the masses, in February 1979, the internationalists declared that Khomeini was no more progressive than the Queen of England or the first emperor, Bokassa. Indeed, carrying out an anti-imperialist

revolution requires that the working class be exposed as a black army rather than as a social class following the demands of another social class, namely the bourgeois class. The UCM also wanted to mobilize the working class to establish a new order and wage slavery, dominated by the new bourgeoisie under the guise of defending the gains of the revolution and defeating the counter-revolution (i.e., a bourgeoisie that had lost power); as Hekmat stated:

“To mobilize workers and the broad masses of working people to defend the gains of the revolution and to decisively defeat counter-revolution.” [6] [Our translation]

Let us identify Hekmat’s perceptions in harvesting the gains of the revolution and how he wanted to mobilize the working class. The UCM, like other currents of the left of capital believed that Iran was dependent on capitalism and they sought to achieve independence from capitalism. This would mean that their country would acquire independence and overthrow imperialist domination. Their country would achieve freedom. Mansoor Hekmat, unaffected by this, presented his demands:

“For the real struggle against imperialism, to supply real bread, independence, and freedom, it should be the Provisional Government supporting workers, not workers supporting the Provisional Government.” [7] [Our translation]

With the stability of the Islamic bourgeoisie, which was accompanied by the suppression of the working class struggle, the class struggle took the form of self-defence. Under these circumstances, in February 1979, the UCM believed that although the revolution has lost its momentum and the ability to move forward, it was still unbeaten.

“But if the Revolution has not managed to solve its basic problem, the problem of taking power has not lost its inner boiling and ability to move. In other words, if the revolution did not succeed, it is not a failure.” [8] [Our translation]

The essential question for the UCM was how to revive the momentum and the revolutionary potential when paralysis had taken effect. Mansoor Hekmat was concerned with the question of how to restore happiness to the revolutionary movement of the working classes (yes, revolutionary classes from the perspective of the UCM). He stated his concerns thus:

“Now the main question is that if from the point of view of objective and economic conditions and the roots of the revolutionary movement of the toiler classes, the heart of revolution is still beating, how can we explain the paralysis of the limbs of revolution, namely, abandon the bulk of the workers and the toilers who are directly struggling for political power as explained directly and what should we do at this given point to draw them into the struggle?” [9] [Our translation]

We have seen in the previous discussions that the UCM evaluated the petty-bourgeois revolutionary class and thought that Khomeini, the leader of the petty-bourgeoisie believed that other revolutionary classes pursued the objectives of the revolution. The UCM continued its exploration with the aim of uncovering those dimensions and, with the help of other revolutionary classes and the quasi-Maoists (multi-classes), it would advance the revolution, as stated below:

“Cognition of these main fronts of the revolution — by the communists, and their active participation in the struggle of the revolutionary classes and especially the working class, in the areas will inevitably follow.” [10] [Our translation]

Apparently, the menial Maoists’ praise and compliments for the UCM from the “revolutionary classes” never ends! It is important to note that the victory of the anti-imperialist revolution or, to put it more clearly, the triumph of this revolution, led to this kind of social system. The UCM stated:

“We must stress that the slogan of the establishment of the people's democratic republic which includes, in the most resolute and comprehensive form, the conditions necessary for the preservation and defence of the gains of the revolution, is the fighting slogan at the present stage.”[11]

We noticed very quickly that from the perspective of the UCM a revolution was underway in Iran. This revolution was anti-imperialist and the nature of the anti-imperialist struggle was also a democratic revolution that, on the day after the victory, would result in the establishment of a democratic social system; this would be the Democratic People's Republic.

Prior to reviewing and analysing the nature of the anti-imperialist revolution of the UCM and the social system that the victory of their anti-imperialist revolution of the UCM would bring, namely, a social system called the Democratic People’s Republic, we describe our understanding and vision of the concept of a social revolution. Our approach is distinct from the Marxist understanding of the concept of social revolution and its material force in different social systems. A new dialectical social system that would replace the old social system is also investigated.

## **The Marxist conception of social revolution**

Since the emergence of social classes and the exploitation of man by man, this exploitation has taken on a systematic form and one class has received all the benefits of material production. This exploitation has provided the contexts for the formation of uprisings, rebellion, riots and even revolutions. However the material conditions for social protest, revolt and rebellion are

very different from the material conditions of social revolution. If the material conditions are sufficient for social protests but the subjective conditions are inadequate, or the protesters do not have a horizon or perspective for their protest, society will explode and protests will be more likely to take the form of a rebellion, an uprising or even revolt.

The social revolution is a process whereby the relations of production and, consequently, a new set of social relations of production will replace the old social relations. It is an undeniable fact that “the history of all hitherto societies is the history of class struggle.” However, historically, this does not mean that the battle with the rulers of class societies has always resulted in a social revolution and the transformation of the relations of production.

Before slavery relations of production replaced feudal relations of production, the history of slavery was rife with rebellions; the most famous being the slave uprising led by Spartacus. The living conditions of slaves and the oppression they faced formed the basis for the slaves’ protests. In 73 BC Spartacus began to lead the protests. During the revolt of Spartacus, many slaves were freed and joined the ranks of the rebels. The slaves led by Spartacus resisted the army of Rome for several years. Finally, despite sacrifices and heroic resistance, the Roman army crushed Spartacus’ revolt in 71 BC and the captured slaves were crucified.

The slaves that revolted were not proposing an alternative to the system of slavery; they wanted to be released and to return to their homeland. Slaves never had the possibility of a feudal system and they neither wanted nor could have been promoted to the ruling class but they dreamed about a free life without their chains.

This also holds true for the feudal system (the serf or vassal system). Several riots and rebellions have been recorded during the era of the feudal system (serf system). Peasants or serfs were no longer slaves. They had authority over their own lives but were dependent on the land. If the owner of the land changed, they were actually passed on to the new owner. One of the most famous peasant revolts was Pugachev’s Rebellion, which occurred between 1773 and 1775 in the Russian Empire. [12]

The peasants (serfs) never revolted against the aims or demands of the capitalist system. At best, their horizons were a piece of land and relative justice. The exploited peasants (serfs) did not create new relations of production; no bourgeois revolution converted the peasant class or even the farmers into the ruling class and would not have been able to do so. In other words, the peasant class did not become the capitalist class but the capitalist relations of production gradually grew in the womb of the feudal system and the new class, namely the capitalist class, was not replaced by the peasant class or even the farmers but was replaced by the master class.

Two social classes emerged from within the feudal system, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and both classes were then transformed into the main classes of society. In fact, the growth of these classes in society would end the rule of feudalism. In other words, the concept of capitalist relations emerged and began to grow from within feudal relations. Workshops, factories and other industries were not created by the feudal class but by the capitalists and within the feudal system.

The gradual growth of capitalist productive relations within the feudal system has created the heterogeneity of the superstructure of society, namely, political power in the infrastructure of society that has provided the grounds for the formation of bourgeois revolutions. “Liberty, equality, fraternity” was the slogan and symbol of the French Revolution. This slogan was not the slogan of the peasants or the farmers but was the slogan of a growing class that represented the new productive relations that were developing from within the feudal system, namely, the bourgeois class, which at that time was the revolutionary class. The new relations of production (the capitalist relations of production) that became dominant in society needed its citizens to have freedom and equality: “the law is the same for all” in society.

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, which was influenced by the French Revolution, had two main demands—a “parliament” and a “constitution”—and had freedom and justice as its main slogan. The Constitutional Revolution represented a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Iran that was delayed due to the restrictions that were the result of being a peripheral country. Finally, after years of effort, the Constitutional Revolution achieved victory in 1906 and this led to the formation of the National Assembly and the adoption of the first constitution of Iran. [13]

Throughout human history, only one social class has arisen that, according to its material conditions, has been capable of offering an alternative to the system that exploits it. This is the proletariat class and its alternative system of communism. Unlike previous systems, where their embryo of change was initially created within the previous class system, growing within the old system and eventually becoming the ruling system, in the capitalist system the alternative was the proletariat. In other words, the embryo of socialist relations of production cannot emerge within a capitalist system and continue to allow it to grow.

Again, unlike the exploited classes of the past—the class of slaves and the class of serfs (or even farmers)—for the first time in history, the mission of the exploited class was to be the ruling class and to create new relations of production, to be a class that cannot release itself unless it releases the whole of humanity from the yoke of the class society and then destroys itself as a class.

“In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons,



whilst the communist revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society”[14]

Although the material basis of the socialist relations of production within the capitalist system is important, socialist relations cannot arise within capitalism under any circumstances. The productive forces of capitalism and their growth also create significant conflict. On the one hand, productive forces are collective but, on the other hand, the relations of production are private or capitalist. In other words, under capitalism, the growth of the productive forces and the antagonism between labour and capital provide the background material conditions for a communist revolution. Thus, the objective conditions are provided for a communist revolution.

The communist revolution is the first revolution in the history of humanity that exploited the notion of class with its understanding of class-consciousness and, with relative knowledge of the future relations of production, this was a revolution that would eliminate the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production.

The communist revolution is a world revolution. In other words, the communist revolution is a political earthquake that has its centre in the country or countries but where the condition of its victory spreads the waves of the political earthquake to other regions and countries. If this is not the case, as in the October Revolution, despite the sacrifices of the Russian proletariat, the revolution will be isolated and will eventually fail. The socialist relations of production are only possible on a global scale and cannot form islands of socialism within capitalism. Engels clearly emphasized this issue in the *Principles of Communism* where, in asking and answering the question about the global nature and form of the communist revolution, he emphasized:

“Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?

No. By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. ...It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range.”[15]

No social system has disintegrated during its period of prosperity. It is only after a period of decline that the old social system is replaced by a higher social system. This is also true in the case of the capitalist system. The history of the capitalist mode of production can be divided into two periods. The first period occurs when the bourgeoisie plays a revolutionary role and the relations of production provide the possibility for the growth of the productive forces. The second period occurs when capitalism enters into its period of decline. The bourgeois class is an

anti-revolutionary and reactionary class and capitalist relations are obstacles to the development of the productive forces. In the era of capitalist decadence, capitalist relations of production become the chains and shackles that feed on the productive forces. It is only at this stage that the material conditions will be provided for a social revolution and, in the current era, for a communist revolution.

More than a hundred years ago, Lenin offered a clear picture of the rise of capitalism and the role of the bourgeoisie and he named the different historical periods of capitalism. With the beginning of the imperialist World War of 1914, the bourgeoisie lost its progressive role and took a reactionary and counter-revolutionary role. In other words, capitalism entered into its period of decline and Lenin noted the following:

“The usual division into historical epochs, so often cited in Marxist literature and so many times repeated by Kautsky and adopted in Potresov's article, is the following: (1) 1789-1871; (2) 1871-1914; (3) 1914 - ? Here, of course, as everywhere in Nature and society, the lines of division are conventional and variable, relative, not absolute. We take the most outstanding and striking historical events only approximately, as milestones in important historical movements. The first epoch from the Great French Revolution to the Franco-Prussian war is one of the rise of the bourgeoisie, of its triumph, of the bourgeoisie on the upgrade, an epoch of bourgeois-democratic movements in general and of bourgeois-national movements in particular, an epoch of the rapid breakdown of the obsolete feudal-absolutist institutions. The second epoch is that of the full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie, one of transition from its progressive character towards reactionary and even ultra-reactionary finance capital. This is an epoch in which a new class—present-day democracy—is preparing and slowly mustering its forces. The third epoch, which has just set in, places the bourgeoisie in the same "position" as that in which the feudal lords found themselves during the first epoch. This is the epoch of imperialism and imperialist upheavals, as well as of upheavals stemming from the nature of imperialism. “[16]

This issue indicates that in the period when the capitalist system was growing, the material conditions for a communist revolution did not yet exist. Yet, the era of the communist revolution had begun. The Paris Commune occurred when the worldwide capitalist system had not yet entered its period of decline. Internationalists divide the capitalist system into two periods. The first period is from 1600 to 1914, when capitalism was in its progressive mode. The period of decline began in 1914. The Paris Commune, which was established in the cradle of bourgeois civilization, was destroyed by civilized barbarians. If it had not been destroyed, its development towards a global communist system would not have been possible at that point. Engels explains this well:

“Everywhere that revolution was the work of the working class; it was the latter that built the barricades and paid with its lifeblood. Only the Paris workers, in overthrowing the government,

had the very definite intention of overthrowing the bourgeois regime. But conscious though they were of the fatal antagonism existing between their own class and the bourgeoisie, still, neither the economic progress of the country nor the intellectual development of the mass of French workers had as yet reached the stage which would have made a social reconstruction possible. In the final analysis, therefore, the fruits of the revolution were reaped by the capitalist class.“[17]

As mentioned above, the outbreak of the First World War showed that capitalism was entering into its period of decline and capitalism was in the era of imperialism. We believe that in the decline period of capitalism, in the era of imperialism, all states, regardless of their size, large or small, regardless of their military and economic power, from the more significant gangsters, such as the US and Great Britain, to the smaller ones, such as Iran and Pakistan, are imperialists.

In other words, with the arrival of the era of the decline of capitalism and imperialism, the era of communist revolution began. This means that the revolution that is on the agenda in all countries, whether a capitalist metropolitan or a capitalist periphery country, is the communist revolution. The communist revolution is valid in Great Britain, Germany, etc., as well as in the most peripheral capitalist countries, such as Afghanistan. Certainly, the communist revolution in a capitalist peripheral country will be part of the world revolution, not an entirely distinct and isolated phenomenon and, on the other hand, being part of the world revolution it will need help from the international proletariat. This is definitely a great responsibility that sits heavily on the shoulders of the proletariat of the metropolitan countries. Without the help of the proletariat of the metropolitan countries, all aspects of the communist revolutionary process will not proceed in peripheral countries.

It is also essential that the social revolution (communist revolution) is not limited to the few days during which the revolution takes place but that the whole process of revolution needs to be considered. For example, the October Revolution achieved the goals of a process that had taken many years and, finally, on 25 October 1917, during an armed uprising, the Russian proletariat took political power.

## **The democratic revolution from the perspective of the Unity of Communist Militants**

We have clearly explained our understanding and perceptions of the contexts of the formation and creation of social revolutions and, in the current era, of the communist revolution. Let us see how the positions and objectives of the Unity of Communist Militants are alien to Marxism, how as a political current of the left of capital, its theories and positions have effectively been in the service of the sterilization of the class struggle. Again, we return to the final slogan of the first manifesto of the Circle of Sahand, and, subsequently, the Union of Communist Militants:

“For a people’s democratic republic!” [18] [Our translation]

The UCM demanded the establishment of the Democratic People’s Republic. The question that certainly arises is why the UCM definitely did not want a dictatorship of the proletariat, such as in the Soviet Republic, but demanded a Democratic People’s Republic. It is here that the Maoism of the UCM manifests itself. Since the UCM shared Mao’s understanding and belief in the concept of revolution and, again, as Mao believed, that the revolutionary classes, four classes (namely, the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and three separate points, since our “theoreticians” were too ashamed to clearly set the “national bourgeoisie” as a class apart, so they represented it with three separate points instead), would demand democratic change in society, we must also consider the interests of the other classes. In other words, the working class, simply in terms of its numbers, must be in the service of the objectives of the other classes. Hekmat wrote:

“The same ruling imperialist relation has provided the objective conditions for the existence of other revolutionary classes (peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie under disintegration,...) who have interests in the overthrow of imperialism and the elimination of its intense exploitation and fierce dictatorship, and who resort to revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system. Hence the working class is not the only class demanding revolutionary changes in the present revolution of Iran.

Therefore the revolution in Iran is democratic since the ruling imperialist system in the dominated Iran, has given a democratic content to the Iranian revolution, from the point of view of the objective conditions (intense economic exploitation and violent political repression of the working class and other toiling classes: peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie...) and also from the point of view of the subjective conditions (the presence of classes alongside the working class - mainly the peasants - prepared, as a result of the objective conditions of their social existence, to accept revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system).”[19]

It is important to note that despite the fact that the struggle of the working class is fundamental, even with their belief in the UCM, the communist revolution (social revolution) was not possible because it also looked at the nature of the anti-imperialist revolution. With regard to the disciples of Kautsky, the UCM activists inability to understand the Marxist concept of imperialism is not a result of their misconceptions but is due to the fact that they belong to the left of capital; for them, imperialism is a tyrannical power and force, and the antagonism between labour and capital should be dominated and overshadowed by the anti-imperialist struggle:

“The present revolution in Iran, despite the domination of capital, is a democratic revolution precisely because of its anti-imperialist character... For this reason, although the main struggle is between the working class and the bourgeoisie of Iran, the revolution in Iran is not immediately a socialist, but a democratic revolution.”[20]

Next, let us consider for a moment, just for a moment, that the Iranian proletariat had been listening to the commands of the UCM and that a black army, which was following the demands of the other social classes, had delivered the victory of the democratic revolution to the UCM. This class would not be telling itself that prior to the democratic revolution the social system was capitalist and based on wage slavery and after the democratic revolution the social system would still be capitalist and we must continue to be wage slaves. What effect will this revolution have on our wage slavery?

"The capitalism of Iran, precisely because it is still present the day after the victory of the democratic revolution, relies on the exploitation of imperialist capitalism and cannot be consistent with the economic demands of the proletariat, and that its axis is going beyond the possibilities of the bourgeoisie in such countries." [21] [Our translation]

Of course, with the UCM winning the democratic revolution, some conditions and reservations were made, namely, the formation of the desired party of the UCM. At the same time, it was stressed that the proletariat was not allowed ("cannot") to directly undertake a socialist revolution but would also have to satisfy the minimum programme. The Communist Party of Iran made the UCM programme its own and this was supposed to be the only communist party in the world, as we can read below:

"We announce that the necessary condition for the victory of the democratic revolution of Iran is the formation of the Communist Party and providing it is led by the proletariat in the ranks of the revolutionary movement ... In such circumstances the class-conscious proletariat and its Communist Party cannot handle an immediate socialist revolution.... the political and economic context of the democratic revolution is to achieve the minimum program of the proletariat." [22] [Our translation]

The UCM took whatever it needed to save capitalism from a range of proletarian attacks and ranted that the objective and subjective conditions for a socialist revolution were not available. However, the capitalist relations of production do not provide the objective conditions for a socialist revolution. Yet, after the constitutional revolution (bourgeois-democratic revolution), Iranian society was not capitalist. The UCM raised its Maoist argument that the class composition of the motive forces of the revolution and the classes that were looking for a revolutionary way to achieve their democratic demands limits the revolution within the democratic framework. According to the UCM, the proletariat must create the revolution for the benefit of other revolutionary classes.

“We believe that the current revolution, because of the objective and subjective conditions, cannot be an immediate socialist revolution.” The on-going revolution cannot have the immediate destruction of capitalism on its agenda. The class composition of the driving forces of our revolution are, on the one hand, the existence of non-proletarian classes and layers alongside the proletariat-which in a revolutionary manner struggle to achieve democratic aspirations-and, on the other hand, being unprepared for the necessary subjective conditions for the mobilization of the proletariat limits the Iranian Revolution to a democratic framework. [23] [Our translation]

Let us consider the demagoguery and populism of the UCM, namely, the necessary unpreparedness of the objective and subjective conditions for socialist revolution and the overshadowing of proletarian struggles in the interests of other classes. This was discussed by one of Hekmat’s later disciples, Mahmoud Ghazvini. Apparently, this senior cadre of worker-communism had forgotten the evolutionary process of his ideology (worker-communism) and, in relation to the unpreparedness of the objective and subjective conditions noted in the previous quotation, he accidentally disclosed the situation of worker-communism, as seen below:

“The difference between the revolutionary populism of 1979 with the vulgar socialism of Hamid Taghvai is that the populism of the year 1979 does not show that the objective and subjective conditions for socialism are ready and that is why it gives up its socialist agenda and struggle for the immediate establishment of socialism and engages in a democratic revolution and creates a revolution for the other classes.” [24] [Our translation]

The question that arises here is what areas of formation exist in the democratic revolution thesis and in what circumstances and in response to which problems in the labour movement have they been proposed? The roots of the democratic revolution thesis should be examined for information about the revolution of 1848 in Germany and the revolution of 1905 in Russia. Marx and the Communist League believed that the German bourgeoisie had gained power in 1848 and established a bourgeois republic. Marx and the Communist League also hoped that, in turn, this Republic would relatively quickly lead to a proletarian revolution. However, the surrender of the German liberal bourgeoisie to the Prussian government caused Marx to reconsider this scenario. In fact, the *Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League* (March 1850) incorporated Marx and Engels’ analysis of the new conditions. The idea of the democratic revolution was that through a continuous or uninterrupted revolution the proletariat would carry out the tasks of the bourgeoisie as well as its own tasks. This democratic revolution is in fact a dual power situation between the workers and the petty-bourgeoisie and was considered to be a step towards a proletarian dictatorship. Before the end of 1850, Marx and Engels had abandoned the theory of democratic revolution and had concluded that any hope of a proletarian revolution following the bourgeois revolution of 1850 was too optimistic. Indeed, in 1895, at the beginning of the class struggle in France, Engels wrote:

“History has shown that we, and all who thought like us, were wrong. It has made it plain that the condition of economic development on the continent at that time was not yet ripe enough by far for the abolition of capitalist production; it has proved this by the economic revolution which since 1848 has transformed the whole continent.”

The second case was the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the tactics set out in Lenin’s *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. Lenin was trying to grasp the heterogeneous development of Russia where 10 million workers were being exploited in large companies by world capital but power was still held by a reactionary semi-feudal regime. Due to the obeisance of the liberal bourgeoisie in respect of the Tsar’s promises in 1905 and the obeisance of the Mensheviks, Lenin was obliged to offer an alternative to the new conditions. He concluded that the proletariat should start a “revolutionary dictatorship of the workers and poor peasants” and should also carry out the tasks of the bourgeois.

Lenin was against the tsarist autocracy but not against imperialist dictatorship and when capitalism had not yet entered into the period of decline and Russian society was in transition to capitalism, he raised the solution of a “dictatorship of the workers and poor peasants”. Lenin was never against the dictatorship of capitalist rule but was unable to offer the alternative of another bourgeois republic or even a Democratic People’s Republic.

Like Marx and Engels, Lenin addressed the analyses of the conditions and developed much of his views in light of the experience of the labour movement. If Marx and Engels’ *Address to the Communist League* presented new prospects, Lenin’s *April Theses* presented an evolution in terms of new social conditions, both in the theories of Lenin and in the workers’ movement.

What was the background to Lenin’s *April Theses*? The programme of the old Bolsheviks was outdated and capitalism had entered into its period of decline, the era of proletarian revolution and the imperialist wars. The Bolsheviks had to offer an alternative programme and solutions for the new terms and conditions. Unfortunately, the majority of the Bolsheviks, especially the old Bolsheviks, were unable to understand the new situation, especially the development of capitalism, and were still immersed in the past. Only a tiny minority of the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, were able to meet the new requirements. It was in this context that Lenin’s *April Theses* was formed and this replaced the programme of the old Bolsheviks. However, the programme met with strong opposition among the old Bolsheviks who were represented by Kamenev and, therefore, it failed by 12 votes to two. However, the Bolsheviks eventually abandoned their integrated support for the interim government and prepared for Soviet power. The second thesis of Lenin’s *April Theses* raised the idea of councils as the political power of the proletariat. As a consequence, the Bolsheviks used the slogan, “all power to the Soviets”.

During the revolutionary wave that occurred between 1917 and 1922, the Russian proletarian revolution triumphed in a country where the division of the population between the proletariat

and the bourgeoisie had not been achieved on a large scale, such as in Great Britain, Germany, France and so on, but had not even reached a relative level, such as the level in Iran in 1978. In many parts of Russia, particularly in the eastern area, capitalism did not exist at all or it had spread very little. Prior to 1917, the Russian proletarian population amounted to fewer than 10 million people as much of the population had been killed in the imperialist war, the First World War. This can be compared to the social conditions of Iran in 1979. When the Russian proletarian revolution took place, the rural population totalled about 103 million, while the urban population was only about 22 million.

From these explanations, it can be noted that the social conditions of Iran, namely, the rate of development and the spread of capitalism in Iran in 1979, were greater than those in Russia in 1917. However, this cannot provide a reason to justify the need for a democratic revolution. So, how should we examine the background of the democratic revolution of the UCM?

As a result of their Maoist thinking (multi-classes), in 1979 the UCM believed that other revolutionary classes were demanding revolutionary developments and that it was, therefore, important to take into consideration the wishes and interests of other revolutionary classes.

The UCM insisted that the victory of the “democratic” revolution would not violate the basis of the bourgeoisie’s private ownership of the means of production, namely, exchange, commodity production and the buying and selling of the labour force. Therefore, capitalism would remain in place. There was no news about the destruction of capitalism! The democratic revolution does not fear the national bourgeoisie, nor is it intended to replace capitalism with another mode of production. It is only intended to create the terms and conditions for the bourgeoisie. The UCM explained the content of its democratic revolution as follows:

“The content of the victory of the democratic revolution is creating the most appropriate political and economic conditions for the development of the class struggle, which from the view of the proletariat, first of all, is being expressed in the most compact form of the minimum demands. From economic perspectives, the realization of these demands does not exist at all, which means the destruction of capitalism, it does not mean establishing ‘another’ mode of production, but merely a pattern that the proletariat imposes on the bourgeois economy and the restrictions that govern the operation of this system...the intervention of the revolutionary proletariat in determining the length of the working day, the minimum wage, vacation time, health and insurance, how to manage the industry, the livelihood of the unemployed, as well as the position of the non-proletarian working class, does not violate the basis of private ownership of the bourgeois and the means of production, exchange, commodity production and buying and selling of labour force, but undoubtedly affects the limits and restrictions of the conditions of profitability and capital accumulation.” [25] [Our translation]



The UCM stated that the victory of the democratic revolution would not violate the buying and selling of labour. In other words, the workforce will continue to work as before but with conditions and restrictions.

As the left faction of capital, the UCM provided a “guarantee” for the right-wing faction of capital that the day after the victory of the democratic revolution it would retain the capitalist mode of production. The activists of the UCM won the honour of being the experts of capital that would take action in respect of its long-term goals and would provide practical solutions for managing and organizing the sale of labour power in accord with the social conditions and the needs of capital.

The day after the victory of the democratic revolution and the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of the UCM, labour power becomes a form of commodity (according to the UCM, the day after the victory of the democratic revolution society will still be capitalist and based on imperialist exploitation) and, in a capitalist society, the value of this commodity is determined, like any other commodity, by the amount of necessary labour spent on its reproduction. In the peripheral capitalist countries, the average value of labour power is lower than the average value of labour power in the metropolitan capitalist countries and, consequently, the average yield and the average life expectancy of labour power is low in peripheral capitalist countries. The left of capital, especially in the peripheral capitalist countries, always accuses the right of capital of being narrow-minded and recommends the long-term interests of capital while efficiently maintaining labour power in their interests. This part of the task of the UCM was to be undertaken by the institutions of capital, such as trade unions, particularly in the metropolitan capitalist countries, to diffuse the anger and protests of the workers by channelling their protests. Capital may even be required to take “radical” action, such as strikes. If such actions are necessary, this will raise the value of labour power. However, all anti-labour measures, the actual reduction of the value of labour power, layoffs and other anti-labour actions have always already been agreed with the unions.

The image that the UCM, with all its demagoguery, offered for the day after the victory of the democratic revolution was not convincing, even as a story for primary school children. The workers would raise their demands in a manner that denies the brutal exploitation of the bourgeoisie. The workers would not demand anything from the bourgeoisie; otherwise, the bourgeoisie would have pitied and forgiven them. Gasconade provides a “moral” identity for social capital:

“The demands of the revolutionary proletariat must be addressed in such a way that forecloses the possibilities of this brutal exploitation of the bourgeoisie. The economic demands of the proletariat, which primarily determine the value of labour power in the capitalist economy, interferes with the political leverage of the high and low levels.” [26] [Our translation]

If, in the imagined world of the UCM, all capitalists were like Bill Gates, i.e., “philanthropic”, perhaps it would no longer be necessary to politically lever society. Bill Gates, the founder and principal shareholder of Microsoft, has spent about \$30 billion on charity in the service of education, health, providing free internet in public libraries and so on. Mr Gates also recommends that other capitalists should do similar charity work. The propaganda institutions and the journalists of capital all retain their power despite the humane characteristics of Bill Gates who writes: “Philanthropy is very important to Gates”. However, at the same time, Microsoft lays off 18,000 of its employees. [27] For the 18,000 people, life became bleak and 18,000 families were ruined. Nevertheless, for Mr Gates, humanitarianism is of the utmost importance.

However, on the day after the victory of the democratic revolution, when Iranian capitalism would be based on imperialist exploitation, Mansoor Hekmat would interfere or create problems for the process of capital accumulation. Such a thing would only be possible in the scientific world of the UCM.

“The capitalism of Iran in practice will not be able to accumulate profits within such ‘imposed’ constraints and conditions.... The superstructure of society on the ‘following’ day of victory of the democratic revolution (‘Democratic People’s Republic’ or in the case of other political states, which represent the rule of the revolutionary proletariat and its democratic allies) on the one hand is at odds with the practical needs of capital accumulation in Iran....The revolutionary proletariat will, can and should not place the burden of the consequences of the crisis on the shoulders of the working people but rather the bourgeoisie.” [28] [Our translation]

Even more ridiculous, because of such constraints and conditions the accumulation of capital would not be possible. Capitalism is the relations of production and capital is social capital. Capital does not know anything—not God, not religion, not politics, not ethics, not conditions—but the blood of the workers (surplus value) that must be injected into the process for capital to be accumulated. Capital is like the vampire, Dracula, who will only drink fresh blood—the blood of the workers (new surplus value). Capital can survive in the short-term without new blood (new surplus value) and without the accumulation of capital but, in the long-term, this creates serious problems in the process of accumulation and raises serious risks, examples of which are World War I, II and others.

As long as capitalism is the basis of the dominant mode of economic-social formations in the world, wherever a revolution undermines or crushes the relations of production, capital will seek to revive this relationship. To what extent this will be successful depends on whether the world revolution is extended.

The UCM demagoguery did not place the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the toiling masses but on the shoulders of the bourgeoisie. This would be achieved through their People's Democratic Republic in which capitalism would continue on the basis of imperialist exploitation. In the historical analysis of his famous book, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels stated:

“The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”

About a hundred years ago, in 1920, the first Communist Party of Iran, unlike the left of capital, believed that due to the existence of private property even the most democratic parliamentary system represents a bourgeois dictatorship. The first Communist Party of Iran, beyond the democratic revolution of the UCM and the council (Soviet), was presented as the only alternative to capitalism and it emphasized that the duty of party propaganda is relentless Soviet power. About a hundred years ago the following was written:

“Even the most democratic parliamentary system or bourgeois republic where the slogan expresses the will of all people, all nations, and all classes, due to the private ownership of land and the means of production, will continue to be in operation under a bourgeois dictatorship. In opposition to this system, the proletarian democracies or councils (Soviets) that have been realized in Russia and a number of other countries and power mass organizations, the captive capitalist class – The proletarians and the semi-proletarians, namely the vast majority of the population, are converted to the sole and fixed basis of the state apparatus, from the bottom up to the top, from the local to the central one. Thus, it is only council rule that can supply local and regional self-management in an incomparable manner more broadly than anywhere else and without authority from above. It is the duty of the party to endlessly explain to the Iranian workers and peasants that the council is the only power that can become a real power for the working people to save them from the exploitation and tyranny of the landlord.”

At numerous times and on different occasions, the leaders of the UCM falsely stated that their ideology and their position on capitalism in Iran came from Europe and from Marx. It would have been more logical if they had said that their ideology and their position was based on Maoist and Stalinist literature that had been tinkered with and reassembled by the UCM. Why

did they give the wrong source for their descent? As long as the working class, as a social class, refuses to stop performing its historical mission as the gravedigger of capitalism, it will be a platform for obtaining power from the left wing of capital. This issue is more naked and visible in the capitalist metropolises than in the capitalist peripheries. Engels explained the problem as follows:

“As long as the oppressed class – in our case, therefore, the proletariat – is not yet ripe for its self-liberation, so long will it, in its majority, recognize the existing order of society as the only possible one and remain politically the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing.”[29]

## **Retaking the democratic revolution**

Marxism is not a religion and Marxist theories are not divine revelations. Marxism is the theory of the emancipation of the proletariat. Marxists use the experiences of the labour movement to analyse the social conditions and to provide their theories on the development of the class struggle.

With the developments and changes in society and with the lessons of past experience, there can be a political tendency to criticize an earlier position, theory or theories and to replace an old position or theory with a new theory. This process is quite logical and principled.

In their *Address to the Communist League*, Marx and Engels reconsidered the democratic revolution and the communist revolution. Engels boldly wrote that “history has shown that we, and all who thought like us, were wrong”. In his *April Theses*, Lenin reconsidered the democratic revolution and provided a thesis for a socialist revolution and, in conjunction with this change, he explained that “Our theory was not a dogma.” On the one hand, this indicates a tendency of loyalty to the principles that it believes in and, on the other hand, it shows the seriousness of the tendency.

The basic question is whether UCM, which had now formed the only communist party in the world, had dealt with this issue. In concrete terms, we ask, what was the fate of the democratic revolution, as discussed in the previous pages, and what was the fate of the heirs of the UCM who now formed the only communist party in the world?

The only communist party of the world, with its theoretical leader, Mansoor Hekmat, very easily and simply repudiated everything and with a lack of principles completely denied that they believed in the democratic revolution. Further, they told outright lies, stating that they believed that the socialist revolution was the only possible and necessary social revolution in Iran:

“With all the places that a victorious democratic revolution - based on our assessment of the likely course of events - has in our current strategy, never considered and does not consider the coming revolution in Iran necessarily and by definition, a ‘democratic’ revolution. While the communist party replaced ‘democratic’ revolution instead, it is a hypocritical claim. The revolutionary Marxism of Iran from the beginning and always, which in accordance with proof and in dispute with the populist movements, that only the social revolution (in the sense that Marx uses) necessary and possible in Iran is a socialist revolution and has underlined that only socialism is responsive to the broad masses of chaotic situations in capitalist society.” [30] [*Emphasis in the original*] [Our translation]

This liar has a short memory. Mahmoud Ghazvini, a former member of the Central Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, a former member of the Central Committee of the Hekmatist Party and one of the disciples of Mansoor Hekmat, forgot that the leader had lied and had repudiated everything and he unintentionally revealed the lies of his leader in his explanation of the reasons for the retaking of the democratic revolution and the acceptance of the socialist revolution, as shown below:

“We eliminated the Revolutionary Democratic Republic from our programme not because the methodology and the theory behind it were wrong because Mansoor Hekmat and we together all began to believe in the socialist revolution and accepted positions of communist unity. We eliminated the Democratic Republic from our programme because of the image it presented and there was a sense that we were supporting the revolutionary democratic republic or a stage in the revolution. With the elimination of the programme, a methodology that has been defended in the anatomy of left liberalism is in place... We eliminated the Revolutionary Democratic Republic from our programme; rather we do not believe in the methodology of participating in the above for the advance of revolution in the revolutionary period. Not because of the current movement that is in front of our eyes but because we don’t have any plans or ideas. We, with the methodology of Lenin and Hekmat, go to scout out the current movement that is in front of our eyes now.” [31] [Our translation]

The history of this tendency is lacking in principles. The UCM removed the idea of a democratic revolution from its programme because it would have provided the image of a revolutionary democratic republic. Was the democratic revolution supposed to provide an image of a communist society? Apparently, in its lack of principles, the UCM also tried to grapple with Lenin!

## **Stealing the work of others**

It is common knowledge among the political milieu of the left that Mansoor Hekmat, with his abilities and knowledge of foreign languages, had studied the work and articles of left-wing

authors and then represented their theories and views as his own achievements. It is usually argued that the original authors were not familiar with the Persian language and were, therefore, unaware that their ideas had been plagiarized by Mansoor Hekmat. However, there is at least one private complainant.

Years ago, one of the tendencies of the left of capital, the Communist Unity [32], claimed that the pamphlet, *The Myth of the National Bourgeoisie*, published by the UCM and written by Mansoor Hekmat, had been taken from the Communist Unity. It is important to note that the lack of an explicit and public denial from the heirs of the UCM and from Mansoor Hekmat himself, is a serious issue. Such was the claim of the Communist Unity:

“Years ago, before the comrades of the UCM managed to explore the myth of the national and progressive bourgeoisie and publish a brochure with this name in May 1979, our comrades in internal discussions with the Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas (1974) were preparing ‘a research project on the national bourgeoisie of Iran’. This entry was released, later in 1977, as an adjunct to the pamphlet ‘political, economic crisis of regime and the role of the Left’. And comrades of the ‘Unity of communist militants’, two years later, have adapted the thesis of the document — without mentioning the source.” [33] [Our translation]

## **To Be Continued**

Issues in the next part:

- The Economic Theories of the UCM
- The Marxist concept of super-profits
- The value of labour power and the Unity of Communist Militants
- Absolute ground rent and differential rent
- The Marxist concept of capital accumulation
- The minimum programme of the UCM

M. Jahangiry  
22 December 2014

## Notes:

[1] Programme of the Unity of Communist Militants, page 11.

[2] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-imperialist Counter-revolution, Part 3.

[3] The Myth of the National and Progressive Bourgeoisie.

[4] For more information about the role of the left of capital in the consolidation of the leadership of the clergy, refer to the article, Developments of 1979, a View of the Positions of the Left of Capital and Internationalists, published on the website of *Internationalist Voice*.

[5] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-imperialist Counter-revolution, Part 2.

[6] The preface to the pamphlet on unemployed workers (April 1979) is in the Ministry of Labour.

[7] As above

[8] The introduction to the pamphlet on the prospects of adversity and the new advancement of revolution thesis is concerned with the political importance of the economic crisis.

[9] As above

[10] As above

[11] The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat

[12] Yemelyan Pugachov was not a peasant but was an army officer and lived in prosperity. During his missions, and by observing the living conditions of peasants and the oppression that was inflicted on them, he supported the peasants and led their uprising and protests. Many lords escaped and the military units of the Russian Empire were crushed. Pugachov tried to initiate a reform in the region he dominated. He announced the abolition of serfdom and military service was also abolished, while taxation was eliminated. Eventually, Pugachov's uprising was crushed and he was arrested and taken to Moscow where he was brutally executed.

[13] The political and economic development of capitalism, in other words, the expansion of capitalism into new areas and its conquering of those new areas, did not exclude Iran. Iranian economic trade expansion with Turkey, India, Russia, etc., wanted to bring about necessary changes to the infrastructure and superstructure of society. Iran was one of the main markets for Russian goods; Russia needed to penetrate its goods into the most remote villages of Iran. This required roads, which Russia played an important role in building and expanding. Great Britain reduced the influence of Russia and, in line with the area of its influence in Iran, established and expanded the telegraph network. In 1870, Iran was actually covered by both the post and the telegraph.

With the changes that occurred in the infrastructure of Iran, its major cities became economic centres and trade grew. Workshops and small factories were created in different industries. As a consequence, awareness developed of topics such as law, equal rights, nationality, independent sovereignty, etc. The Eighth Principle of Amendment to the Constitution states: "The country's citizens are equal before the law state." In such circumstances, the bourgeois-democratic revolution of Iran (the Constitutional Revolution) was formed to demand a constitution that would limit the powers of the king and would transfer power to parliament.

[14] The German Ideology- Karl Marx

- [15] The Principles of Communism
- [16] Under a false Flag – Lenin
- [17] Manifesto of the Communist Party -The 1893 Italian Edition
- [18] The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)
- [19] As above
- [20] As source 18
- [21] Toward Socialism No: 5 - First Period
- [22] Program of the communist party of Iran
- [23] As source 23
- [24] The populism of Hamid Taghvai and the Charter of Overthrow of the Worker-communist Party-Hekmatist (Mahmoud Ghazvini).
- [25] As source 23
- [26] As source 23
- [27]<http://www.geekwire.com/2014/breaking-microsoft-cutting-18000-jobs-next-year-14-workforce>
- [28] As source 23
- [29] Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State
- [30] Toward Socialism No: 1 - second Period
- [31] As source 24
- [32] Communist Unity was one of the currents of the left of capital that was shattered in 1991. In contrast to other tendencies on the left of capital and within the framework of the left of capital, the Communist Unity had minimum harmony in its theoretical position.
- [33] “Communist party of Iran” or “Communist party” of UCM? – page 138