

Our opinion

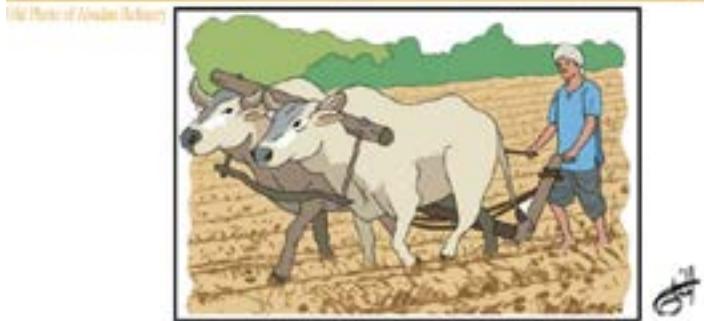
**The Need for United and Independent Organization of Workers and Farmers to Solve the Economic Crisis:
to End the Rise in Poverty, Unemployment and High Prices, Power and Water Outages in the Country;
to End Islamic Republic Reactionary Wars.**

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PAX ROMANA



The Need for United and Independent Organization of Workers and Farmers to Solve the Economic Crisis: to End the Rise in Poverty, Unemployment and High Prices, Power and Water Outages in the Country; to End Islamic Republic Reactionary Wars.

It is not possible to solve capitalist crisis through its managements- All Iran's ruling factions are united in common positions against the workers and farmers, against the interests of Mellat (nation), and in continuing the order of the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi, which with the help of Washington and its international allies has been named by the country's rulers as the Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R.I.) since the victory of 1979 revolution.

Before the 1979 revolution, the problem of the Pahlavi autocracy, established by Washington through the coup of August 19, 1953, was not lacking managerial skills. No matter how many ministers and lower managers were replaced, the nature of despotism, and imposition of illiteracy and poverty, did not change—the unbridled enrichment of the superrich and the extreme political repression of the Pahlavi era continued. Mellat discovered the root of the problems and moved to revolution to overthrow the monarchy.

After the revolution, only a few years were needed for the key subject of the revolution, namely the independent collaboration of workers and farmers to resolve the urgent and historical tasks faced by the country—i.e. to fulfill the historical tasks of capitalism—to be eliminated

by the shahi (royalist) opposition under Khomeini that rules I.R.I. This goal was achieved by banning the Kargar journal in 1982 and the long imprisonment of independent socialist leaders through the direction of Washington and the actions of Tehran in the winter of 1983.

The new regime, established by the shahi opposition under the banner of Khomeini (Grand Ayatollah), has shown for more than four decades the continuation of the same problem as in the times of the brutal monarchy: relying on the management of the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi system, namely I.R.I., leads nowhere.

The economic crisis and acute shortages in the country is not a managerial issue that can be resolved by I.R.I. managers. As many ruling factions have been replaced by I.R.I., yet the result has been the same against Mellat. Instead of the Pahlavi regime's strategy of reliance on Washington, given the wide array of imperial sanctions, the long path of substituting the Shanghai alliance in its place has been pursued by the I.R.I. Without any change in the needs of the country and their fulfillment witnessed; like the ill-fated era of Mellat under the Pahlavi's domination, problems have continued under I.R.I. The solution to the demands of the people requires independent collaboration and united

action of workers and farmers at the head of Mellat.

The agreements of the former autocratic regime with Washington have been replaced with agreements with China and Russia, in the form of 25-year and 20-year agreements, and yet the chronic disease of the economy in the semi-colonial country is left not identified and treated and thus the problems continue. No amount of trade with neighboring and non-neighboring countries can eliminate the economic crisis of the country, which is the offspring of the Shia-Bazaar government's policy of the capitalists' profiteering and militarism.

The leaders of the I.R.I. express satisfaction with the establishment of good relations with some neighboring countries and non-European and North American powers and see no shortcoming except the need for more time (profiteering for more decades and forever).

Profiteering in the I.R.I. soars sky-high, and therefore there is no place for complaint for the super-rich. In I.R.I., which is the continuation of the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi, the expectation is that nothing is to be done for the people. Only the independent action of Mellat has the ability to cure the economy of society and place it at the service of the urban and rural popular classes.

The continuation of Washington's sanctions increases burden on the popular urban and rural classes. For the leaders of the I.R.I. these sanctions open opportunities for the game of "circumvention," whose proceeds amount to billions of dollars. Circumvention full of economic corruption, governmental ties and con-

nnections, and the executors expect, in addition to billions of dollars in proceeds, to receive repeated rewards from the official policy of the country. Mellat under the circumstances receives the double whammy of economic hardship plus the impact of Washington sanctions.

With the more than four decades of the I.R.I.'s promises to solve the country's problems having been proven false and the economic crisis intensifying, the collapse of the currency to one million to the dollar (from less than 70 rials at the time of the revolution's victory), given the conditions of Iran's defeat in Israel's 12-day defensive war, the need for independent actions by Mellat to exit the crisis is felt more than before. Independent actions of Mellat encompass an independent national policy toward domestic and international issues, which we shall explain.

One. Domestic policy and the need for the establishment of the workers and farmers government:

To eliminate the crisis of poverty, unemployment, and high prices, electric and water outages in the country. Removing the three humiliations, that is, poverty, unemployment,

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and high prices in the country requires the independent action of the popular urban and rural classes. The social force of the working class has been formed by history to resolve this dilemma. For a hundred years and more, all country's success and failure are result or lack of the independent organization and action of the working class. The Shia-Bazaar forces have neither the will nor the ability to resolve these problems. In Iran we are witnessing the extension of humiliation of economic woes to daily power outages and water shortages. Working class action is not a question facing only Iran. The whole world needs the independent action of the working class in guiding society. Iran must take the lead in this path if it is to overcome its economic, social and political woes.

By supporting all the current struggles of the working and toiling people in defense of their standard of living and the improvement of working conditions, which fortunately are on-going across the country, the working class will get the chance to unite as a class. The efforts of the working and toiling people from oil workers for providing decent wages and liberation from drudgery and insecurity caused by contract work without official employment, to teachers and retirees, to truck drivers, miners, and various toiling strata, promise to grant Iran access to Independence and Freedom. The ongoing struggles of the working and toiling people in defense of their standard of living and struggle against poverty have brought forth the issue of the sovereignty of Kurdish, Turk, Baluch, and other Aghvam (ethnic groups). Working people see the tie between the hardships they face and the war policies of I.R.I. against the Jewish state. When hundreds of thousands of Afghans

are being deported by the I.R.I. in the aftermath of Israel's defensive 12 day war it is clear that Afghan immigrants do not see the Jewish state as their enemy.

Full employment requires implementing public works programs in the country; workers' control over industrial production is the way for organizing the entire population of cities and country side; ending the harassment and dismissal of teachers, migrant and Afghan workers, uniting independent organizations of workers and small farmers, uniting women and securing equal rights with men in all matters of employment, travel, and mothers' custody of children and the unconditional right to divorce, and the full rights of Iran's Aghvam for national sovereignty and teaching mother tongues, separation of mosque and state, securing civil and political liberties, lifting the ban from the Kargar journal and party, opens the way for the establishment of the workers and farmers government. Only with the establishment of a government based on Mellat and independent of the Shia-Bazaar and the capitalists can the key issues of the country be resolved.

Overcoming power and water cuts—the crisis of water shortage and the threats of drought is the result of the anti-Mellat policy of the I.R.I., which is under the control of the Shia-Bazaar and the capitalists. The top-down command economy and the connection of the Shia-Bazaar with the private sector for securing lucrative contracts for providing drinking water needed by the cities and water needed by agriculture has proven harmful to the people. It is the same with electricity production in the country where there is abundant gas and oil energy

resources. Water and electricity shortages are problems created by the central government's Shia-Bazaar policy. Instead of benefiting from the country's abundant oil and gas resources for electricity production, billions of dollar has been directed to profiteering programs through wind and solar technology in line with the propaganda of international financial capitalism and its institutions. Electricity through nuclear technology has been a victim of I.R.I. plans to impose a second holocaust against the Jewish state. Profiteering by the Shia-Bazaar government and the capitalists, have intensified the blackout crisis in the country. Without cutting the hand of capitalism and its profiteering from the government, it is not possible to resolve the water and electricity crisis in the country.

The link between the water issue and the issue of Aghvam's sovereignty is evident in the drying up of Lake Urmia. The continuation of national oppression against Turk and Kurd and the imposition of central government Shia-Bazaar programs and the securing of massive contracts for profiteering through dam building and water transfers has multiplied the problem of water shortage, and this problem, stemming from the imposition of central government policies, is not solvable without sovereignty of Aghvam. Pahlavi dictatorships imposed underdevelopment on all Aghvam. Once I.R.I. took over their state the results are stark: drying up of the jewel Azerbaijan and Kurdistan: Lake Urmia.

The technology of converting urban wastewater into drinking water and the desalination of brackish water is known in the country, and each of these methods of providing drinking water in various parts of the country have been exploit-

ed, in some cases for decades; nevertheless, because of the policy of the capitalist government led by I.R.I., that is, the profiteering of the private sector and state managers, Mellat has been deprived of proper exploitation of the known technologies for meeting the water needs of the cities, agriculture, and the whole country. Utilizing multiple methods of providing drinking water for resolving the needs of urban and agricultural water shortage is conditional upon the decision-making of the people in the cities, independent councils or assemblies of workers and small farmers, and Aghvam—Turk, Kurd, Baluch, etc.—the country's economy needs the decision making by the people and the prevention of completely false decisions by the Shia-Bazaar bureaucracies and capitalism that pursue amassing wealth and profit.

The intervention of the Shia-Bazaar government, the central bank, and its financial institutions such as the Astan Qods Razavi, or foundations like Mostazafan, which together hold vast capital of the country, has acted contrary to the urgent needs of the people and created the crisis of water and drought. The government is at the service of capitalists and their managers. Mellat has no control over these economic institutions, and without the people's control over the country's financial resources, it is impossible to solve the problems of water shortage and power cuts.

The nationalization of all banks, and financial institutions of Astan and Bonyads (like Razavi and Mostazafan) in the country is a necessary step for the people's control over the country's currency resources. With a fraction of the tens of billions of dollars of national capital that

have been and are being wasted on nuclear enrichment and war with Israel against national interests, the country can overcome the crisis of urban drinking water shortage, water needed for agriculture, and electricity cuts. What is needed is a government that belongs to the people, i.e. a workers and farmers government.

The imposition of the economic crisis of unemployment and high prices, nuclear enrichment, missile production, and reactionary war against the Jewish state form the basis of the I.R.I.'s policy. In all events, large and small, the I.R.I.'s reactionary military policy as well as profiteering of the very rich is clear and is the source of ire of society.

Government leaders and their civilian and military staff live in their own world. Consider the reports of condolence sessions of the vice president (Aref) to the families of the deceased in the Israel's defensive 12-day war:

Up front as the photographs of the I.R.I.'s news agencies at the opportunity of the senior representative's visit to their homes show, all these families of commanders hold mourning gatherings for their lost ones in reception rooms with luxury style furniture and expensive carpets, far removed from the lives of the absolute majority of the people of Iran.

One step beyond the photos aforementioned, the families of the Shia-Bazaar stand at the top of "circumventing" Washington's sanctions and pocket billions. The accounting of this profiteering remains hidden from the eyes of Mellat and, except for one or two cases, does not even leak into the country's press.



Khomeini, and after him Khamenei, through the support of native capitalism and international financial capitalism, arrested the capable social power of Iran to achieve independence and freedom and drove the country's policy to the worst possible economic crisis and the most reactionary point, namely uranium enrichment for staging a second Holocaust. They took the shah's nuclear program and made it the basis of economic development in the country. Instead of the dominance of the independent unity of workers and peasants, Khomeini's leadership and its continuation made militarism and security repression the mode of social interaction after the revolution.

Mellat, with tied hands, paid a heavy price with its social capacity held in check when confronting Saddam-Washington's 8-year war, and hundreds of thousands of the youth lost their lives on minefields and in the military plans by Shia-Bazaar leaders. The legacy of militarist policy in the Iraq war continued in the post-Iraq-war era with ongoing economic crisis and militarism. More militarism is trumpeted by I.R.I. media during these condolence ceremo-

nies.

Because of the Shia-Bazaar government's policy, the generals and the scientists recruited into the secret military nuclear programs paid a heavy price with their lives and inflicted hundreds of times more harm on Mellat. Mellat knows *Azmoodé ra Azmoodan Khast* (to try the untried is an error). When we have been harmed by a policy, we cannot trust it again and expect a different result. For the Shia-Bazaar it is very easy to move from "only Hezbollah," Khomeini-Khamenei's line of political control/repression, the banning of the Kargar journal and the imprisonment of independent socialist leaders for years, to the serenade of "O Iran, O Land of Jewels" and false nationalism, while at the same time imprisoning tens of thousands on fabricated charges of supporting Israel and achieving the world record in executions with the execution of hundreds. Thus, a three-year-old child of one of the victims of the I.R.I.'s policy sings the hymn "O Iran" instead of "only Hezbollah" at the mourning ceremony. Yet false patriotism, like snow in summer, will not last. The need for control of industry and banks by independent workers' and employees' councils—banks and industrial production must be placed in the service of the nation. The 25-year and 20-year contracts of Iran with China and Russia are not directed toward alleviating the economic and social pains of society. Just as under the brutal despotism of the Pahlavi, its contracts with Washington and other imperial states did not cure the nation's ills. The right of Iran to economic relations with all countries of the world is a correct principle; but without the nation's control over the economy of the country, which is only possible through the independent workers' councils at the core of the

economy, there can be no trust in the economic contracts of the Shia-Bazaar government and the capitalists to bear results for the benefit of the people. All the policies of the Shia-Bazaar government operate in the opposite direction to the interests of Mellat, imposing economic crisis and militarism.

Consider Aref's conversations with the families of those killed in the 12-day war of the I.R.I. against the Jewish state headlined in the media: the entire educational system of the country in the universities must be united with the secret military programs of enrichment and missile and drone armaments. Instead of freedom of religions and the separation of mosque and state, and mosque and university, Khomeini-Khamenei imposed the unity of university and Shia seminary. Entry to education from youth to the universities was made conditional upon the permit of Gozinesh (Shia selection). Upon weakening as a result of Israel's defensive 12-day war, they demand the integration of the higher education system with their militarism and the entire cabinet they have chosen is ready to serve this program.

A stable currency needs an economy under the supervision of independent workers' councils—let us look at the country's economic situation over the past 45 years since the revolution's victory. Mellat achieved the greatest revolutionary victory, and because of the weakness of independent leadership arising from the defeat of August 19, 1953, this victory was handed to the Shia-Bazaar under Khomeini's leadership; a process lauded by international financial capitalism. What did Khomeini do? He imposed the worst economic conditions on the shoulders of the toiling people, and after him this same trend

was continued by Khamenei. Over the last four decades the dollar rose from under 70 rials to one million rials. How? Shia-Bazaar government was filling the pockets of the super-rich and government managers through profitable programs. After the 1979 revolution, seldom was there anyone among the officials who did not immediately obtain for himself several economic concessions and “principle contracts” that amassed land grab and trade preferences and dollar consignment. Principle agreements for all kinds of money-making programs under the cover of “economic” and “cultural” were executed and handed out like windfalls to members of the ruling class, and this continues to this day. For its expenditures the state would face shortage of money—it had paralyzed industrial and agricultural production through preventing workers’ and small peasants’ councils, and blocking the historical tasks of capitalism, and it had no money. The solution was printing money. The value of the currency followed a descending course to one million rials to the dollar. What is the solution? The experts of the Shia-Bazaar are not prepared to give up sources of income and easy profiteering. Now they say instead of kilograms of banknotes, which cause them inconvenience, we must make lighter weights of banknotes the basis of monetary circulation in the country and reduce the zeros of the rial on the currency. Let us buy time until we reach once again kilograms of banknotes. For now, let us remove some zeros from the banknotes! If you say your economic game with the country has been exposed, they say no, right now we have signed 25- and 20-year contracts with China and Russia.

The country needs the nationalization of all banks and currency resources under the con-

trol of the foundations and Astan Qods Razavi. Achieving independence and freedom requires the fulfillment of the historical tasks of capitalism, and as long as the country’s capital remains under the control of the Shia-Bazaar and the capitalists, it will be used for militarist actions and harmful economic programs. Only in the light of the monopoly of foreign trade in the hands of the state can Mellat gain oversight of the economic and financial affairs of the country and direct all currency resources to meeting the country’s needs.

What then is to be done with the capitalists? The working class’s program concerning capitalism is not improvised and is clear. Are the capitalists not supposed to show their ability in conducting enterprise in industry and agriculture? They can do this under the supervision of Mellat, under the control of workers over industry, and agricultural workers over large-scale agriculture. The prerequisite of this is changing the government from the instrument of the Shia-Bazaar, the continuation of the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi, to the instrument of Mellat, that is, the workers and farmers government. A government founded upon the councils of all workers and toilers, and replacing the I.R.I.’s program of oppression and repression through the executive, legislative, and judicial powers with the liberating oversight and control of Mellat and civil and political liberties.

2. Foreign policy:

The solution to the “Palestine” issue is through the dissolution/destruction of Hamas in Gaza. The I.R.I.’s program for reversing the blows of its nuclear enrichment program and military appendages from Gaza to Lebanon after Isra-

el's 12-day defensive war is clear (Araghchi's statements in multiple forums): hope to benefit from the anti-Semitism of financial capitalism in Western Europe and the United States to reverse its setbacks before Israel. But Washington and the European capitals are too weak to undo Israel's successes in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran.

Iranian diplomacy threatens that if the entire world of financial capitalism does not join the I.R.I. in sympathy against Israel, we will do this or that; either the world is filled with threats, or we will leave the Atomic Agency and you will have no control over us. The entire effort of the I.R.I.'s policy is based on gaining more success for Jew-hatred from global financial capitalism, and in this way it seeks to preserve the pillar of economic crisis, nuclear enrichment, and missile production for the destruction of Israel. But these policies, faced with Israel's defense of its existence, confront unprecedented difficulties and do not show a path of success for continuing the I.R.I.'s reactionary programs.

The response of the leading cadres/bodies of imperial powers under Washington's direction, who themselves in the coup of August 19, 1953, aligned the Shia-Bazaar with the monarchy of the second Pahlavi and are old acquaintances with it, is that: if only we could meet your demands, and have we not done this since the 1979 revolution? But your military program of October 7, 2023, in staging the greatest pogrom since World War II, forced Israel to defend its existence. Your reactionary program, aimed at exploiting our weakness in the Middle East, in continuation of the wars of the Shia Napoleon, brought ruin upon you. Your action of October 7 caused many of the restrictions that we had

imposed since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 to be lifted and the reins to slip from our hands—did we not try to prevent Israel's military entry into Lebanon; did we not support the dictatorship of Bashar Assad to the end? But the dynamism of Tehran's enrichment program and your program for war with Israel did what should not have been done. We are aware of the consequences and dangers of tolerating defeat in the war-mongering of the Shia-Bazaar in Tehran and we by no means accept the strengthening of the Iranian nation. However, without the I.R.I.'s retreat in ending nuclear enrichment, you will take the situation, for yourselves and for us, from bad to worse.

The I.R.I., with success in the Shia Napoleon wars from 2011 onward, spending tens of billions of dollars and equipping Shia militias, declared its advance in Maydan (field) and its consolidation by "diplomacy"; the Shia-Bazaar factions argued back and forth over raising or lowering reliance on Maydan and diplomacy and accused each other, each demanding a larger share of the Shia-Bazaar government's policy, and with the signing of the JCPOA introduced themselves as masters of diplomacy—yet the JCPOA did not last. Finally, the lecturers of negotiation, who presented themselves as the world's foremost in diplomacy, during Trump's first presidency, following the U.S. Democratic Party, said: "we don't negotiate with a madman!" Instead of negotiation, the ruling council in the I.R.I. agreed to plan on success in Maydan, and in this regard the massacre of Jews on October 7 was carried out and backfired.

Now, in light of the Middle East events after Hamas' pogrom on October 7, which ultimately ended in Israel's 12-day defensive war, the

I.R.I. finds its hands empty in both, Maydan and diplomacy. Pretending otherwise, as we saw in Lebanon (Larijani's trip and preventing the disarming of Hezbollah), only weakens Iran's Maydan and diplomacy, and there is no escape from this unpleasant reality except by recourse to Mellat and ending the nuclear enrichment program. Iran needs to call unconditionally for the release of the Israeli hostages in Gaza and completely abandon the reactionary and bloody military show of the "axis of resistance." It must desist from continuing the economic crisis in the country and recognize the establishment of workers' councils and the civil and political rights of Mellat, that is, the rights of the Kargar journal and party.

The independent position of the nation is 180 degrees different from the position of the former Pahlavi regime and the I.R.I. toward Israel. The former Shah, trained in Europe's anti-Semitism, proudly spoke of the lie of Jewish control of the international press and banks, and if faced with the possibility of action against Israel would not have hesitated in choosing Jew-Zionism enmity. The I.R.I. has continued the same positions for more than four decades with pride. Khomeini, trained by the same system with the same thoroughly reactionary ideas, led by Bazargan-Yazdi (leaders of Nehzaté Azadi) constantly and proudly spoke of these ideas and declared the solution to the region's problem to be uprooting the Jewish state, and he used this reactionary weapon to prevent the rights of workers and toilers, their independent organization, and the sovereignty of Turk, Kurd, Baluch, and other ethnic groups in the country. He did not know that the cheers and applause he received from his regime supporters for these positions would not last as it is not shared by

Mellat.

His boisterous anti-Semitism only served a higher hand: Khomeini, with his ruinous line, merely fueled the propaganda of financial capitalism under Washington's leadership, even more than the network of Arab and non-Arab countries of the Middle East, a policy continued by the Shia-Bazaar leadership after him, and now it faces a comprehensive problem. Mellat and the country insist on their survival, and the continued survival of Mellat is not possible with the Shia-Bazaar government and the capitalists' control of the government.

The I.R.I.'s reactionary policy has been struck by Israel's military defense in the 12-day war. Neither Washington and its international partners, nor the I.R.I.'s leadership has a solution to avoid these blows. How many times can Washington drop a bomb on a mountain region and, because of it, establish a temporary ceasefire in the I.R.I.'s war against Israel and its secret military program to acquire the nuclear bomb and stage a second Holocaust? In light of the blows to Iran's military programs in Israel's defensive war, the harmful effects of the economic policy of imposing unemployment and high prices show sharply. The struggles of sections of the working class against the economic crisis reveal the reality of the nation's exasperation with the escalating economic crisis and I.R.I.'s wars.

We must keep in mind the Gaza war and the efforts of international financial capitalism and its regional allies, like Qatar and others, to preserve Hamas. The Gaza war is the first war since the 20th century in which ordinary people do not have the right to leave the war zone. The

generation of the 1979 revolution in Iran may remember that in the first year after the revolution, when Khomeini and his provisional government fanned small armed clashes in Kurdistan and for this tasked one of the opponents of the revolution of 1979, Mehdi Chamran, with militarism in Kurdistan, even the smallest military clashes would lead to the creation of long lines of ordinary people leaving, for example, the city of Marivan. In Hamas' Gaza, ordinary people have no right to leave the war zone of Gaza. So, what are all these international "pro-Palestine" bodies for? Why do they not pass resolution after resolution to open the borders of neighboring countries, near and far, for the temporary exit of Gaza's people? For the same reason that they have left and continue to leave the issue of Israeli hostages unaddressed. Instead of helping Gaza's people to leave the war zone, which is the primary right of citizens in a war zone, European and North American governments and their international organizations, such as the UN and others, engage in false propaganda about the imposition of hunger on Gaza. Simply put, instead of giving the urgent permission for Gaza's people to leave the war zone, false propaganda is fabricated on the basis that Israel supposedly did not serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner on time! Meanwhile, Hamas confiscates much of the food aid and other assistance, sells it on the black market, and Hamas itself is in no food shortage. The I.R.I. echoes the false propaganda of international financial capitalism against the Jewish state in its own propaganda, but these lies work for neither of them, neither international financial capitalism nor the I.R.I.

The independent position of Mellat is the immediate release of the Israeli hostages. Mellat

criticizes the use of Palestinian lives by Qatar, the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, and other states allied to international financial capitalism for the needs of the Jew-Zionism enmity policy.

With more than a billion Muslims in the world, Iran's population is less than 10 percent of this population. Adding Europe's and Russia's populations, Iran's share is less than 5 percent. If we take the rise of the poisonous global Jew-hatred propaganda as a standard, Iran's share of world population is much less. If the I.R.I. were serious about preserving Palestinian lives, it should advance the position to declare readiness to accept less than 4 percent of Gaza's population—to declare readiness to temporarily take them out of the war zone, so that the progressive and revolutionary goal of uprooting Jew-Zionism killing in the region, that is, the complete suppression of Hamas, is facilitated and the lives of Gaza's ordinary people, who have been turned into scapegoats by Hamas and international financial capitalism, are increasingly preserved. But the hands of the Shia-Bazaar government have been exposed, and the people are demanding the solution of the country's problems instead of Gaza and Lebanon, and the I.R.I.'s reactionary programs in Gaza have hit a wall; on horizon is the complete defeat of Hamas.

Opposition to Putin's criminal war against Ukraine. Putin's military aggression on February 22, 2022, following the occupation of Crimea in 2014, is the greatest war against national independence in Europe since World War II. In the pages of this journal, the issues of this war have been evaluated as the resurgence of capitalism in Russia and its attempt to return to the imperial policy of Tsarist Russia against

the nations inhabiting former Russia. The rise of capitalism in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the last decade of the twentieth century took place in line with the wishes of Washington and its international allies. The rise of capitalism in Russia, similar to the hypothetical return of Jim Crow in the United States which entails the return of racism, requires the suppression of Ukraine's independence and of other former Soviet republics. Given the objective possibilities of history and international relations between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution, the possibility of Putin's military victory does not exist, and the wheels of historical movement do not easily turn back.

Putin's Russia, with possession of the world's second nuclear army and land, sea, air, and space capabilities, has at its disposal the anti-revolutionary legacy of Stalinism, which it acquired with Washington's cooperation after WW II. Russia's economy is on par with Italy's. Russia's revenue depends on oil and gas exports. An imperial war to revive Tsarist empire is beyond Russia's socio-economic capacity, and Russian society, unlike financial capitalism in North America and Western Europe, cannot bear the costs of imperial war. It cannot, by relying on energy exports, endure long in the war against Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of young Russians have lost their lives in this war, and the antiwar position has instinctively rooted itself in the depths of Russian society.

In facing Ukraine's valiant resistance against the large-scale military aggression of 2022, the Russian army was unable to capture Kyiv. After its defeat in taking Kyiv, the main operations of the Russian army have been spent on destroying Ukrainian working people, civilization and

its economic resources, killing and wounding tens of thousands of Ukrainians each year. Ukraine's defense against Russia's aggression has been mostly with tied hands because of Washington's restrictions on using conventional weapons for attacking Russia. Putin's only hope for success in continuing the war is Washington. Otherwise, fledgling capitalism will be forced to endure a heavy defeat, which neither Washington nor the imperial powers in Western Europe desire. Putin's inability to conquer Ukraine is a headline for the renewed political awakening of the popular urban and rural classes in Russia who oppose Putin militarism. Moscow is more isolated in the eyes of all nations of the former Soviet republics than ever before.

Ukraine, during the time of Putin's aggression, has managed to achieve indigenous military industries, including permanent production of explosive drones. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian women have joined the ranks of the homeland defense soldiers. Today Ukraine forms the strongest fighting power in Europe for the defense of national sovereignty and it can find more resources by the growing social power if her working class—through expanding working class rights in economics and production. Putin's situation, despite practical support from Washington, resembles Washington's position in the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s, when Washington relied on all imperial resources; like Putin and his reliance on the Shanghai alliance. But these supports, just like the purchase of Russian oil and gas by semi-colonies such as India, which has the right to these purchases, cannot transform the destined outcome of Putin's reactionary war.

Meanwhile, the I.R.I. under Khamenei's (supreme leader) leadership has found the opportunity of alliance in Putin's reactionary war and from the start congratulated Putin on this murderous act. The main reason for Khamenei's alliance with Putin is the I.R.I.'s opposition to the sovereignty of Aghvam inhabiting Iran. The independent position of Mellat is 180 degrees different from that of the Shia-Bazaar council, which is the political legacy of the August 19 1953 coup in the country. The Iranian people support Ukraine unconditionally. It sees its interests in achieving Independence and Freedom as on a par with the defense of Ukraine's sovereignty. Through supporting Ukraine against Putin's savage aggression, the workers and toilers gain the opportunity for the expansion of their independent organization.

In Iran, the use of Russian technology to acquire supersonic missiles has shown its harmful effects in the I.R.I.'s military aggression against Israel during Israel's 12-day defensive war. It is possible for Iran, by rejecting the I.R.I.'s line and ending uranium enrichment and missile production, to save itself from militarism, currently based on Russian technology, and to turn toward the independent organization of workers and peasants and a position of peace, which is the only path to achieving Independence and Freedom—in this case it could place the technology acquired from Russia at Ukraine's disposal. Iran can and must put all of its missiles and explosive drones at Ukraine's disposal and set as its guiding principle the peaceful policy of ending uranium enrichment and missile production, that is, the flourishing of independent workers' and peasants' organization for solving the economic crisis and the basis of national defense of the motherland.

Iran supports economic relations with all countries of the world, including Russia. Iran can continue these relations in all non-military fields. Iran has no need for Russia's land, air, sea, and space weaponry. The reality is that Russia itself has no need for any of these military technologies and is merely entangled in the grim legacy of Stalinism in this respect. Looking back to Iran before the 1979 revolution, possessing the most advanced U.S. weaponry did nothing for its defense against Saddam's military aggression. No one has spoken of a decisive role for British or Soviet-made tanks, U.S. Phantoms and F-14s, or even missiles Iran received from Libya or Syria in the war against Iraq's aggression. All those weapons, when Khomeini—and under his direction the leaders of the military, i.e. Bani-Sadr, Rafsanjani, and Chamran—bound Mellat's independent hand in the national liberation war, were capable of nothing decisive. Today it is the same. Uranium enrichment, the building of supersonic missiles and explosive drones are bottomless pits of cost imposed by the twin military powers of the Guards and the army on the shoulders of Mellat, and they do not enhance the country's defensive capability for achieving Independence and Freedom but worsen it.

Iran's defensive capability against imperial aggression, which is the structural reality of a world under the domination of financial capitalism, lies in the country's social forces: above all the Iranian working class. Alongside it, the allies of the working class include women, religious minorities, Aghvam/ethnic-nationalities who make up more than half the population, farmers, students and youth; in a word, the popular urban and rural classes in the country. In 1979, with less than half the current popu-

lation of the country and cities forming a fraction of today's urban population of Iran, when imperialism was stronger than today, no one entertained the thought of military aggression against the country. Moreover, the imperial apparatus under Washington's leadership and all its rivals are striving toward staging World War III with their international competitors, and Iran is obligated to separate its path as soon as possible from this inhuman trajectory.

Iran's defense of Ukraine is at the same time the defense of the rights of Iran's nations and an emphasis on achieving peace. The establishment of Kurdish, Turk, Baluch, and other national sovereignties in Iran shakes Putin's military program. It multiplies Ukraine's strength. It opens the era of national freedom in the Middle East. Such an act can only arise from the independent movement of Iran's workers and toilers. In contrast, the I.R.I. has shown that it has no qualms about dragging Iran into a ruinous nuclear confrontation and will do whatever it can to maintain the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi system, profiteering, and financial enrichment. It is enough to listen to the words of the current official of the Supreme Defense Council (Larijani), who kissed the grave of the Jew-killing leader during his trip to Lebanon in the scheme of "honor in having weapons," meaning nuclear weapons, to know that these individuals have no qualms about staging nuclear war against the people. His trip to Lebanon, this Jew-Zionism hater, was to prevent the advance of the Lebanese people in disarming Hezbollah, and its proceeds were only for imperialism.

The independent sovereignty of Kurd, Turk, Baluch, and other ethnic-nationalities of Iran is the shield of Iran's right of self-determination.

Khomeini, by establishing the I.R.I., stripped Mellat of that defensive shield. When in confronting Kurdistan in 1979 he declared himself commander-in-chief of the armed forces, only the opponents of the 1979 revolution, like the Chamran(s), rejoiced—he declared himself equivalent to the former Shah in the military hierarchy and was glad of it. Whereas Khomeini should have declared himself the greatest defender of the Kurdish, Turk, and other peoples and nationalities of Iran and explicitly proclaimed that with the victory of the 1979 revolution national oppression belonged to the past and he would not permit it. Khomeini had no task other than carrying out the historical tasks of capitalism.

But Khomeini was trained by the first Pahlavi and walked in the path set by him and by colonial powers. Instead of raising the flag of rights, he declared support for war and bloodshed in Kurdistan. In the same way in Azerbaijan, with the suppression of Shariatmadari (Grand Ayatollah), he blocked the path of Azerbaijan's sovereignty. When he stripped Iran of all its defensive shields, such as women, ethnic groups, workers and farmers, then he clung to the council of the opponents of the revolution 1979 that he had put at the head of military defense against the Iraq war, who were supposed to save the country with their blunders. That ended with drinking the cup of poison in ending the Iraq war in the summer of 1988. But history does not repeat, and Iran's present line for war against Israel, the permanent program of Jew-Zionism killing, and nuclear enrichment can expose the Iranian people to the danger of nuclear war.

The grim past can be left behind with the victory of truth. Khomeini, by rejecting the demands and historical tasks of capitalism, threw the country, which had just been saved from the soul-crushing pit of Pahlavi despotism, into the ditch of the I.R.I. But the nation and the historical demands of capitalism are alive. Against the programs of financial capitalism under Washington's direction and Shia-Bazaar capitalism in Iran, they are capable of commanding and deciding of history's will. The path of achieving Independence and Freedom, the fulfillment of the historical tasks of capitalism by the capable hands of Iran's workers and toilers, through the establishment of the workers and farmers government, is the herald of the present gener-

ation and of future generations in the country.

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Anti-Jewish–Zionist hostility propaganda of the Islamic Republic: first the destruction of Israel, then world peace

الغاء الاشتراك...لأنكم منحازون ... نطالب بجعل الشرق الاوسط منطقة خالية من السلاح النووي وليس ايران فقط...أين مجلس الامن وحقوق الانسان ... بعض الدول لا تعرف بحق الغير للعيش بسلام"

“Unsubscribe... because you are biased... We demand making the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons, not only Iran... Where are the Security Council and human rights... Some countries do not recognize the right of others to live in peace.”

Mr. Abbas from Syria says that nuclear weapons and enrichment are the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Of course he also agrees with a Middle East free of nuclear weapons. We asked why only the Middle East. He replied that he also agrees with a world free of nuclear weapons. Of course, that is after the Islamic Republic has enrichment and nuclear weapons. In other words: first, with nuclear weapons we will destroy Israel; then we will celebrate a world free of nuclear weapons and the Jewish state!

Masoumeh Taban replies: The formation of your ideas is based on the propaganda of the Islamic Republic and the former Assad regime in Syria and reflects it. Beyond these two regimes your ideas reflect financial capitalism's anti-Semitism.

Think about when you discovered the problem of your life to be the existence of the Jewish state. Most likely from childhood, from family and elementary and secondary school. You

will realize that you have been made a victim of anti-Jewish–Zionist-hostility propaganda. You are not alone in this way of thinking.

Even in countries that have established relations with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan, many young people suffer from the ailment of anti-Jewish–Zionist hostility, which is reflected in popular culture. Like rap songs in Arab countries whose lyrics call for grabbing Kalashnikovs and RPGs to smash the unnamed enemy — which is clearly the enemy: the Jewish state. Pay attention to the Emirati government's propaganda in recent years when it moved to establish relations with the Jewish state: “Our red line is the Israeli genocidal operation in Gaza.” In the Middle East, the repudiation of Jewish-hatred has not typically been discussed as a matter of how to achieve independence and freedom. It is at best tied to governments who receive rewards from Washington for making peace with Israel and the anti-Jew-Zionism propaganda is kept alive deep in society; foremost in its educational system and media. This is not a matter for Arab countries as Turkey is also currently led by Akhvan-al Moslemin. The latter was key to place the brakes on Arab Spring in Egypt.

Articles in the financial capitalism's newspapers, global sources of anti-Jewish sentiment, declare that with Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza and Qatar, all of Israel's achievements in establishing diplomatic relations in the Middle East are at risk of being destroyed as Israel continues “genocide” in Gaza.

International financial capitalism will not give up and does not want to accept the successes of the Jewish state in pushing back anti-Jewish-Zionist hostility in the defensive war after the massacre of Jews on October 7, 2023.

European governments one after another call for the formation of a Palestinian state—an armed outfit directed against the Jewish state. Canada says it will review relations with Israel. Washington opposes the destruction of Hamas and criticizes the pursuit of its leaders in Qatar, who are its allies. The Islamic Republic, which has received heavy blows in enrichment and the reactionary war to stage a second Holocaust, insists on this same reactionary positions and has its eyes on support from Washington.

What is the duty of the many young “Abbass,” male and female, in the Middle East? When all global financial capitalism seeks to institutionalize anti-Jewish-hostility, as it has for the past 70 years, since the inception of Israel; all with the cooperation of semi-colonial Arab and non-Arab states of the Middle East among them.

Young people learn to reject anti-Jewishness from the propaganda of the ruling apparatus, which is against them on all vital social issues. They understand that Jewish-Zionist hostility is, like the regime’s lies about unemployment, rising prices, expanding poverty, denial of equal rights for women, religious minorities, ethnic-national groups, students and youth — another copy of the states’ opposition to the independent rights of workers and farmers; and a replica of capitalism’s opposition to rights accepted by the popular urban and rural classes.

Israel’s successes in the defensive war against the Jews-destroying forces in the Middle East open the way to overcome Jewish-Zionist hostility and to throw it away forever. The path of the unity of workers and farmers at the head of the struggle for democracy and the right to self-determination alone promises the future of freedom. A path that cannot be taken without the repudiation of anti-Jewish hostility.

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End the direct-indirect killing of nuclear scientists in the Islamic Republic



The deaths of Ahmad Zolfaghari and Abdulhamid Minouchehr during Israel's defense in the 12-day war and the execution of Roozbeh Vadi raise the issue of the direct—indirect killing of nuclear scientists by the Islamic Republic. The direct—indirect killing of these individuals is the result of the reactionary wars of the Islamic Republic to destroy the Jewish state; the result of Hamas-I.R.I. pogrom in the massacre of 1,200 Jews on October 7, 2023 and the ongoing hostage-taking. In this regard, after Israel's defensive 12-day war, the number of the killed and executed in the Islamic Republic runs into the dozens. Sympathy with the Jewish people in Israel and worldwide is confronted by the death penalty in the Islamic Republic. More than twenty thousand, as an expression of sympathy with the Jewish state, are now in detention by the judiciary of the Islamic Republic.

Anti-Mellat Nuclear Enrichment Program— For more than three decades, Islamic Republic

has contrary to the will of the nation, engaged in a covert military program to produce a nuclear bomb. The origin of this work lies in the former monarchical dictatorial system. Financial capitalism form the basis of Jew-Zionist hostility in the world. It openly or covertly supports the reactionary programs of the Islamic Republic against the Jewish state.

Washington support to the ruling group of I.R.I. goes back to the legacy of the Shia-Bazaar support during 28 of Mordad (August 1953) coup against the interests of Mellat and restoring a most bloody Pahlavi dictatorship. After the 1979 revolution these same political tendencies, under the leadership of Khomeini (Grand Ayatollah), formed and continue to form the government in the Islamic Republic.

Khomeini blocked the opportunity for the 1979 revolution to carry out the historical tasks of capitalism; instead he based he opted for being

the leader of Shahi opposition. For his rule he took the model of rule by the brutal Pahlavi I and II regimes setup by London and then Washington: he placed military and security power under his control and placed the state bureaucracy, under first his prime minister and later his president. Society was left at the mercy of voracious state managers, traders and capitalists/landowners. He prevented the independent organization of workers and farmers, which is the life-support of Independence and Freedom in the country. In this vein he prevented the independent socialist-worker tendency—banned the Kargar publication and imprisoned its leaders for many years without the slightest legal justification of his own constitution and defined laws.

Mellat was deprived of the sweet fruits of the revolutionary victory of 1979 that was won by the working and toiling people. Instead of a government of the people, the Shia-Bazaar government became, as a predominantly top-down operation against Mellat, at the tête of the Islamic Republic and the executive-legislative-judicial apparatus became a stronghold of the market-capitalist-landlord domestic classes supported by international financial capitalism.

The detention of opponents of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and the frame-ups by the judiciary- since Israel's defensive 12-day war, the mass detentions and the execution of dozens and the long queue awaiting execution—are the methods of the Shia-Bazaar government to ensure continuation of the economic crisis, expansion of poverty, unemployment, rising prices, water and power outages, and war with Israel—billions of dollar spent on nuclear enrichment, missile and aerial explo-

sives and Shia militias.

Through the covert military program of nuclear enrichment to carry out a second Holocaust against the Jewish state by the Islamic Republic, public opinion was largely unaware of the existence of such scientists before the deaths of the named individuals. A decade earlier, these three recently killed scientists, according to reports, presented a joint paper at the 18th Iran Nuclear Conference in Esfand 1390 (March 2012). On that basis one can assume an intellectual agreement and common positions of the named persons more than a decade before their killings.

Differences appear among nuclear scientists and the need to benefit from providing water and electricity technology- Nuclear scientists follow the rest of society in their views. With the intensification of the country's economic crises, an increasing number of people oppose the costs of the Islamic Republic's wars and its covert nuclear enrichment, missile production and explosive drone programs.

There is no rational reason to spend the country's financial resources to intensify poverty, unemployment, rising price and permanent water and power outages, to wage war against Israel.

Water and electricity technology are known in the country. Parts of the country on the islands of the Persian Gulf (which the Arab countries call the Arabian Gulf) have for many years used desalination plants. Waste water purification is also known. Providing drinking and usable water serves the people's interests. Solving unemployment through public-benefit programs

to achieve full employment, eradicating poverty, and ending water and power cuts, based on the country's available capacities, is possible. Based on the country's energy resources, providing electricity is known. The Shia-Bazaar government is the obstacle that promotes the economic crisis and electricity and water shortages.

Times change and nuclear scientists turn to positions against the government's war-military programs. The facts of the actions of these three scientists killed directly-indirectly by the government are clear. The covert military program to produce a nuclear bomb in Iran over the past three decades put these three on opposing paths. Two, Ahmad Zolfaghari and Abdolhamid Minouchehr, under covert titles unknown even to their families, were recruited and used to advance the Shia-Bazaar government's enrichment program to produce a nuclear bomb. The third, Roozbeh Vadi, dissuaded from continuing work in this path. The views of these three for and against the nuclear enrichment could and should have been a source of good for Mellat by allowing the people to benefit from public debate. But because of the government's covert military nuclear program the Islamic Republic opted for the indirect—direct death of these three; their deaths are the result of the Islamic Republic's insistence on continuing the program to carry out a second Holocaust against the Jews. These three are a glaring example of the detention, suppression and ultimately execution of opponents of the Jew-killing war in Iran.

The purge of elements opposed to the covert enrichment programs is as if times have not changed from the underground groups of the

liberal bourgeoisie, the populist—guerrilla tendencies in the savage Pahlavi dictatorship who purged their members for dissenting from the official policy; the same methods are applied to nuclear scientists opposing the enrichment program this time by I.R.I. government.

Before the 1979 revolution, when the dominant approach was "armed struggle," the Narodnik-style model of terror was the guideline of populist groups and political purges were considered an essential part of "revolutionary" work. In the underground organization, disagreements arose over self-defeating methods of theatrical terror, and the solution to disagreements was often not discussion and enlightenment but the killing of dissenters within underground organizations under fabricated and spurious security pretexts. Behind this severe and life-taking issue the sinister hands of SAVAK always stood, exploiting the populist groups' methods to have them eliminate members by themselves. The only Kargar political tendency, before and after the revolution, opposed revenge and internal purges among the populist groups. And when, after the revolution, the Islamic prosecutor's office and the revolutionary courts of the Islamic Republic also exploited this reality to execute the remnants of populist groups, the independent socialist tendency stated its opposition to executions and patiently explained the facts.

In the course of the deaths of the three nuclear scientists involved in the Islamic Republic's covert programs, the charge against Roozbeh Vadi is the usual frame-up and what is evident is his opposition to the Islamic Republic's program to carry out a second Holocaust. Behind the direct—indirect deaths of the three scientists also

stand the sinister hands of the financial capitalist system, the main promoter of Jew-Zionist hostility in today's world. The international financial capitalist system, of which the Islamic Republic is one of its Third World clients, on the one hand pushes scientists, relying on the sinister legacy of the second Pahlavi in enrichment and bomb making, and on the other hand when scientists refuse, acts against them. The result is the same and the nuclear scientists are eliminated by death. In this particular case, two are killed in Israel's defensive war and the death of the third occurs to prevent opposition to enrichment and the Islamic Republic's program to carry out a second Holocaust. With the execution of Roozbeh Vadi the Islamic Republic seeks to cement the hired, mercenary work of nuclear scientists within the diabolical circle of nuclear bomb production and to prevent the danger of dissent and leaks of truths to society.

At the mourning ceremonies held by the families of the fallen scientists by indirect killing, the surviving wives of these scientists each have higher education and therefore do not differ from their husbands in scientific respect except that their husbands' work was carried out covertly by order of the Islamic Republic. Whereas it is the government's duty to ensure that all scientists and engineers enjoy the benefits of open and lawful life to serve the unity with workers and farmers, the independent action of the social force of the popular urban and rural classes to achieve independence and freedom.

If the work of the murdered scientists had been carried out openly, their children could have proudly told friends at school about their father's scientific work. They would certainly

have faced opposition from classmates and teachers regarding the enrichment program and the nuclear bomb. In this social exchange in the school and educational field no one is killed. Newspapers and the media could and should have reported the anti-Mellat work of enrichment and nuclear armament to the people so that through this everyone in society could benefit from public debate and bring an end to it.

The necessity of abandoning the nuclear enrichment program- The time has come for Mellat to eliminate the reactionary military and security secrecy, the imprisonment and execution of women, members of religious minorities, Aghvam/ethnic groups, students and youth, artists and intellectuals, and scientists in the country, and to declare by law the termination of covert military programs in the country. All government programs in nuclear enrichment, missile production and explosive drones must end. The death of scientists by direct—indirect means in the government's covert programs must be declared forbidden. It is noteworthy that Israel, which is characterized by the I.R.I.'s Jew-Zionist hostility as an "apartheid" regime, does not have capital punishment.

Masoud Siami, Shahrivar 1404

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The passing of the skilled artist Bahman Rajabi



Bahman Rajabi, the tonbak player, one of the best in this art, passed away at the age of 87. In the years before the end of the Iraq war, in the summer of 1988, he had been imprisoned in Evin for many years. The story of his imprisonment tells much about the events of Khomeini's regime and is also reminiscent of the events of the Stalin era.

Bahman had written a letter to a friend in Spain, speaking about the conditions of his life: "From the moment I wake up until night, I must endure this miserable situation," and he had lashed out at the entire Islamic Republic, from top to bottom. His letter had reached Spain while his friend had already moved away. Thus the letter was returned, and the post office sent it back to his home. A neighbor in the apartment had taken the letter, read it, and delivered it to the authorities. Rajabi said maybe the neighbor didn't like his art and music, or perhaps was one of the regime's people! The letter was referred "for handling" to Asadollah Lajevardi at the Prose-

cutor's Office of the Islamic Revolution in Tehran. Just like that, Bahman was imprisoned and faced the danger of execution.

When I saw him in 1987 in Ward 325, which mostly held ordinary prisoners, he had already been in prison for years. Lajevardi had been dismissed, but Bahman was still imprisoned. In a 6-by-6 room with more than 20 inmates, after lights-out when the bulbs dimmed, there wasn't even a hand's width of empty space. Each prisoner had only the width of his shoulders and the length of his body as sleeping space. These were counted as the good times in Evin.

Bahman spent most of his time alone, and his life in prison was hellish—rarely did a smile cross his lips. He would sit with his knees drawn to his chest, and his delicate fingers tapped on his knees as if playing the tonbak. He said he mustn't let his fingers stiffen. Rarely was a sound heard from him, except one morning before 7 o'clock when he lost patience with the

cellmate beside him: “Am I your father’s grave, that every morning at dawn you stand over me, praying and chanting loudly?” That cellmate came from a clerical background. In the past, in Khorramabad, he had held a high position in the Islamic Revolutionary Courts. Then his crime was simply being Afghan and having married a non-Afghan “Iranian” woman, while concealing his Afghan identity in work and marriage. Rajabi said, the funny thing is they declared bandari music forbidden, but all the songs about “Khomeini the Leader” were composed in bandari rhythm.

After the mass executions of the summer, a cleric came to our ward and into our cell. He sat down and turned to Bahman: we want the list of the bad people of this regime so that we can punish them later. Bahman was alert. He said: Please, tell me why you arrested me and kept me locked up in this ruin for years? In this room we have a prisoner who is like iron. But I am more fragile than glass. Breathe on glass and it clouds over. When will you release me from this hell?

I don’t know when he was freed. To the last moment I recall, perhaps until late 1988, he was still imprisoned in Ward 325, and maybe longer. From thousands of people, only one like Bahman Rajabi, with such abundant musical talent, comes among us. But today, there are many like Bahman, imprisoned without any reason, in the Islamic Republic. According to the regime’s own claims, more than 25,000 people have been held in prisons after Israel’s 12-day defensive war. All of them are those who have criticized their own condition or that of the country somewhere. Among them, hundreds have been executed this year in the Islamic Republic.

When the people of Iran raise the roar of joy for liberation, for gaining independence and freedom, the cry of freedom will recall the tens of thousands of Bahmans who lost their lives under the wheels of the Shi’ā-Bazaar-imperialism regime of repression.

We honor the memory of dear Bahman Rajabi.

B.Z.

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Concealing the role of the working class is to block realizing Independence and Freedom in Iran.

Did the peasants—rural farmers—have the central role in the 1979 revolution?



Old Photo of Abadan Refinery



After Israel's defense of its existence during the 12-day war, the issue of the dynamics of social transformation in Iran has increasingly come to the attention of the vanguard of the working class. Therefore, on this anniversary of August 19, 1953, coup, studying the truths of the past can be the best guide for understanding the path of the future.

The greatest event in Iran in the 20th century was the revolutionary action of the people in 1979 which led to the overthrow of the anti-Mellat Pahlavi—Washington monarchy. Unfortunately, after this historic transformation, due to the leadership of Khomeini (Grand Ayatollah), the political bloc of bourgeois supporters, that is the Shia-Bazaar, with the support of Washington and other world powers, eliminated the working class — which had been the fundamental social force and guarantor of the revolution's victory — from the political arena of the country, and instead of establishing the independent sovereignty of Mellat, namely the workers and farmers government, they established the Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R.I.).

The establishment of the I.R.I. meant putting the working class into oblivion. The activities of the Kargar socialists, reflecting the independent positions of the working class, in less than four years

after the victory of the revolution faced restrictions such as the closure of publications, repeated arrests of members and leaders, and this trend continued for years.

The attempt to eliminate the role of the working class in 1979 has continued until today, and instead of the true path of gaining Independence and Freedom, Mellat has been dealt severe economic and social crises accompanied by the reactionary program of uranium enrichment and anti-Jewish-Zionism wars to bring about a second Holocaust. Simultaneously with the practical assault of the Shia-Bazaar ruling bloc against the working class in the I.R.I. — the background of which goes back to the CIA-backed coup of August 19, 1953, around the axis of Zahedi-Kashani — we are witnessing the revival of the political and ideological offensive of native capitalism. Now, along with the weakening of the I.R.I. after Israel's defense in the 12-day war, we are witnessing the continued elimination of the working class from today's and tomorrow's debates of the country, and consequently its obliteration along with the country's future transformation. However, across the country, segments of the working class — from the oil industry to teachers and retirees — are demanding their unpaid wages, job security, and expulsions from work and oppose I.R.I. reactionary wars, which makes solidarity with them more necessary than ever.

The pseudo-sociology that the dominant political currents in I.R.I. use to justify the elimination of the working class, like emotional or moral sociology throughout the 20th century, is the method of the middle class intellectuals, which is in contradiction with the explicit realities of history. In pseudo-sociological analysis, the aim and conclusion of the study are predetermined, and then to prove it, emotional or moral arguments are presented, or, once substance is lacking data is fabricated. In this trick, economic, political, and cultural backwardness is presented as being outside the responsibility of the ruling capitalism (and its international backers), multiple excuses are created for it, and nonsensical theses are offered. If capitalism is not responsible for the country being held back, then other reasons must be concocted. *Heech divari kootah-tar az roostaie nist* (no wall is shorter than that of the peasantry), and thus the rural class is presented as the historical culprit.

The responsibility of the bourgeois leadership in the cities — in this case the Shia-Bazaar — for the shortcomings and backwardness in economic-social, politics, and culture is denied, and the responsibility is shifted onto the rural class(s). The intellectuals of the middle class and likewise the quasi-Marxist tendencies, which in the end have been and still are dependent on the line of liberal bourgeoisie and suffer from the historical weakness of the liberal tendency, in order to justify the repeated failures of their theories, resort to this kind of pseudo-sociology: society is afflicted with rural-mania and therefore nothing can be done, and all shortcomings stem from this artificial reality. Here we examine the core of the arguments put forward by this kind of pseudo-sociology.

The rural revolution in Iran

Saeed Leylaz, is a prominent university professor, journalist, and economic analyst known for his affinity with the fundamentalists or Right. In an interview with the newspaper Shargh — which represents the views of the liberal bourgeoisie — he speaks about the Trauma of a Repressed Movement (August 19, 2025, issue no. 5185) on the anniversary of August 1953 coup. His remarks are of significance for young workers. Since our effort is solely enlightenment, we cite his remarks here and thank both him and the newspaper Shargh, particularly as Mr. Leylaz declares opposition to the coup of August 19, 1953, yet as is fashionable in capitalist tendencies, avoids raising and discussing all the lessons of this painful event.

Leylaz's cross-faction interview in Shargh offers an opportunity for workers to see that the ruling Shia-Bazaar factions, by whitewash of the working class — the main force of progress in the capitalist era — have always been united, in both past and present. In this interview, which contains numerous questions and answers, workers or the working class are mentioned only once, and that in connection with the Great French Revolution more than two centuries ago. Whereas at the time of the French Revolution there was no social force equivalent to the oil industry workers of Iran, and understanding the transformations of Iranian society — especially the 1979 revolution progression and its negation afterwards— is impossible without grasping the liberating role of the working class in society.

The 1979 revolution is presented by Saeed Leylaz as a revolution by “mass, that is a rural mass”: “The Islamic Revolution was the revolution of rural Iran. In fact, at the time of the Islamic Revolution, we did not have a city... there was only a small urban nucleus... can we call this a city, but in what sense is it really a city?” His evaluation includes all the famous revolutions of history — “There too [the French Revolution] rural masses, the urban masses that were never been seen, came onto the stage.”

At the time of the revolutionary strikes of the Iranian oil industry workers in the pre-revolutionary period, the New York Times devoted its front page to the shocking news of these revolutionary oil workers' strikes. With the emergence of the Iranian Revolution, Washington acutely felt the necessity of preventing a similar event in South Korea and showed haste to avert it. Nowhere in the world did the rulers of the capitalist system wake up to find the sudden uprising of the rural masses. The revolutionary action of millions of urban people—with industrial workers at the center—was in plain sight of imperialism, and Washington had no way of stopping it in Iran. Imperialism considered the coup regime of August 19, 1953, which it had itself established, lost, and after that, it could only count on Khomeini. Just as today they strive to preserve the Islamic Republic against the blows it has received from Israel's defense in the 12-day war, and, to manage the situation, would not hesitate even at last-day bombings to procure instant ceasefire. The grind of I.R.I. reactionary war against Israel once faced with the defense of the Jewish state of its existence, is the type of grind that will tear apart the façade of I.R.I. imposed on Iran by the

Shia-Bazaar and Washington and its allies—it must be stopped at all costs.

From Leylaz's viewpoint, back in 1979 the rural masses “not only created the greatest event in the history of Iran, but also shook the entire Middle East and, in a way, the world.”

As for pseudo-sociology, suffice it to say that for centuries before the French Revolution, the capitalist system had prevailed. Kings had become indebted to capitalist banks. Democratic revolutions took place to destroy feudal domination and to provide the superstructure, that is, the political regime corresponding to the new capitalist mode of production (In parallel, the domination of semi-colonial society in Iran throughout the 20th century renders the society ready to find the solution to its historic capitalist tasks through the leadership of working-class).

In the classical European revolutions' peasants were a key component of the tasks faced by society and obtained land; they were able to step into the sphere of small bourgeoisie. The Iranian revolution was urban, and the key component of rural masses, in its light, were set in motion, but after the overthrow of the despotic Pahlavi–Washington monarchy, they faced Khomeini's opposition to implementing an agrarian revolution or land distribution. The denial of facts by Leylaz and the newspaper Shargh in the said interview, and their distortion of truths by sophistry and insistence on delusions, is purely regrettable.

It suffices to refer to the attention of financial capitalism worldwide to the pre-revolutionary conditions in the years 1978 and 1979.

Reports of the New York Times about the events of Iran in the year of the 1979 revolution

Here we list samples of New York Times reports refuting Leylaz's claims. The New York Times is the explicit guidance of all the ruling currents in the Islamic Republic, especially since today, in advancing anti-Jewish-Zionism, this newspaper is its resonant international voice and agenda setter. Therefore, we select old articles from this authoritative newspaper of financial capitalism in the United States.

On November 6, 1978 [more than three months before the revolution], the New York Times, in an article titled “IRAN PREMIER QUILTS; RIOTERS CHALLENGE ARMY RULE BY SHAH” wrote: “The Prime Minister of Iran resigned tonight after demonstrators demanding the ouster of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi rampaged through the streets of Teheran setting fire to buildings. Strikes spread through the country, further crippling oil production and other industries.

“The Shah, who is fighting an increasing challenge to his reign of 37 years, turned to the armed forces to help restore order, and the authorities announced that they would strictly enforce martial law, which was imposed in 12 cities in September, and shoot rioters and strikers in vital industries … As a result, the Shah was expected to name a new government that, according to sources close to the palace, would include military men in many key posts. [In Washington, the Carter

Administration was showing serious fears that the Shah might not be able to survive the present crisis unless he took decisive action to revamp his government in the next 24 to 48 hours. On the economic front, the turmoil in Iran has led to higher oil prices because of the disappearance of Iranian oil from the world market...”]

On November 8, the same newspaper headlined: “Iran Arrests Head of Secret Police, Other Officials and Businessmen.” The article continues: “The arrests appeared to be an important gesture toward the Shah's political opponents, who have in recent months shaken the country and its oil-based economy.

“Among those arrested was Gen. Nematollah Nassiri, former head of SAVAK, the internal security agency, which has been accused of using torture under his control. Six former Cabinet ministers. were among those detained, and a number of businessmen were charged with corruption.

“Government sources say arrest orders have been issued for 52 others, most of whom have not yet been detained... Government sources said that former Information Minister Darioush Homayoun was among the prominent officials arrested. Mr. Homayoun has been accused of responsibility for a letter, extremely critical of Ayatollah Khomeini, that appeared in a newspaper early this year and sparked the uprisings against the Shah.”

On November 10, the New York Times headlined an article: “Iranian Opposition to Continue Strikes.” The article, which introduces the National Front as the main opposition party, writes: “...strikes at oilfields and factories as its main weapon against Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi now that the nation is under military rule.... A high official of the National Iranian Oil Company recounted today how his office staff, including his secretary, went on strike last week in sympathy with the workers in the oilfields and had come into his office to warn him to stop working too. As soon as they left, the phone rang, and the caller said: “Why are you answering the phone? Didn't we tell you not to do any work?”

That same newspaper on November 11 headlined: “Strikers in Iran Demand Expulsion of all Foreigners Holding Oil Jobs.” The article writes: “The strikers who have crippled Iranian oil production are demanding that the military Government expel all foreigners from the petroleum industry. Some Americans and Europeans have left their jobs in the oil fields here for Teheran or home.

In another article on November 11 the New York Times headlined: “Iranian Oil Plant Focus of Unrest.” The article explains that the Abadan refinery, the largest in the Middle East and one of the largest in the world, is located below the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates at a point they discharge into the northern Persian Gulf. “The world production of crude oil is 98 to 50 million barrels a day. Iran produces a little more than 10 percent of that amount. The Abadan refinery is known as large complex refinery because [it] produces a complete line of petroleum products,

from gasoline through residual fuel oil.”

In yet another article on the same day, the New York Times writes: “The military Government today ordered troops to work in Iran's strike-bound oilfields.



On November 13, the New York Times headlined: “IRAN'S OIL WORKERS TOLD TO END STRIKE OR FACE DISCHARGE” The next day, on November 14, the New York Times in its headline says: “MOST OIL WORKERS BACK AT JOB IN IRAN FROM 2-WEEK STRIKE.” On November 16, the New York Times headlined: “IRAN'S OIL WORKERS STAGING SLOWDOWN” The article continues: “Despite official assertions by the National Iranian Oil Company that production has steadily increased, striking workers in this center of Iran's oil industry say that many Iranian workers have stayed home over the last two days and that those who have reported to their jobs have done little or no work at all.

“According to official figures, production today, one day after the anti-Shah strikes were said to have collapsed, reached more than three million barrels, about three times the low point of Nov. 7. However, normal production for this time of year would be about 5.8 million barrels.” In parallel with this fact, the New York Times writes: “Gas Pipeline Still Idle.” “However, the 500-mile natural gas pipeline that carries Iranian gas from the southern oil fields to the Soviet Union has been idle since Oct. 15. Iranian officials said the pipeline, which also supplies several Iranian cities. might start up tomorrow.”

On November 19, the New York Times headlined: “Despite Army's Presence, Iranian Oil Town Is Challenging the Shah.” On November 26, the New York Times headlined: “Iran's Troubles End Boom Times for Foreign Companies.”

On November 27, the New York Times headlined: “Iranian Workers Stage Strikes and Demonstrations.” The article continues: “Demonstrations and work stoppages were carried out in all the major cities of Iran” … “Most Government employees, who have been carrying out a work slowdown for weeks, stayed away from their jobs, and for the second day in a row workers at the Iranian Central Bank in Teheran were on strike.”

On December 4, the New York Times headlined: “Strikers Again Cut Iranian Oil Output.” The article continues: “Renewed strikes and work stoppages by thousands of workers who oppose the Shah reportedly slashed production in Iran's oilfields by 30 percent today in a major blow to the military Government.”

In an article on the same day, the New York Times headlined: “TEHERAN IS CALMER BUT SOLDIERS SHOOT INTO CROWDS AGAIN”

On December 13, the New York Times writes: “NEW STRIFE SWEEPS IRAN'S SECOND CITY” referring to demonstrations in Isfahan during which “40 had been killed” and “city's five hospitals were packed with 600 and 700 people wounded in the clashes between demonstrators and troops.” Meanwhile, “Opposition sources have put the death toll even higher, saying that several hundred people were killed in the Isfahan riots.”

On December 17, the New York Times headlined: “For the Shah, a Mixed Echo of the 1953 Revolt Sound in 1978.” The article continues: “The crisis that threatens to push Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi off the Peacock Throne of Iran erupted just 25 years after another crisis in which he was driven into exile, only to return in triumph.... Even in his present embattled state, the Shah is more powerful than he was in 1953. He has cemented the loyalty of the army (spending billions on arms), created a powerful secret police force and enfeebled the politicians ... But ironically, the Shah's determination after 1953 to centralize power in his own hands may cost him his throne today.”

On December 27, the New York Times headlined: “Iranian Oil Exports Reported Halted as Output Plunges.”

The next day, on December 28, the New York Times writes: “Iranian Strikers Shut Down Central Bank and Refineries.” The article continues: “Opponents of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahievi effectively pressed strikes in all sectors of the Iranian economy today, trying to bring down the monarchy by dislocating every aspect of national life.”

The next day, on December 29, the New York Times headlined: “Indefinite Shutdown Feared.” The article continues: “Iran is not considered able to produce its oil, about 12 percent of the non-Communist world's supplies, without the help of the foreign technicians, most of whom are reportedly being flown by chartered planes to nearby destinations including Cyprus, Bahrain and

Istanbul.” On the same day, December 29, the New York Times headlined: “Stocks Fall as Iran Oil Flow Stops.”

On December 31, the New York Times headlined: “Oil Workers Severed the Lifeline of the Nation.” The article continues: “Iran's oil workers cast their vote against the Shah and his generals with a devastating strike that effectively halted the flow of Iranian oil.”

Readers can, based on the above documents, assess the truth or falsehood of Leylaz's claims and of the pseudo-sociology about a peasants' revolution. The attention of world financial capitalism is focused on the actions of the oil-industry workers at the core of the nation's revolutionary upsurge. Commitment to Mellat requires adherence to truth. And this is what, in the Shia-Bazaar political current, due to its commitments to native and international capitalism, results in adherence to untruth. The theorists who move in the direction of the Shia-Bazaar's political mirage inevitably turn to articulating pseudo-sociology.

We draw readers' attention to the editorial of Payam-e Daneshjoo¹ written in the heat of the events of 1979 in the month of Dey: “The heroic strike of the oil-industry workers has presented to all the peoples of the world the message of the revolutionary uprising of the oppressed and suppressed people of Iran: without the expulsion of the Shah, not a drop of oil will be exported from Iran. This heroic struggle has been accompanied by the general strike of all workers and employees. For three weeks we have witnessed a revolutionary struggle of such dimensions that it has brought the entire economic life of the country to a standstill. Street mobilization — here and there, everywhere — has continued persistently. In the face of the onslaught of the mobilized mass of millions upon millions, various sections of the army have repeatedly fractured. The force of the monarchy can no longer withstand the revolutionary assault of the masses; indeed, it can barely keep the palace of terror and murder of the Pahlavi standing.”

In the above editorial of Payam-e Daneshjoo, the correct method of sociology — that is, commitment to truth and respect for the facts of society — has been employed. This is what is needed today in the light of the I.R.I.'s reactionary war for Jewish-Zionist-killing, the enrichment of uranium to acquire and use nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, Mr. Leylaz is among the customers — staunch supporters of uranium enrichment and the preservation of its “achievement” as well. It is no surprise that his view of the country's past is devoid of truth.

The role of peasants in social transformations and the need to establish the workers and farmers government

Regarding the role of peasants in social transformations, there is nothing new in modern history. Generally, the peasant class and rural society follow the city and are led by urban classes. In the

¹ From the editorial of Payam Daneshjoo (students' correspondence), third volume, number 4, published in New York, editor Babak Zahraie, Dey 22, 1357 [January 12, 1979].

capitalist system, the main urban classes are either the capitalists or the workers, and the peasants' alignment is with one of these. The alliance of peasants with urban capitalist forces in the era of capitalism's decline does not lead to the fulfillment of capitalism's historical tasks as witnessed in the aftermath of 1979 revolution.

More than a century has passed since the dawn of capitalism and the termination of its progressive role in history. The clarity of this truth has been manifested in Iran through more than four decades of the I.R.I. Despite the historic victory over the despotic monarchy and its abolition in 1979, Mellat did not get to taste the sweet nectar of victory based on establishing its own government. Capitalists prefer to join the remnants of historical reaction, such as the monarchy and landlords and their economic livelihood is with the financial capitalism in the world. The Shia-Bazaar, which earlier supported the enemy of Mellat in the coup of August 19, 1953, now under Khomeini's banner continued the Pahlavi government without the Pahlavi.

The unity of the working class and small farmers is the only path to realizing the long-standing aspirations of Independence and Freedom in semi-colonial countries, including Iran. This independent unity paves the way for the establishment of the workers' and farmers' government. Without the establishment of such a government, resolving the immediate and historical dilemmas of Iranian society, as the history of the Islamic Republic shows, is nothing but wishful thinking and not feasible.

The above reality is not valid only for Iran. The whole world needs the establishment of an independent government of workers. Without the independent intervention of workers to take the helm, human society will be driven toward a Third World War. Washington economic tariffs on its competitors drives toward shooting world war.

Therefore, the liberation of Iran from Jewish-Zionist-baiting, America-baiting, the establishment of freedom of religions, civil and political liberties, the dismantling of the Shia-Bazaar execution apparatus, and the realization of the rights of women, Aghvam/nationalities, workers and farmers, students and youth, professionals, scientists, and small business owners is determined in the factories: When the workers organize themselves independently and, as rulers of society, put an end to the dominance of capitalist oppression and exploitation, they open the era of achieving Independence and Freedom through the establishment of the workers and farmers government. It is no coincidence that the interviewers in the newspaper Shargh insist on concealing the role of the working class.

The Centrality of the City in Democratic Revolutions

The centrality of the city in democratic revolutions is a recognized fact. The classic bourgeois revolutions in the 18th century took place in cities which, compared to their later populations under capitalist growth, were much smaller. Just as Iranian cities in 1979 multiplied in population after

the overthrow of the Pahlavi–Washington monarchy and the migration of millions of villagers into cities. Without Petrograd and Moscow, the February and October revolutions of 1917 would be inconceivable. The centrality of the city in achieving independence and freedom is indisputable. Exceptional cases did arise in the reactionary periods of history that require explanation.

After the successive defeats of the working class in the years following the October Revolution, due to the domination of Stalinism, the centrality of the city in social struggles at the world level disappeared for a time. This refers to the defeats of social struggles in Western Europe and ultimately in China (1927). In the events of China after the defeat in 1927, the centrality of the city was questioned. The remnants of those who survived Chiang Kai-shek's horrific massacre (Chiang Kai-shek was labeled as revolutionary general by Stalin before his bloodbath) of communists (1927) were forced to flee and take refuge in the mountains. Although this great flight to the mountains was later called “The Long March with Chairman Mao.”

During World War II, China was occupied by imperial Japan. After Japan's defeat in World War II, which saw the use of nuclear bombs by Washington in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Chiang Kai-shek's forces saw the opportunity to finish the half-completed suppression of the Communist Party. In the assault against the forces of Communist Party, the latter had no choice but to defend themselves, and Chiang Kai-shek's armies collapsed. The Communist Party forces, composed of rural



masses, entered the cities and, by declaring martial law, began their dominance. Of the role of the national bourgeoisie in the democratic revolution and national independence, through Stalin's demagoguery, only a single star in the four-starred Chinese flag remained.

With the model of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the age of urban centrality in social transformation was considered over. The first generation of Iranian Maoists in the 1960s, inspired by this reality, prescribed the version of “encircling the cities through the villages” for Iran. Years later, the Fedai guerrillas, following the false political image of Narodnik—constructed on the axis of liberal bourgeois and Stalinist traditions, began their operations with an attack on a gendarmerie post in the village of Siah Kal. The populist-guerrilla currents sacrificed dozens upon dozens of young revolutionaries by following the discredited Narodnik line. However, the development of history showed the contrary to rural-centered expectations.

During the decades after the victory of the Chinese Revolution, social struggles worldwide returned to the model of urban centrality. The clear example of this reality is the general strike in France in 1968. In semi-colonial countries like Chile, before the Washington–Pinochet coup, the center of social struggles was in the cities. The struggle to liberate Iran from the demon of Pahlavi was the same: in the cities, began by migrant workers in shantytowns and slums, in 1977, with resistance against the attacks of the Pahlavi dictatorship's municipality in Tehran. Protests that continued through peaceful urban marches expanded into the revolutionary strikes of oil-industry workers that paralyzed the heavily armed Pahlavi apparatus and opened the way for the victory of the 1979 revolution.

The Elimination of the Working Class in the Literature Spread by the I.R.I. Theorists

The elimination of the working class by pseudo-sociology goes back to the lessons of the Constitutional Revolution and has a long history throughout the 20th century. With this historical background, the elimination of the working class is carried out by intellectuals and professors in the I.R.I. The elimination of the working class belongs on the list of other utterly wrong positions of the Shia-Bazaar theorists.

At the top of this list is Jewish-Zionist-baiting and America-baiting; both of which Khomeini picked up from the armed struggle small groups under the shah (Fedai & Mujahed) in the aftermath of revolution. Khomeini was no supporter of the Jewish rights but what he bequeathed from the appointment of leadership of Bazargan-Yazdi was anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism par excellence.

The second item on this list is the priority of Shia and Bazaar in the politics of the country. This priority was implanted during the Constitutional Revolution by the Qajar–British Russian leadership, and despite Mellat's success in overthrowing the despotic monarchy in 1979, it has endured

to this day. If the Shia-Bazaar has political priority, what place remains for workers, other than the hollow praises of the leaders of the Islamic Republic on May Day?

The Constitutional Revolution failed in carrying out the historical tasks of capitalism, at the top of which was the abolition of monarchy—and when Tehran was conquered by the Mujahedeen of Tabriz from the east and the Bakhtiari from the south (July 17, 1909), instead of establishing the independent government of Mellat, the continuation of the Qajar monarchy was guaranteed. The framework of the country's politics was set according to the constitution under the authority of the monarchy and the council of Shia clerics as sought by the British and Russian colonial powers. The revolution proved incapable of overthrowing the Qajars after defeating them, and the position of Russian and British colonialism and the Shia-Bazaar ruling bloc robbed Mellat of the fruits of victory and continued the Qajar monarchy. This reality — namely, the failure to fulfill the historical tasks of capitalism (see Kargar no. 8, article “The Historical Tasks of Capitalism”) — was the starting point of society's decline in the following decades. Pseudo-sociology since that time has described the failure to liberate the country from Qajar despotism as the victory of the Constitutional Revolution. To support such falsehood its by-products, the services of British imposed first Pahlavi, is lauded by the false sociology.

The Failure of the Constitutional Revolution: Preservation of the Qajars rule and Non-Implementation of democracy/the First Amendment, Freedom of Expression and Assembly, and Separation of Mosque and State Leylaz believes in the victory of the Constitutional Revolution, and he declares the failure to realize the people's demands, which was not a matter of choice but was determined by the tasks faced by the Iranian society and world history, to be “journalistic nonsense” (quote from Leylaz). Victory over one Qajar and submission to another is the “victory” that Leylaz counts. The preservation of the Qajar monarchy was the continuation of the chronic political disease of the country for decades — more than a century — and this disease, designed by the colonial powers of Russia and Britain, has continued up to the victorious 1979 revolution and to this day remains the scourge of the country, of Independence and Freedom.

Although the Qajar dynasty did not survive the blows of the Constitutional Revolution and the overthrow of Tsarism in Russia, the foundation of later governmental transformations in Iran was set within the framework of the failure of the Constitutional Revolution. i.e. preservation of monarchy. The Constitutional Revolution failed in declaring freedom of expression and assembly, and the separation of mosque and state, that is, the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, whose universal necessity had been proclaimed by the independence revolution of America in the 18th century. The victories claimed, in the retention of the Qajars and the designation of the political centrality of the Shia clerics by the constitution, more than anything else reveal the use of pseudo-sociology by the Shia-Bazaar theorists that look for continuation of such legacy.

By placing the Qajars and the council of Shia clerics at the head of the constitution, only the opportunity was created to suppress freedom of expression and assembly according to the desires

of Russian and British colonialism. The triumphant forces of the Constitutional Revolution in Tehran, which ended the minor despotism of Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar, and replaced him with Ahmad Shah Qajar, defined its own basis for freedom as follows: that “we have Shia and Shia, which are not all the same”; Mashrooá-coalition could not be considered Shia, and their leader, Nuri (Ayatollah), was hanged. Whereas the Shia of Behbahani and Naeini, or the Shia of Nuri—even if we consider them entirely different religions of Shia—and likewise all religions, from the standpoint of the First Amendment, are equally entitled to their rights before the state. This also applies to “American Islam” which was denigrated and Khomeini’s Islam which was fostered, after the 1979 revolution. At any rate, following the execution of Nuri in the early 20th century, the Mujahedeen of the Constitutional Revolution were dissolved, and Sattar Khan, the leader of Mujahedeen who had been wounded by gunfire, died shortly thereafter. The center of gravity of power shifted from Mellat and its armed mass grouping of the Mujahedeen to Majlis (the parliament), and from there to the government cabinet, and ultimately to the dictatorship of Reza Khan. If there was any victory in this process, it belonged to colonialism.

The non-fulfillment of the ideals of capitalism’s historical tasks and their reduction to the restoration of the Qajar monarchy and the designation of a Shia council to frame the constitution proved extremely harmful. This was no longer the 16th-century Safavid dynasty, a tribal monarchy, that set Shia as its state religion; rather, it was the imposition of the will of Russian and British colonialism to defeat the Constitutional Revolution by retaining the Qajars and giving Shia primacy over law in the 20th century—freedom of religions was trampled. And after the developments resulting from World War I, and the survival of the negligible Cossack regiment created by Tsarist Russia, following the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, the time arrived for the leader of this small Cossack detachment to be installed by Britain through the 1299 coup as the first Pahlavi, a Shia kingdom.

The traditional military forces of the Asiatic system and the entry of Cossack formations and other colonial powers

A word on the difference between the traditional military forces of the old Asiatic system and the new military system, that is, the Cossack brigades, is necessary. For thousands of years, the old Asiatic state(s) relied on military forces suited to their needs, hierarchies, and definitions. The monarchy had a small daily garrison force that matched its financial capacity, i.e., the royal treasury. The central monarchy of ancient Persia ruled based on the consensus of the settled/urban society and the tribes. When the time came for war and plunder, the tribal hosts gathered, and suddenly a vast army of several hundred thousand would come into being. Such forces were a mobile copy of the Asiatic social structure—the tribesmen and the families of their chiefs, livestock and poultry, and the provision of bread were among the requisites of this army. Xerxes’ army ate Es-hkeneh (vegetable and egg soup) at night. After conquering the Achaemenid lands, Alexander of Macedon was surprised by the variety and quality of the foods of Achaemenid civilization—use

of rice, vegetables, stews, kebabs, and varied meats—and his acquaintance with them was not expected by him.

In ancient history, repeated assaults by ancient Persia against Greece were made possible by raising an extraordinary army. The Asiatic army would descend on the enemy like locusts, *na taak mimand va na taakestan* (leaving neither vine nor vineyard)—just like Xerxes' war against Greece 450 years before Christ. The Sasanian wars against Rome were likewise.

In the time of Shah Abbas Safavi (ruled in 16th & 17th centuries), the method of establishing a standing army in imitation of the Western system was adopted. The expense of this military force was beyond the Safavid monarchy's capacity—one reason for the disappearance of the Safavid dynasty is estimated to be the formation of this standing army. As the saying goes, *kalagh ba taghlid as kabk rah raftan khod ra faramush mikonad* (the crow, by imitating the partridge's gait, forgets its own). The tax revenues of the old Eastern monarchy and the military costs of a large standing army were incompatible, and the central Asiatic monarchy lost its traditional balance.

As the Qajars became acquainted with modern military techniques, the creation of Cossack brigades by Tsarist Russia in Iran inserted colonial military institutions into the old Eastern society. Military training was provided by British advisers and other colonial powers during the Qajar era. Times had changed, and the Qajar military apparatus needed to employ the new instruments of war—unaware that this transformation was erasing the independence of the old Asiatic society at its most crucial pillar, namely military power.

Friedrich Engels wrote, regarding the defeat of several thousand Qajar troops by a few hundred British naval forces in the south (18th century), that the reason for the defeat was not the worthlessness or cowardice of the Qajar soldiers. Although the defeated troops were brought to Tehran, chained together, and paraded around the city, the Qajar forces had no power to stand against their own military instructors. It sufficed for the horse of one British officer to bolt and charge toward the Qajar line for the soldiers to break ranks and flee. In other words, in proportion to the penetration of foreign colonial power, the traditional Eastern society lost the ability to resist the onslaught of Western capitalism, and the military arena expressed this truth in the clearest terms.

The tribal forces that made possible the conquests of Nader Shah the Turkmen or Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar belonged to the past. In the arena of military competition and confrontation with the modern armies of the colonial states—as shown in the defeats of Abbas Mirza and Fath-Ali Shah at Turkmen Chay and Gulistan—the military forces of the powerful Asiatic armies had no room to shine, and their Asiatic conquests of old had come to an end.

As the proverb says, *mirassé kherss bé kaftar miressad* (the bear's inheritance falls to the hyena): with the destruction of Russian Tsarism by the Russian Revolution, the apparatuses it command-

ed in the Qajar realm remained as a thin shell and fell to the use of British imperialism. The rise of Reza Khan at the head of a small Cossack detachment to the premiership and then to the founding of a new royal dynasty was thus made possible by Britain (the late Anvar Khameé's article in this issue, on the simultaneous designation of Reza Khan and the oil contracts by Britain, provides the reader with the necessary information on Britain's central role in installing Reza Khan).

Comparing Reza Khan's rise to power with Napoleon's rise at the close of the Great French Revolution, as Leylaz does, is incorrect. Here the difference is more than that between subject and object. *Har gerdi gerdoon nist* Not all that glitters is gold. Reza Khan was the manifestation of colonialism in the country and the object of colonialism, whereas Napoleon was the subject of colonialism. Reza Khan's repressiveness does not make him equivalent to Napoleon: the former was an agent of colonialism for domination inside a semi-colonial country and, by definition, stood above the country's politics as an absolute dictator for the colonial power, tearing into the ruling classes according to the needs of his own unchallenged domination and wealth accumulation; the latter was the agent of executing the colonial plans of the French bourgeoisie on the world stage. Objects of colonialism in a semi-colonial country is a different story: The Constitutional Revolution had no path to success against the chain of colonialism's objects who from beginning to end strove to retain the Qajars and set the framework of national politics under the command of the Shia clergy. Perhaps, had the Mujahedeen of the Constitutional Revolution—which were prematurely dissolved—continued to exist, an exit from the above impasse might have been achieved. Yet this conjecture, too, is far-fetched. The Social-Democratic tendency at Markazé Gheibi (hidden center) at the peak of the Mujahedeen also originated with the Mensheviks of Baku and followed the liberal bourgeoisie.

The object of colonialism showed itself, as expected, in September 1941 and the occupation of Iran by the Allies. His army commanders, who received more than 40% of the national budget, openly engaged in wealth accumulation, just like Reza Khan himself. As the saying goes, ghashosh va changal haft dast vali shamo nahar heech (seven sets of spoons and forks, yet no dinner or supper): the new military system of Iran had rank upon rank in abundance. Reza Khan's forces did not fire a shot in the face of the Allies' onslaught. Reza Khan beat up his generals under his command, and moments later he abdicated and went into exile. Many believe that his exile was to his own liking as he did not feel safe staying in Iran after thousands that he had killed through the unprecedented brute repression.

A similar scenario occurred in the face of Iraq's military aggression after the victory of the 1979 Revolution. The army left over from the Monarchy—Washington was not inclined to fight Saddam—Washington's military invasion, for it had been created to suppress Mellat. The war commanders—like the first president—thumbed through operational manuals like children coloring shapes in exercise books and issued orders. According to pilots' accounts, raids deep into Iraqi territory to bomb military airstrips—which would affect the enemy for only a few hours—were ordered at the cost of endangering the country's military, human, and material resources. In the Iraq war,

Iran's military leaders—such as Rafsanjani and Chamran—came from the Shahi opposition, not from the 1979 Revolution, and not with a belief in the liberation of the peoples of Iran and the Middle East through a national liberation war. The military programs of these commanders led to schemes for the destruction of human resources, especially young farmers. Workers, who relied on workers' mobilization, were reluctant, unlike raw young villagers, to walk onto minefields. Mellat needed its own independent leadership over the military. Shia-Bazaar institutions like the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps did not create a fundamental change to the military. Whether the first president read aloud the victory over Ashkebus from the Shahnameh, or elegy-chanters spoke of martyrdom at Karbala, it did not alter the essentials. Defense against military aggression required leadership command of workers and toilers in military affairs—which Kargar journal articulated. Kargar was banned in late 1981.

The singular pattern of armies and wars of the old Asia–East system

The attention of the Greeks/Herodotus to history began with the need to understand the Persian Empire, which was a serious threat to them (see the articles “Mystery of the East” and “Hellenic Liberation” by Robert Briffault in Kargar No. 2, Summer 1403). With the Xerxes’ war in 450 BC, Persian expeditions were labeled the invasion of barbarians. It took the Greeks a long time to grasp the spiritual world of the power of ancient Iran. In the historical In the historical painting that



Plato stands in the center in a red cloak, Aristotle beside him pointing to the ground with the Ethics in his hand, Hercules at the bottom center leaning against a marble pillar, Pythagoras sitting on the left foreground drawing geometry in his notebook, Euclid teaching his pupils at the lower right, and Zoroaster on the right looking forward while holding a celestial sphere. Raphael himself, in a black cap, stands next to Zoroaster looking directly at the viewer.

places the spiritual masters of Greece in one frame, Raphael placed Zoroaster alongside these masters. The School of Athens (see above).

The spiritual world of the East in antiquity was expressed with the appearance of Zarthusht (Zoroaster). Zarthusht presented Sé Neek, the three goods (good thought, good speech, and good deed) as religious principles. Good and bad stayed with the individual and the only remedy was to do better as the Zoroastrian religion had no heaven or hell. In this respect, Zoroastrianism may well be older than the Abrahamic religions, which all have heaven and hell. Zarthusht's principles spread among the pastoral and agricultural society, farming and irrigation, across the vast eastern Middle East. Hegel says that in Indian thought man is not separated from nature, and with Zarthusht a step is taken toward the independence of man from the bonds of nature and the independence of humankind. Cyrus the Achaemenid, in his search to find the prophet Zarthusht, failed and lost his life in that quest. After Cyrus, the Achaemenids declared Zoroastrianism the religion of the state. The Asiatic system found Zoroastrianism suited to the governance of vast territories. The absolute power of the king and the total submission of society to him, in Zoroastrianism as state religion, continued until the end of the Sassanids. The Asiatic mode of production and the political system based upon it were the same before the Achaemenids, during the Achaemenids, and then the Sassanids. In the Asiatic system religion was its politics.

By establishing Zoroastrianism as official religion, the Achaemenid system in fact needed a higher authority, the supernatural, namely an official religion. In Asia the development of religions was inspired by the system of reward and punishment of Asiatic earthly absolute power and was codified as heavenly verses by the successive religions. Establishing an official religion in the rule of the Asiatic system did not change the functioning of that system. A rule which stemmed from water management over vast lands. A rule that was organized based on Maliat, taxation, Omran, construction, armies, and conquest/plunder, with religion serving as politics in the Asiatic system. It simply gave the operations of the Asiatic autocrat a celestial backing. Thus, in Xerxes' conquest of Greece in 450 BC, when plunder is dictating the military crusade no sign of the application of Zarthusht's Sé Neek is observed. Before official religions were designated in the Asiatic system of antiquity, rulers already claimed to be heirs of supernatural powers. When Xerxes, in crossing the Dardanelles–Bosphorus, confronted raging waves, he lashed the sea, declaring, "I am Xerxes, and I command you waves to be calm." Nearly two thousand years later, Shah Ismail Safavid, founder of the state Shi'ism that has been bequeathed to us, was cut from the same cloth, and when he took vengeance on the bones of the dead, there was no trace of "the Merciful, the Compassionate" in his actions. He too considered himself representative of the unseen. In all cases the king, the representative of the super-natural declared a religion as his politics.

The Asiatic system continued in its course from antiquity to the late Qajar era, that is, until its collision with international capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries. As Marx stated, had it not been for this collision with global capitalism, the Asiatic system could have continued its closed course unchanged.

With the extinction of the Sassanid Empire and ancient Persian history by new military powers like the Arab-Muslims, the old Asiatic order remained intact, and the military forces of Islam

followed the same pattern as the Asiatic armies of antiquity. Huge hosts of tribal warriors set out to conquer new lands for plunder and expansion of dominion and revenue. The civilization of the Arabs was backed by trade economy, tribal warfare, and a culture of poetry, and the cry of *Allahu Akbar* was the sign of the rise of the Arab-Muslim armies as a new force in history. Each new land was a new source of income, and each new member of society was a new taxpayer under the numerous Islamic titles and ranks.

In the expansion of the Islamic empire, the spiritual resources of ancient Persian civilization were destroyed along with Sassanid empire. Ibn Khaldun, remembered as the “father of history,” considered the destruction of the spiritual resources of Persian civilization unjustifiable and lamented the obliteration of the knowledge of ancient Persian society by the Arab-Muslim invasion. In general, he opposed the destruction of the spiritual resources of cities and civilizations, such as the repeated burning and annihilation of libraries, which was customary during the wars of the ancient Middle East.

In *Moghul* invasion (1219-21), the Mongol army, arising from a pastoral society, had little or no place for settled society, agriculture and trade. The Mongols embodied a civilization that saw urban life and farming as contrary to their way of life, and they undertook the extermination of many populations in the cities they conquered, as in the massacre of Nishapur, including the killing of Attar of Nishapur. The many Asiatic armies in the post-Islamic period likewise followed the historical pattern of the Asiatic Persian military system.

Russian and British Colonialism Above Qajar Persia

Let us return to the subject underscored by Leylaz: one may say that between the 18th-century French Revolution and the 20th-century Constitutional Revolution in Qajar Persia there is as much difference as between earth and sky.

Over the society of the Great French Revolution there was only the sky. Over the society under the Qajars, there was both the sky and the colonialism of Russia and Britain. The era of the 18th-century French Revolution and the 20th-century Constitutional Revolution were different. The first took place in the age of the rise of the political system of capitalism, the second in the age of the decline of global capitalism. Moreover, 18th-century France was one of the centers of international capitalism, while 20th-century *Mamaleké Mahroossé Qajar* was among the centers of the semi-colonial world. Pseudo-sociology does not proceed from these primary historical realities, that is, the era and the economic and social nature of the society in question—and seeks to deny them.

The political axis determined by the British and Russian empires in Iran during the Constitutional Revolution took a heavy toll on Mellat for decades afterward. This reality continued with the imposition of the brutal monarchies of the first and second Pahlavi for over half a century, by the

establishment of oil rentier state (see the article by Anvar Khameii in this issue). Only the 1979 Revolution—the independent action of workers and toilers—swept away the anti-Mellat Pahlavi—Washington power, that is, by-product of colonialism’s agents in the country. Between the first and second Pahlavi, Stalin and the Tudeh Party played the decisive role in Mellat’s defeat, and Stalinism deprived the people of their rightful share in social struggles after the fall of the first Pahlavi (as elsewhere in the world), paving the way for the success of the August 19, 1953, coup. Mossadegh, leader of the movement to nationalize the oil industry, by evading the independent movement of workers and the peoples of Iran, paved the way for his own defeat and that of the national liberation movement. He remained committed to the legal framework inherited from the Constitutional Revolution, and this commitment cost him dearly.

The Endurance of Shia Clerical Guardianship in Politics Under Khomeini After the 1979 Revolution

The legal axis of the country set by the Constitutional Revolution, which Leylaz calls a victory, first restored the Qajars and second set the laws of the country under the command of the Shia clerical council—in comparison to pre-capitalist Europe it combined monarchy and Vatican as the rule of the country under the tutelage of colonial powers who had no liking for the power of Mellat.

With the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy, the legal framework of the Constitutional Revolution left intact the determination of the laws of the country by the clerical council. It is no accident that all the ruling factions of the constitutionalist and the Mashrooté currents in the country—from Jebhé Melli, National Front, and Nehzaté Azadi, Freedom Movement, to the populist/guerrilla groups and the Tudeh Party—after the February 1979 Revolution, followed and supported this very framework. Washington’s calculation of Khomeini’s role proved accurate.

Leylaz states that Khomeini was a revolutionary. When and where? Khomeini supported the overthrow of the monarchy. In exile he even said that Marxists would have legal rights under his regime. He also toyed for a short time with free water and electricity.

The entire Shia-Bazaar establishment, and likewise imperialism, had only Khomeini to maintain capitalism. All those who were deliberately opposed to the revolution spoke of Khomeini’s ability to read the feelings of the people. Great revolutionaries in history all have an unparalleled affinity with the gray mass of society. When such a figure does not exist, an artificial one must be constructed. Hence from Mehdi Bazargan to all the opponents of the revolution spoke of Khomeini’s extraordinary abilities.

After the revolution’s victory, in all key matters Khomeini’s positions were against the needs of the country and aligned with the needs of the Shia-Bazaar. His political and intellectual upbringing was acquired under Reza Khan, and opposition to the historical demands of capitalism came

naturally to him: from denial of the rights of women to those of religious minorities, Aghvam/nationalities, workers and farmers, students and youth, professionals, scientists and small business owners, artists and intellectuals. He did not hesitate to say, “I will break the pens,” and such regressions, he, like *Leylaz*, considered “revolutionary.” He declared the unity of *Hozé Elmiyé*, *Qom* seminary and university—both established by British policy under Reza Khan—and according to the principles of this unity, *Gozinésh*, Shia selection, was declared a prerequisite for participation in education in the country. The luminaries of science worldwide, like Newton and Einstein and thousands of scientists who advanced the natural sciences since the 17th century, under Khomeini’s *Gozinésh*, would not have been allowed in the universities of the country and would have failed the vetting.

Yes, Khomeini said he kissed the hand of a *Pasdar* because the army was bent on overthrowing him. Yes, Khomeini said he was the servant of the people, and such a posture also existed in antiquity when the people had no rights, when the princes of their time called themselves *Malek ol Raaya*, owners of the flock. Khomeini’s “service” was of this sort, and he had no belief in the principle of Mellat’s sovereignty over all affairs of the country; if he had, he could not have declared Shia, as defined by British colonialism in opposition to the Constitutional Revolution, to be above politics and society, but would have instead leaned on the revolutionary principle of the separation of mosque and state.

Khomeini withheld the principle from Mellat and then in the secondary matter said that clerics should not interfere in politics or hold governmental office, which at minimum is meaningless or ridiculous. The liberal bourgeoisie, too, are equally guilty in this erroneous stance—they evaded the separation of mosque and state and instead insisted on the “principle” of non-participation of clerics in government. Yet with the separation of mosque and state, the participation of clerics in government has no prohibition at all. Let us look at the facts: Khomeini’s behavior with Seyyed Kazem Shariatmadari (Grand Ayatollah), opposed to his views, was contrary to the stature of the revolution. A nation that has made a revolution has no need for, indeed finds abhorrent, *Tobé Televisioni*, forced televised confessions. By acting contrary to democratic and revolutionary principles with a Grand Ayatollah who disagreed with him, he from the outset after the revolution established the trampling of civil and political liberties in the country. The deadlock of Shia dominance over government was displayed by him better than anyone else from the beginning.

Leylaz says that the I.R.I. has been bad with intellectuals and still is. What has stopped Leylaz and intellectuals from supporting the working class? Shouldn’t intellectuals be good to themselves and defend the working class and its role in national liberation? Without the working class, is the achievement of civil and political liberties, the rights of women, religious minorities, nationalities, and the entirety of the popular urban and rural classes possible? Is it not time for Leylaz and his likes to defend the rights of the working class for the attainment of Independence and Freedom?

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Dara Barzegar, September 2025

The Rise in anti-Semitism and the Need to Fight it

A reader from Turkmenistan says this verse from the Qur'an about the good qualities of the Jews that you quoted is not a historical document. What reason is there that it should also be valid today and that today there should be a need to defend Israel against Hamas?

If Islam had arisen as a Jew-killing religion, today we would not know anything called Islam, but sectarian struggles against the Jews that persisted throughout history. What was important then, when Jewish tribes lived in the Arabian Peninsula and in many lands of the Middle East, is today of multiple importance. The background of the Nazi Jew-killing in the Holocaust during the Second World War and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel as the refuge of the Jews of the world is far more significant than the existence of Jewish tribes in the Arabian Peninsula at the dawn of Islam. The Qur'an's explicit stance in support of the Jewish people can resonate today as well.

In our period the question of colonial suppression and national liberation movements is presented based on the traditions of world working class. Qur'an Ayeh can help those who feel the need for Islamic cannon for their clarification. Those who approach the national and international question on the basis of 19th century social science, i.e. the independent working

class movement, fight against anti-Semitism is the prerequisite to the unity of workers and oppressed nations to succeed in achieving their progressive demands. Without a firm stance against anti-Semitism workers and toilers of the Middle East have no chance in uniting and gaining the right to self-determination. The Jewish population has not reached the pre-WW II levels prior to the Nazi Holocaust. Anti-Semitism supported by financial capitalism and its allies aims to remove and abolish the world sanctuary of Jews which is the Jewish state and have people in various countries to direct rage and murder against Jews—like the October 7 pogrom by Hamas-IRI. Islamic Republic stance and action against the Jews has put a lethal weapon not only against the Jewish state but also Iran's working people.

In the 21st century, especially since the creation of Israel in 1948, the problem does not arise from the Jews and their state. Rather, international financial capitalism, of which anti-Semitism is a cornerstone, and is the root of Jew-hostility in the 21st century. To safeguard the oil-rich Mid-East region and to foster its network, imperialism finds anti-Semitism a useful tool. On this basis, “Third World” countries in the Middle East and further afield try to spread Jew-hatred and Zionist-hatred in order to gain credibility with international financial capitalism by positioning themselves against their own people. The outstanding example of this reality is the semi-colonial country called the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Listen to the words of one of the I.R.I. spokesmen (Baqa'i) this week in response to the summoning of the ambassadors of Australia and the Islamic Republic: "He called the accusation of

Jew-hatred ... ridiculous" (ISNA news agency) and went on to say Iran is firmly opposed to the apartheid regime and the genocide of Palestinians! Baqa'i refers to the Jewish community in Iran and says "they feel safe here." But he does not say that if any of the Jews in Iran expresses solidarity with Israel he/she has periled his/her life and they do not have the right to travel to Israel; or Zoroastrians who do not have the right to appear in public according to their own beliefs.

In many cases we see that today's anti-Semitism is expressed by accusing Israel of Nazism or racism, or apartheid regime.

The editorial of the reformist newspaper *Shargh* (Seyed Mostafa Hashemi Taba, *Shargh* No. 5196) this week says: "With the infiltration of Zionism into the White House, which gradually became stronger and stronger and now the White House [that is, in the Trump era] is entirely under the control of Zionism ... the genocide in Gaza and the subjugation of Jordan and Egypt and Bahrain and the Emirates showed that America suppresses anyone who stands against Israel and its messages to Iran indicate surrender and the creation of another Iran ... they do not want to allow any regime in Iran to have enrichment and missiles." The said journalist does not utter a word about Hamas's savage massacre of October 7, the largest pogrom since the Second World War, which received unanimous support of the Islamic Republic, nor about the release of hostages. It is clear that the newspaper and the writer want to win the support of international financial capitalism and its media organs like the New York Times and want to make a name for themselves with Trump-hatred. The stance of the Democratic Party, which

appeared in the Washington Post editorial this week, recognizes the "right" of enrichment for Iran and leaves open the way for nuclear bomb production in the future. Everyone knows that Trump has done and continues to do everything possible to prevent Israel from entering Gaza, and that the stance of financial capitalism in the United States in defense of Israel is a secondary matter to Washington's support of the oil regimes in the region. Shargh wants Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain and the Emirates to abandon their "submissive" position and join the Islamic Republic's war against the "apartheid regime of Israel." After the blows the Islamic Republic suffered due to Israel's defensive war in the 12 days, this anti-Jewish-Zionist stance has become more intense and encompasses the entire ruling establishment of Iran.

The importance of fighting anti-Jew/Zionist hostility in the 21st century shows itself to be, far more important than at the dawn of Islam. The independent unity of workers in Iran and the Middle East cannot be achieved without rejecting hostility against Jew-Zionist.

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The Program of Imperialism in Establishing the Oil-Rentier State by the Pahlavis and Its Continuation by the Islamic Republic

Anvar Khamei



Introduction—In this issue we present to our readers sections from the article “*The Blight of Oil Revenues in Our Annual Budgets*” by the late Anvar Khameh’i, published in Gozarash in January 1996. This article contains significant data on Iran’s oil contracts and revenues in the twentieth century.

The oil contract begins in 1299 solar (1920–21), simultaneously with Reza Khan’s coup d’état and his installment by the British that same year. With Reza Khan’s appointment, the country received a payment from the British government for all the years of exploitation of southern oil prior to the contract—a sum of 1,325,000 lira. Iran’s share for just the year 1920, under this very contract, was 470,000 lira, i.e., more than one third of the amount paid for all previous years.

Under the above contract, the bulk of oil revenues was in the hands of Reza Khan and his monarchy, and less than 30% was allocated to the national budget. The oil revenue was deposited in a “separate reserve account” of which the country’s accounting office had no knowledge. Anvar Khameh’i writes: “As far as the author of these lines has sought and inquired, he has not been able to obtain precise and documented information on the place of deposit of this reserve, its items of expenditure and withdrawals from it, and ultimately how it was settled. Some researchers have stated that these sums were deposited in an account in one of the London banks and that Reza Shah personally used that fund to purchase heavy weapons such as tanks and military aircraft for the Iranian army. But apart from one purchase, there is no other documentation in this regard... and it is not clear whether that expenditure and withdrawal were from the same separate reserve or from elsewhere.”

The above data gives a picture of Reza Khan’s being set up to administer an oil-rich country by British imperialism up until 1939, when World War II began (at the end of his rule when he had turned toward Nazi Germany): “From that year {1939} onward all of Iran’s oil income went directly into the budget and constituted part of the revenues.” During World War II, Reza Khan, having turned away more and more from Britain and allied with Nazi Germany, fell with the Allied occupation in September 1941, bringing to an end his twenty-year dictatorship.

After the coup d’état of August 19, 1953, “the large multinational oil companies, with the aid of the U.S. and British governments and all the internal and external enemies of the Iranian people...

once again spread out the exploitation of all of Iran's oil resources, even the continental shelf." The major portion of oil revenues was spent on the Shah's massive arms purchases from the United States and was entirely under the control of the Shah and his royal family. Anvar Khameh'i believed: "One of the effects of the August 19 coup was that it turned Iran's economy into a mono-product one."

After the 1979 Revolution, the course of the oil-rentier state in the founding of the I.R.I. by the Shi'a-Bazaar tendency did not fundamentally change. The efforts of workers and farmers to solve the country's problems were pushed aside and completely suspended by the ruling Shi'a-Bazaar bloc.

The roots of the Shi'a-Bazaar tendency go back to the pro-coup group around Zahedi-Kashani. Therefore, the continuation of the rentier oil-state policy under Khomeini (the Grand Ayatollah) is understandable. Anvar Khameh'i writes: "So far as the next year's budget {1981}, now under discussion in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, is concerned, the oil revenue share is 51.5% of total revenues and the tax revenue share is 19.6%. This is no sign of economic health."

In the years after the Iraq war, which Rafsanjani dubbed the "reconstruction" period, the economic situation of the popular urban and rural classes did not improve. Iran's oil income was spent on continuing the programs of the Pahlavi-without-Pahlavi state to dominate the region and to annihilate Israel. Tens of billions of dollars were spent on the Shi'a Napoleonic wars in Syria, the achievements of which ultimately led to the overthrow of Assad's dictatorship. During the I.R.I.'s "reconstruction" period it undertook the creation of the "axis of resistance" in key parts of the Middle East and intensified its enrichment program to acquire nuclear weapons. The chapter of the I.R.I.'s regional wars entered a new stage on October 7, 2023, with the massacre of more than 1,200 Jews and residents of southern Israel and the taking of more than 200 hostages by Hamas, which continues to this day, closing the chapter of its previous successes in the Shi'a Napoleonic wars.

In response to Hamas's horrific massacre on October 7, Israel was compelled to defend itself. In the course of this defense, the two war fronts of Gaza and Lebanon suffered defeat, and as a consequence of these defeats, Bashar Assad's dictatorship in Syria collapsed. In Israel's twelve-day defensive war, the I.R.I.'s nuclear enrichment program for staging a second Holocaust was struck with unprecedented blows.

In the article of his that we are publishing, Anvar Khameh'i believed that the country could, by relying on its people, achieve a multi-product economy, thus increasing the share of the toiling masses in the nation's economy. Unfortunately, such a goal is not achievable without the independent action of the working class. Regrettably, by breaking with Stalinism he did not discover the path of political independence of the working class for attaining national aims.

Anvar Khameh'i, born in 1916, passed away in 2018 at the age of 101. He was a member of the group of 53 and among the founders of the Tudeh Party of Iran. He was one of the first graduates in chemical engineering. In 1961 he left Iran, earning a doctorate in economics and social sciences in Europe.

In 1946, together with Khalil Maleki and Jalal Al-e Ahmad, he broke from the Tudeh Party. Afterwards, he and his companions supported the movement for the nationalization of the oil industry. Because of the severing of continuity by Stalinism, none of them after the split from the Tudeh Party discovered the political independence of the working class, the prospect of establishing a workers and farmers government. Before the coup of August 19, 1953, they all hoped that the national movement would be able to bring about the historic ideals of independence and freedom. The realization of the ideals of the national movement is possible only through the independent unity of workers and farmers and the establishment of their independent government. This perspective was revived again only in 1970 by the independent socialist worker current and was resumed, and for the first time after the 1953 coup, the dark history of Stalinism's dominance in Iran was surpassed—Payam Daneshjoo magazine, precursor to Kargar, and Fanoos publications expressed the independent positions of the working class. The independent socialist current, whose revival could only take place on the international stage, laid out a new path for realizing the historical tasks and demands of capitalism.

Despite Anvar Khameh'i's lack of a perspective of working-class independence, his research and insistence on facts are like a river that flows into the sea of the independent perspective of the popular urban and rural classes in Iran. We honor his memory.

Masoumeh Taban, September 2025

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For the first time, oil revenues appeared in the government budget in 1299 (1920/21). The reason was that after several disputes between the government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company over concession dues and other debts the company owed to the Iranian government, the company finally agreed to pay 135,000 lira in settlement of all its obligations from the start of oil exploitation up to 1919. The company also paid the Iranian government 470,000 lira for Iran's rights for the year 1920 (1299). These amounts were included as revenues in the 1299 budget. From that date until 1307, sums paid annually by the oil company were counted among government revenues in the budget. For example, in the budget of that year, whose total revenues were 7,729 million rials, 5,964 million came from oil concession revenues, which constituted 76.2% of the total.

It is worth noting that in those years not all sums received from the company were entered into the budget; rather they went into the government's reserve account, and only the portion necessary to

balance the budget was paid out.

But in 1328 the government decided to keep the national budget apart from oil revenues, because the country had gradually attained stability and, as a result of increased production and exports, government revenues from taxes, customs, and other levies had reached a level sufficient not only to cover current expenditures but also to finance public works such as building the national railway, constructing highways, etc. For this reason, the government submitted that year's budget without using oil revenues and consequently with a deficit of 48 million rials, hoping that this deficit would be compensated through additional revenues from the tobacco monopoly and new duties and taxes. This important development was mentioned in the 1308 budget bill in the following terms:

“It is evident that the increase in expenditures beyond the appropriations of the previous year causes outlays to exceed receipts, especially since the revenues from southern oil—which is one of the important sources of state income—the government has kept in a special account as a separate reserve and has refrained from allocating it to the ordinary budget and from spending it on current expenses. However, this deficit of receipts, amounting to more than four and a half million tomans, is not a cause for alarm or anxiety, because the revenues from the new tobacco tax and the additional income resulting from the monopoly of tobacco and cigarettes, the law for which is under discussion, will compensate for a major part of this deficit.”

Thus from that year, revenues from the southern oil concession were deposited into this “separate reserve,” of which the country’s accounting office had no knowledge. I must note that from 1919 A.D., i.e., 1298 to 1308 solar, a total of 2,826,146 lira—that is, 135,655,000 rials—was paid into the state treasury as revenues from southern oil and, during those years, was included in the budgets for ordinary and current government expenditures. On average, that amounted to 135,000 tomans per year, which was a relatively small part of the budget. But from that year (corresponding to 1929 A.D.), due to the rapid increase in extraction and the expansion of production at the Abadan refinery, the company’s income and consequently the Iranian government’s concession share quickly increased. This share rose from 341,000 lira in 1929 to 3,315,000 lira in 1939, and the oil company paid a total of 21,968,000 lira over those eleven years, all of which went into the separate reserve account. As far as the author of these lines has searched and investigated, he has not been able to obtain precise and documented information about where this reserve was kept, how it was spent, and how it was eventually settled. Some researchers have stated that these sums were deposited in an account in a London bank and that Reza Shah personally used that fund to purchase heavy weapons such as tanks and military aircraft for the Iranian army. But apart from one purchase, there is no other documentation in this regard. That one case was authorization to expend 60 million rials from the mentioned reserve for procuring and completing munitions for the army, which was to be reimbursed from the savings of the general budget of 1308 and 1309. Even this case lacks sufficient clarity, and it is not clear whether the withdrawal and expenditure

of this 60 million rials was from the same separate reserve or from elsewhere.

Oil and the wartime budgets

In any case, as we said, this situation continued until 1318 (1939). In that year World War II began, and the problems arising from it—such as the prevention by the German, Italian, and Japanese navies of oil tankers' passage on the high seas—led to reduced production and export of oil from Iran. The oil company attempted to reduce Iran's concession share proportionately, which aroused Reza Shah's anger and protest; eventually, with the intervention of the British government, the oil company agreed that for the entire duration of the war it would pay the Iranian government an annual sum of 4 million lira. On the other hand, in 1318 (solar), due to the expansion of Iran's development programs and the outbreak of the world war, Iran's budget for the first time since 1308 faced a deficit, and the government was forced to cover this deficit from oil revenues. The budget deficit of 1318 amounted to 683 million rials, and the entire 4 million lira mentioned, equal to 322 million rials, was entered into the budget to offset it, constituting 12.3% of total revenues.

From that year onward, all Iran's oil income was directly entered into the budget and formed part of the revenues. Until 1324, the oil company paid Iran 4 million lira each year, but the rial equivalent of that sum varied due to changes in the exchange rate of the lira to the rial and thus formed a fluctuating share of total revenues. For instance, in 1319 the equivalent of 322 million rials represented 10.4% of total revenues, but in 1320, when the pound rate increased from 90 rials to 140 rials, the same 4 million lira amounted to 560 million rials or 15.5% of total government revenue. In 1321 the lira parity was adjusted again and set at 130 rials, and the oil revenue (the same 4 million lira) was estimated at 520 million rials, constituting 10.7% of total revenues, and this pattern continued until 1324, in which year the same 4 million lira represented 11.8% of Iran's total revenues.

It should be noted that during these wartime years, on the one hand the government's budget deficit increased year by year and was excessively covered by borrowing from the National Bank, i.e., by issuing banknotes. The volume of banknotes in circulation, which in 1320 was 1,320 million rials, reached 7,580 million rials in 1323 (more than a fourfold increase). Therefore, the 520 million rials (equivalent to 4 million lira) that in that latter year had been entered into the budget as oil revenue constituted only a small share of the total budget. On the other hand, especially from 1942 onward, owing to the Allies' wartime needs, the company extraordinarily increased its exploitation of Iran's oil resources and reaped enormous profits, while Iran still received the same fixed amount. For example, the tax the company paid to the British government rose from 1.9 million lira in 1939 to 10.6 million lira in 1942, while Iran continued to receive 4 million lira.

In short, even in those wartime years and despite the occupation of the country by foreign armies, as we have seen, the share of oil revenue in the national budget did not exceed 12 to 15 percent of the country's total revenues. In the postwar years, although the country's economic condition was very dire and critical and our need for foreign exchange, particularly lira and dollars, was immense, nonetheless the share of oil revenue in the state's receipts never reached 25%. In 1325 and 1326, with annual receipts of 7.1 million lira, this amount constituted 16.9% and 16.6% of total revenues, respectively. In 1327 the company paid 9.2 million lira to the Iranian government, which formed 19.6% of total revenues in the budget. This proportion reached its maximum in 1328 at 22.5%, owing to a payment of 13.5 million lira as an advance by the oil company, because the company hoped thereby to secure parliamentary approval of the supplementary contract. Even in 1329, during the Razmara government when the oil company and the British government placed great hopes in him to resolve the oil problem, and for this reason made 16 million lira available to him as an advance, still this amount constituted only 17.8% of total government revenue.

Then came the era of Dr. Mosaddegh's government and the removal of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's control, and the implementation of a no-oil economic policy. Everyone knows that during those 28 months the government's revenues from oil exports and their products were practically zero. Moreover, the government was compelled to expend large sums from its other revenues. The economy continued to rest upon oil and natural gas revenues. We do not intend here to examine such an economy and enumerate its essential features, but I must point out that in such an economy, on the one hand all economic institutions are dependent on oil and its income, and on the other hand the country's general policy inevitably prevents it from moving toward economic independence. Oil revenues, instead of being spent on building necessary infrastructure, basic industries, and developing agriculture—that is, to create other major sources of income that could replace oil—were consumed for other purposes.

It is now useful to look at the statistics of oil revenues in some years of this twenty-five-year period before the Islamic Revolution and compare them with total revenues of each year. For example, in 1347, oil and gas revenues and their equivalents in the total national budget (ordinary and development combined) were 73.2 billion rials, while total revenues were 188.1 billion rials. Thus oil revenues constituted nearly 39% of total revenues, while direct tax revenues were only 12.9 billion rials, indirect taxes 35.2 billion, and total taxes 48.3 billion rials—altogether 25.6% of total revenues. The real budget deficit that year, financed through loans and credits, was more than 60 billion rials. In 1348 oil revenues were 91.5 billion and total revenues 221.4 billion, i.e., oil revenues formed 41.3% of total revenues, while direct and indirect taxes totaled 62 billion rials, and the budget deficit was financed by 43 billion rials in loans. Let us recall that according to the notes of Alam, Minister of the Court and the Shah's close confidant, in that same year he constantly complained about the consortium's low volume of oil extraction, demanded an increase, and even to frighten them had devised a plan to lay an oil pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet border!

Also, in 1350 the country's oil revenue was 155.2 billion rials out of 289.4 billion in total revenues, i.e., 53.6%. In 1352 government income from oil and gas was 266.5 billion rials out of 470 billion in total revenues, i.e., 48.2% of the total. For the last years of the Shah's reign, when, owing to the sudden rise in oil prices from \$3 to \$12 per barrel, the oil revenues of the country soared dizzyingly, suffice it to say that he himself, in his final defense, claimed that 20 billion out of a total 57 billion in the last budget of his reign came from oil and gas.

Leaving aside the fact that elsewhere in the same book this oil revenue is cited as 21 or 22 billion and the total revenue of 57 billion is in no way credible, nevertheless when 35% of a country's budget is financed by an unstable source such as oil, this is a sign of a mono-product economy and of the fragility of that country's economy. Moreover, that is not the whole issue; one must see how this revenue was spent.

In that same book the Shah devoted an entire chapter to describing his massive arms purchases and his future plans in that field, but he did not say at what price he had acquired all those tanks, artillery, various aircraft, and small and large warships. Was it not at the price of auctioning off oil and the ever-increasing exports of this vital and inexhaustible source of our country's income?! In 1356 the Financial Times and The Economist wrote that he had signed a single arms contract with the United States worth \$80 billion (i.e., four years of oil revenues), to be delivered over six years. This method of acquiring revenues and spending them is precisely the characteristic of a mono-product economy!

Let us now look at the situation of oil revenues and their proportion in the government's total revenues in the years after the Revolution. If we set aside the early years of the Islamic Republic, when the government was beset with multiple upheavals and the start of the imposed war, and begin from the time when the regime had attained stability, the situation was as shown in Table No. 1.

The said table shows that although the total revenues have remained almost constant and oil in the year 1368 showed a noticeable increase, overall oil revenues followed a downward trend, declining from about 40 percent of total revenues to nearly 20%. Considering the continuation of the imposed war in those years and the government's urgent need for hard currencies, this trend seemed correct and appropriate—especially given that revenue from taxes, except in 1368, remained nearly constant and, except in 1364, was always greater than oil revenues.

If this trend had continued in the following years, oil revenues could have been kept within a moderate limit and allocated more to investment in development projects. Unfortunately, in recent years this trend did not continue but was to some extent reversed, to the point that in next year's budget, which is now under discussion in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the share of oil revenues is 51.5% of total revenues and the share of tax revenues is 19.6%. This is no sign of economic health.

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The Development of the Social-Economic Formations

V. I. Lenin



The excerpts below are taken from "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", written by V. I. Lenin in 1894.

It is obvious that Marx's basic idea that the development of the social-economic formations is a process of natural history cuts at the very root of this childish morality which lays claim to the title of sociology. By what means did Marx arrive at this basic idea? He did so by singling out the economic sphere from the various spheres of social life, by singling out production relations from all social relations as being basic, primary, determining all other relations. Marx himself has described the course of his reasoning on this question as follows:

“The first work which I undertook for a solution of the doubts which assailed me was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of right.... ¹My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum-total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and French-men of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of ‘civil society,’ that, however, the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.... The general result at which I arrived ... can be briefly formulated as follows: in the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations ... relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum-total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

¹ A Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, written in 1843 by Karl Marx.

The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.

With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

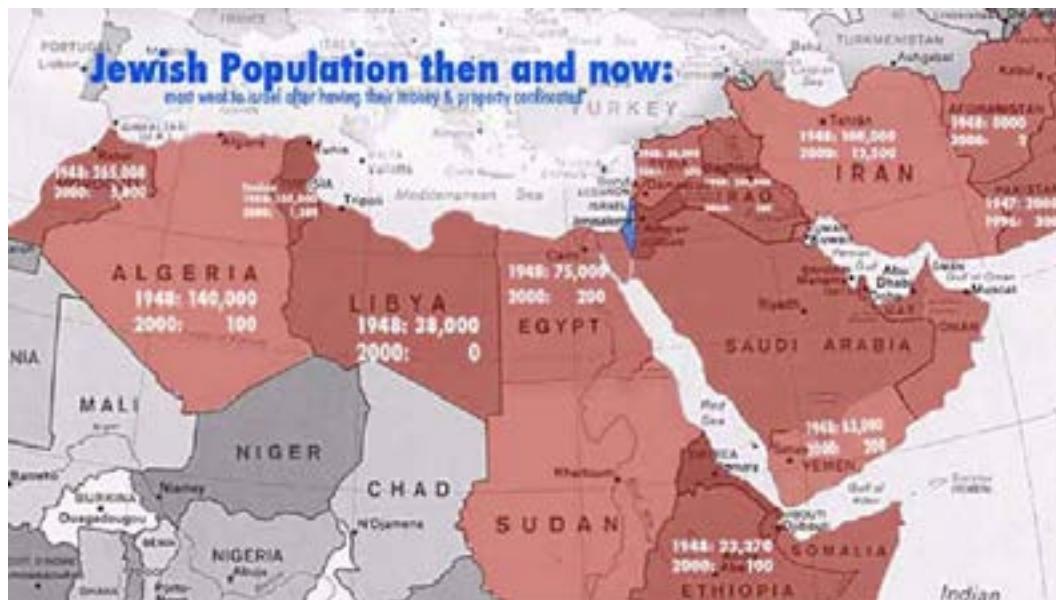
In considering such transformations, a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the conditions of production, which should be established in terms of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production.... In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.”²

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² Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, written in 1859 by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels.

The Jewish Question

Abraham Leon



The Jewish Question – Section 2

From antiquity to the Carolingian epoch: The period of commercial prosperity of the Jews

B. Roman imperialism and its decline

In contrast to modern imperialism which is based essentially on the development of the productive forces, ancient imperialism was founded on the looting of conquered countries. For ancient imperialism it was not a question of opening new roads for its products and its capital; its objective was exclusively the despoiling of conquered countries. The backward state of production in antiquity could sustain the possessing classes of the conquering countries in luxury only by means of the more or less rapid ruination of the conquered peoples. Exhaustion of the conquered countries, growing difficulties in making new conquests, the gradual softening of the conquerors, all these sooner or later brought about the decline of ancient imperialism.

Rome provides the classic example of ancient imperialism. There have been great exaggerations concerning the commercial and industrial development of Rome. Its trade always showed a deficit.¹ Rome drew exports from the provinces without giving anything back in return.² The Roman ruling classes heartily despised every kind of trade. The Claudian law forbade Senators, their sons, and the entire aristocracy of Rome to own ships drawing more than 300 amphoras, which corresponds to less than 225 bushels of grain or vegetables. This was equivalent to forbidding

1 See Heinrich Cunow, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin 1926–31), vol. 2, p. 61.

2 Pirenne, *A History of Europe*, op. cit., p. 40. "Products flowed to the center without there being any compensating current backward." Gustave Legaret, *Histoire du Développement du Commerce* (Paris 1927), p. 13.

them to engage in trade. Caesar renewed this ban. Roman policy was never determined by its so-called commercial interests. The best proof of this is that Rome, after the defeat of Hannibal, still allowed the Carthaginians to bar entry into their sea.³ “In general, it must be said that the Roman economic problems were unusually simple. The gradual conquest of Italy and the provinces more than occupied the surplusage of capital and population so that there was no crying need for industry and commerce,” states Tenney Frank.⁴ The traders at Rome were as a rule foreigners and it is that moreover which explains the continuous growth in the Jewish colony at Rome from Caesar’s epoch on. Roman businessmen were not traders but usurers who looted the provinces.⁵ The development of trade in the Roman empire must above all be ascribed to the growing luxury requirements of the ruling classes of Rome. Strabo explains the development of the great market of Delos in this fashion: “Hence arose a proverbial saying ‘Merchant come into port, discharge your freight—everything is sold.’ The Romans, having acquired wealth after the destruction of Carthage and Corinth, employed great numbers of domestic slaves.”⁶

The same was true of industry. Roman industry depended primarily on the luxury requirements of the aristocracy. “Tenney Frank, after observing that no appreciable progress was made in the domain of industry in the fourth century B.C., adds: ‘In the two succeeding centuries we do not find evidence of any marked change in the nature of production at Rome. Doubtless the amount of ordinary ware produced at home increased with the growth of the city ... but of goods worthy of export we do not hear. The only difference now is that work previously performed by free labor began in the second century to fall into the hands of slaves.’ ”⁷

Even those authors who consider that Italy had been a producer country in the republican epoch admit that it ceased to be one in the imperial period. “Italy becomes less and less a producer country Several industries which were prosperous at the end of the republican period are now in decline Thus trade between Italy and the Orient now takes place only in one direction, and it also becomes lodged more and more in the hands of Asiatics, of Alexandrians and Syrians.”⁸

Thus Italy now lived only on the exploitation of the provinces. Small property, the foundation of Roman strength, was progressively supplanted by vast domains serving the luxury needs of the Roman aristocrats and on which slave labor predominated.⁹ Pliny’s conclusion is known to all: “*Latfundia perdidere Italiam.*”

The slave became more and more an item of luxury rather than a factor in production.¹⁰ Horace, in one of his Satires, states that a minimum of ten slaves was the indispensable prerequisite of a

3 Tenney Frank, *An Economic History of Rome to the End of the Republic* (Baltimore 1920), p. 116.

4 Ibid., p. 126.

5 Ibid., p. 283.

6 Strabo, *Geography* (London 1854 57), vol. 3, p. 51.

7 Toutain, op. cit., pp. 234–35. Toutain does not subscribe to this opinion.

8 Jean Hatzfeld, *Les Trafiquants Italiens dans l’Orient Hellénistique* (Paris 1919), pp. 190–91.

9 The subject of the disappearance of the peasants was a common topic of discussion among the leading men of the Augustan period.” M. Rostovtzev, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman empire* (Oxford 1926), p. 65.

10 Karl Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity* (New York 1925), p. 66.

gentleman. Thousands of slaves did in fact work in the vast latifundia. “In the domains of Tusculum and Tibur, on the shores of Terracina and Baiae—where the old Latin and Italian farmers had sown and reaped—there now rose in barren splendor the villas of the Roman nobles, some of which covered the space of a moderate-sized town with their appurtenances of garden grounds and aqueducts, fresh and salt water ponds for the preservation and breeding of river and marine fishes, nurseries of snails and slugs, game preserves for keeping hares, rabbits, stags, roes and wild boars, and aviaries in which even cranes and peacocks were kept.”¹¹

At the same time that free labor was being eliminated by slave labor, Italy became an immense center of squandering the wealth drained from the entire empire. Crushing taxes ruined the provinces; “the frequent and costly naval armaments and coast defenses in order to check piracy; the task of supplying works of art, wild beasts, or other demands of the insane Roman luxury in circus, theater and the chase ... were just as frequent as they were oppressive and incalculable. A single instance may show how far things were carried. During the three years’ administration of Sicily by Gaius Verres, the number of farmers in Leontini fell from 84 to 32, in Motya from 187 to 86, in Herbita from 252 to 120, in Agyrium from 250 to 80, so that in four of the most fertile districts of Sicily, 59 percent of the landholders preferred to let their fields lie fallow rather than to cultivate them under this regime In the client states the forms of taxation were somewhat different, but the burdens themselves were if possible still worse, since in addition to the exactions of the Romans there came those of the native courts.”¹²

Roman capitalism, to the extent that the term capitalism is applicable here, was essentially speculative and bore no relationship whatever to the development of the productive forces.¹³

Roman trade and banking resembled organized brigandage. “But still worse if possible and still less subject to any control, was the havoc committed by the Italian men of business among the unhappy provincials. The most lucrative portions of the landed property and the whole commercial and monetary business in the provinces were concentrated in their hands Usury flourished as it had never flourished before ‘All the communities’ it is said in a treatise published in 684/70, ‘are ruined’; the same truth is specially attested as regards Spain and Narbonese Gaul, the very provinces which, comparatively speaking, were still in the most tolerable economic position. In Asia Minor, even towns like Samos and Halicarnassus stood almost empty; legal slavery seemed here a haven of rest compared with the torments to which the free provincials succumbed and even the patient Asiatic had become, according to the descriptions of Roman statesmen themselves, weary of life Even the statesmen of Rome herself publicly and frankly conceded that the Roman name was unutterably odious through all Greece and Asia.”¹⁴

11 Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, vol. 4, p. 478.

12 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 501.

13 Giuseppe Salvioli, *Der Kapitalismus im Altertum* (Stuttgart 1922), p. 206.

14 Mommsen, *History of Rome*, op. cit., vol. 4, pp. 502–4.

Clearly this system of parasitism and brigandage could not last indefinitely. The source of wealth from which Rome drew dried up. Long before the fall of Rome we witness a steady slowing up of trade. The arena for pillage contracted in the measure that Rome emptied the conquered countries of their substance.

The fact that the production of grain, especially wheat, diminished, while the vine and olive tree conquered vast domains in the east and west, constituted an ominous token of the state of things. Luxury products displaced products which are indispensable for production and for reproduction of the labor force. “The spread of the culture of vines and olive trees ... not only meant economic ruin for Italy but might also result in a corn famine throughout the empire.”¹⁵ Trajan vainly tried to ward off this danger by compelling Senators to buy land in Italy. His successors achieved as little. Luxury killed off production. “Soon superb buildings will leave no more land for the plough of the toiler,” Horace cried out.

By the third century, the decline in trade was complete. Relations with distant countries were cut off. “Practically no Roman coins of the third century have been found in India,” which proves a breakdown of exchange between Rome and India.¹⁶ The decline of Egyptian agriculture became so pronounced in the third century that it was necessary to forego a part of the deliveries of grain from this formerly wealthy province. These Egyptian deliveries had to be replaced by grain supplies from the province of Africa (the Algeria and Tunisia of today).¹⁷

Commodius found it necessary to establish a flotilla for transporting the grain grown in the province of Africa. We have seen that trade in the Roman empire was primarily based on supplying the wealthy classes of Rome. Is there any wonder then that exhaustion of the provinces was followed by a decline in trade? More and more, Roman emperors were compelled to resort to requisitions in kind, which only resulted, however, in aggravating the lot of the suffering provinces. “The system of requisitions was rampant: corn, hides, wood for spears, and draught animals had to be delivered, and payment for them was irregular and indeed problematic”¹⁸

A purely natural economy, producing exclusively use values, slowly displaced the exchange of products. “Whereas the Roman peace had formerly brought about a regular exchange of goods and the equalizing of living conditions between the different regions of the empire, in the anarchy of the third century each country was often condemned to live upon itself, painfully and poorly.”¹⁹

An attempt has been made to explain the gradual displacement of slavery by the *coloni* system either as a result of the lack of energy on the part of landed proprietors or by a shortage of slaves caused by the termination of foreign wars. The gradual ruin of the colonies, the halt in the flow

15 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 188.

16 Ibid., p. 421.

17 Wilhelm Schubart, *Aegypten von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf Mohammed* (Berlin 1922), p. 67.

18 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 374.

19 Eugène Albertini, *L'empire Romain* (Paris 1929), p. 306.

of their products, was probably the main reason. The great proprietors, more and more reduced to living on the products of their own lands, were interested in replacing slave labor, relatively low in productivity, by the *coloni* system, which resembles the system of serfdom that flourished in the Middle Ages. “The *colonus* owes his master everything that the serf will have to give his lord.”²⁰ [55]

The power of the landed proprietors, who often possess enormous areas of land, kept growing continuously. In Egypt, in the fifth century the peasants will be completely subject to them. State administration passed entirely into their hands.²¹

It is therefore quite inaccurate to view the natural economy which flourished in the Carolingian epoch as an outgrowth of the fall of the Roman empire and the destruction of Mediterranean economicunity.²²

Undoubtedly the barbarian invasions played a very important role in the decline of ancient trade and in the rise of feudal economy. But the economic decline of the Roman empire began long before the fall of Rome and several centuries before the Moslem invasion.

Another very important indication of the evolution toward a natural economy was the monetary change which had already begun under the reign of Nero.²³ [58] Copper increasingly replaced gold and silver. In the second century, there was an almost complete dearth of gold.²⁴

The development of a natural economy, of an economy primarily producing use values, was consequently far from being an “abnormal phenomenon” as Pirenne claims. The Roman empire was ruined economically before it was ruined politically. The political blow to the Roman empire was rendered possible only by its economic decline. The political anarchy of the third century, like the barbarian invasion, can be explained accurately and exclusively by the economic decline of the Roman empire.

To the extent that the provinces were ruined, an intensive exchange of goods ceased, and a return took place to a natural economy, to that same extent the very existence of the empire became a matter of indifference to the possessing classes. Each country, each province withdrew into its shell. The empire, with its immense administrative apparatus and its extremely costly army, became a cancer, a parasitic organism whose unbearable weight pressed down on all classes. Taxes

20 Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire Générale du IV^e Siècle à Nos Jours* (Paris 1893), vol. 1, p. 16.

21 56 Schubart, op. cit., p. 29. Very significant also is the gradual disappearance of the class of knights, the class of Roman “capitalists.”

22 “The demesmal organization, as it appeared from the ninth century on, is therefore the result of alien circumstances; nothing can be observed there in the nature of an organic transformation. This is equivalent to saying that it was an abnormal phenomenon.” Henri Pirenne, *Les Villes au Moyen Age* (Brussels 1927), p. 46. “The French empire was destined to lay the foundations of the Europe of the Middle Ages. But the mission which it fulfilled had as an essential precondition the overthrow of the traditional world order; there would have been no summons to this task if historical evolution had not been turned aside from its normal course, if it had not been, so to speak, thrown off its axis by the Moslem invasion. Without Islam, the Frankish empire undoubtedly could never have existed and Charlemagne would be inconceivable without Mohammed.” Ibid., pp. 27–28. For Pirenne, feudal economy is therefore a result of the destruction of Mediterranean unity; produced primarily by the Mohammedan invasion.

23 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 171.

24 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 375.

devoured the substance of the peoples. Under Marcus Aurelius, when the soldiers after their great victories against the Marcomanni, demanded an increase in pay, the emperor made this significant reply: “Everything you would receive above your usual pay would first have to be drained from the blood of your relations.”

The Treasury was exhausted. In order to maintain the administrative apparatus and the army, it was necessary to confiscate individual fortunes. While the lower classes were in ceaseless revolt, the possessing classes were turning away from the empire, which was ruining them. After the economic ruin of the empire by the aristocracy, the aristocracy was in its turn mined by the empire. “Daily people could be seen who only yesterday were still among the wealthiest and today have to take up the beggar’s staff,” said Herodian. The soldiers grew more and more bestial. It was not greed alone which forced them to despoil the inhabitants; impoverishment of the provinces and the wretched state of transportation, which created difficulties in provisioning the armies, forced the soldiers to use violence in order to find their means of subsistence. Caracalla, in granting Roman citizenship to all Roman inhabitants, sought only to increase the taxable population. Irony of history: The whole world became Roman when Rome was no longer anything!

The exactions of the Roman administration and the excesses of the soldiery incited all the inhabitants of the empire to hope for its destruction. “The quartering of soldiers was a real disaster: the population of Syria regarded an occupation by the Parthians as a relief in comparison with a prolonged stay of Roman troops.”²⁵

“The Roman government appeared every day ... more odious and oppressive to its subjects The severe inquisition, which confiscated their goods and tortured their persons, compelled the subjects of Valentinian to prefer the more simple tyranny of the Barbarians ... They abjured and abhorred the name of Roman citizen, which had formerly excited the ambitions of mankind.”²⁶ The Christian writer Salvian stated in *De Gubernatione Dei*: “Hence all the Romans in that region [Gaul and Spain] have but one desire, that they may never have to return to the Roman jurisdiction. Yet we are surprised that the Goths are not conquered by our resistance, when the Romans would rather live among them than at home ... I could find occasion to wonder why all the poor and needy taxpayers do not follow their example, except for one factor that hinders them, namely, that they cannot transfer their poor possessions and homes and their households.”²⁷

Far from being an “abnormal” phenomenon, the barbarian invasion was the normal consequence of the economic and political decline of the empire. Even without the invasions, the empire would probably have been dismembered. “In Asia Minor, as well as in Syria, one of the leading features of life was the gradual reversion to the feudal system The so-called revolt of the Isaurians in Asia Minor is another symptom of the same tendency towards the formation of almost indepen-

25 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 375.

26 Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire* (New York: Heritage Press 1946), vol. 2, p. 1103.

27 Salvian, *On the Government of God* (New York 1930), p. 146.

dent states within the empire.”²⁸ Similarly, the attempt to create an independent Gallo-Roman empire, the attempts at secession, prove how weak had become the bond of empire. The barbarians only gave the coup de grâce to the shaking edifice of the Roman state.

The fundamental cause for the decline of the Roman empire must be sought in the contradiction between the growing luxuriousness of the possessing classes, between the incessant growth of surplus value, and the static character of the mode of production. During the entire Roman epoch, very little progress was registered in the sphere of production. The tools of the cultivator retained their primitive form. “Plough, spade, hoe, mattock, pick, fork, scythe, sickle and pruning knife, were, as the surviving specimens show, just as they had been handed down from generation to generation.”²⁹ The growing luxury of the Roman aristocracy and the expenses of imperial administration were covered by a furious exploitation of the provinces, which had as its consequence economic ruin, depopulation, exhaustion of the soil.³⁰ Unlike the capitalist world, which must perish from the (relative) superabundance of means of production, the Roman world perished from their scarcity.

The reforms of Diocletian and of Constantine constituted an attempt to set the Roman empire on the foundations of a natural economy. “The State had now to be based on the country and the peasants.”³¹ The peasant was now chained to his bit of land. Each landed proprietor became responsible for his domain and for the number of coloni who were established on it; the new tax was assessed on this basis. “The reform of taxation by Diocletian and the edicts of later emperors made the colonus a serf, bound to his domicile and to his master”³² The same was true of the other layers of the population; small proprietors, artisans, merchants, all were chained to their living place and to their profession. The epoch of Constantine is the epoch of the unlimited rule of the great landed proprietors, undisputed masters of vast princely domains. The aristocracy more and more abandons the cities which fall into decay and flees to sumptuous country villas where it lives surrounded by its clients and its serfs.

The reforms of Diocletian and Constantine constituted attempts to adapt the empire to a natural economy. But we have seen that the empire had, on this basis, no reason for existence. Its various parts could be held together longer only by tyranny. Thus, if from the economic and social point of view, Constantine ushers in a new historical era, symbolized by the adoption of Christianity, from the political point of view, he opens the last act in the history of the Roman empire.

Translated by Kathe and Vafa Dari

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28 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 425.

29 Toutain, op. cit., p. 282.

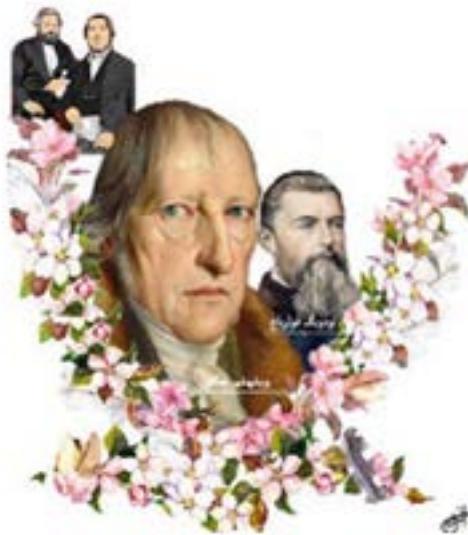
30 Certain authors see depopulation and exhaustion of the soil as the essential causes for the decline of the empire.

31 Rostovtzev, op. cit., p. 453.

32 Ibid., p. 472.

Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy

Frederick Engels



Part 2: Materialism

The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being. From the very early times when men, still completely ignorant of the structure of their own bodies, under the stimulus of dream apparitions¹ came to believe that their thinking and sensation were not activities of their bodies, but of a distinct soul which inhabits the body and leaves it at death — from this time men have been driven to reflect about the relation between this soul and the outside world. If, upon death, it took leave of the body and lived on, there was no occasion to invent yet another distinct death for it. Thus arose the idea of immortality, which at that stage of development appeared not at all as a consolation but as a fate against which it was no use fighting, and often enough, as among the Greeks, as a positive misfortune. The quandry arising from the common universal ignorance of what to do with this soul, once its existence had been accepted, after the death of the body, and not religious desire for consolation, led in a general way to the tedious notion of personal immortality. In an exactly similar manner, the first gods arose through the personification of natural forces. And these gods in the further development of religions assumed more and more extramundane form, until finally by a process of abstraction, I might almost say of distillation, occurring naturally in the course of man's intellectual development, out of the many more or less limited and mutually limiting gods there arose in the minds of men the idea of the one exclusive God of the monotheistic religions.

Thus the question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of the spirit to nature — the paramount question of the whole of philosophy — has, no less than all religion, its roots in the

¹ Among savages and lower barbarians the idea is still universal that the human forms which appear in dreams are souls which have temporarily left their bodies; the real man is, therefore, held responsible for acts committed by his dream apparition against the dreamer. Thus Imthurn found this belief current, for example, among the Indians of Guiana in 1884

narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery. But this question could for the first time be put forward in its whole acuteness, could achieve its full significance, only after humanity in Europe had awokened from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages. The question of the position of thinking in relation to being, a question which, by the way, had played a great part also in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, the question: which is primary, spirit or nature — that question, in relation to the church, was sharpened into this: Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?

The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other — and among the philosophers, Hegel, for example, this creation often becomes still more intricate and impossible than in Christianity — comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.

These two expressions, idealism and materialism, originally signify nothing else but this; and here too they are not used in any other sense. What confusion arises when some other meaning is put to them will be seen below.

But the question of the relation of thinking and being had yet another side: in what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to this world itself? Is our thinking capable of the cognition of the real world? Are we able in our ideas and notions of the real world to produce a correct reflection of reality? In philosophical language this question is called the question of identity of thinking and being, and the overwhelming majority of philosophers give an affirmative answer to this question. With Hegel, for example, its affirmation is self-evident; for what we cognize in the real world is precisely its thought-content — that which makes the world a gradual realization of the absolute idea, which absolute idea has existed somewhere from eternity, independent of the world and before the world. But it is manifest without further proof that thought can know a content which is from the outset a thought-content. It is equally manifest that what is to be proved here is already tacitly contained in the premises. But that in no way prevents Hegel from drawing the further conclusion from his proof of the identity of thinking and being that his philosophy, because it is correct for his thinking, is therefore the only correct one, and that the identity of thinking and being must prove its validity by mankind immediately translating his philosophy from theory into practice and transforming the whole world according to Hegelian principles. This is an illusion which he shares with well-nigh all philosophers.

In addition, there is yet a set of different philosophers — those who question the possibility of any cognition, or at least of an exhaustive cognition, of the world. To them, among the more modern ones, belong Hume and Kant, and they played a very important role in philosophical development. What is decisive in the refutation of this view has already been said by Hegel, in so far as

this was possible from an idealist standpoint. The materialistic additions made by Feuerbach are more ingenious than profound. The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice — namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable “thing-in-itself”. The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such “things-in-themselves” until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the “thing-in-itself” became a thing for us — as, for instance, alizarin, the coloring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years, the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with 100, 1'000, 10'000 to 1 chances in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But then Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when [Johann] Galle really found this planet [Neptune, discovered 1846, at Berlin Observatory], the Copernican system was proved. If, nevertheless, the neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian conception in Germany, and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where in fact it never became extinct), this is, in view of their theoretical and practical refutation accomplished long ago, scientifically a regression and practically merely a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world.

But during this long period from Descartes to Hegel and from Hobbes to Feuerbach, these philosophers were by no means impelled, as they thought they were, solely by the force of pure reason. On the contrary, what really pushed them forward most was the powerful and ever more rapidly onrushing progress of natural science and industry. Among the materialists this was plain on the surface, but the idealist systems also filled themselves more and more with a materialist content and attempted pantheistically to reconcile the antithesis between mind and matter. Thus, ultimately, the Hegelian system represents merely a materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content.

It is, therefore, comprehensible that Starcke in his characterization of Feuerbach first of all investigates the latter's position in regard to this fundamental question of the relation of thinking and being. After a short introduction, in which the views of the preceding philosophers, particularly since Kant, are described in unnecessarily ponderous philosophical language, and in which Hegel, by an all too formalistic adherence to certain passages of his works, gets far less his due, there follows a detailed description of the course of development of Feuerbach's “metaphysics” itself, as this course was successively reflected in those writings of this philosopher which have a bearing here. This description is industriously and lucidly elaborated; only, like the whole book, it is loaded with a ballast of philosophical phraseology by no means everywhere unavoidable, which is the more disturbing in its effect the less the author keeps to the manner of expression of one and

the same school, or even of Feuerbach himself, and the more he interjects expressions of very different tendencies, especially of the tendencies now rampant and calling themselves philosophical. The course of evolution of Feuerbach is that of a Hegelian — a never quite orthodox Hegelian, it is true — into a materialist; an evolution which at a definite stage necessitates a complete rupture with the idealist system of his predecessor. With irresistible force, Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization that the Hegelian premundane existence of the “absolute idea”, the “pre-existence of the logical categories” before the world existed, is nothing more than the fantastic survival of the belief in the existence of an extra-mundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism. But, having got so far, Feuerbach stops short. He cannot overcome the customary philosophical prejudice, prejudice not against the thing but against the name materialism. He says:

“To me materialism is the foundation of the edifice of human essence and knowledge; but to me it is not what it is to the physiologist, to the natural scientists in the narrower sense, for example, to Moleschott, and necessarily is from their standpoint and profession, namely, the edifice itself. Backwards I fully agree with the materialists; but not forwards.”

Here, Feuerbach lumps together the materialism that is a general world outlook resting upon a definite conception of the relation between matter and mind, and the special form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite historical stage — namely, in the 18th century. More than that, he lumps it with the shallow, vulgarized form in which the materialism of the 18th century continues to exist today in the heads of naturalists and physicians, the form which was preached on their tours in the fifties by Buchner, Vogt, and Moleschott. But just as idealism underwent a series of stages of development, so also did materialism. With each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science, it has to change its form; and after history was also subjected to materialistic treatment, a new avenue of development has opened here, too.

The materialism of the last century was predominantly mechanical, because at that time, of all natural sciences, only mechanics, and indeed only the mechanics of solid bodies — celestial and terrestrial — in short, the mechanics of gravity, had come to any definite close. Chemistry at that time existed only in its infantile, phlogistic form². Biology still lay in swaddling clothes; vegetable and animal organisms had been only roughly examined and were explained by purely mechanical causes. What the animal was to Descartes, man was to the materialists of the 18th century — a machine. This exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature — in which processes the laws of mechanics are, indeed, also valid,

² Phlogistic Theory: The theory prevailing in chemistry during the 17th and 18th centuries that combustion takes place due to the presence in certain bodies of a special substance named phlogiston

but are pushed into the backgrounds by other, higher laws — constitutes the first specific but at that time inevitable limitations of classical French materialism.



Materialism: the logic governing nature, history, and consciousness

The second specific limitation of this materialism lay in its inability to comprehend the universe as a process, as matter undergoing uninterrupted historical development. This was in accordance with the level of the natural science of that time, and with the metaphysical, that is, anti-dialectical manner of philosophizing connected with it. Nature, so much was known, was in eternal motion. But according to the ideas of that time, this motion turned, also eternally, in a circle and therefore never moved from the spot; it produced the same results over and over again. This conception was at that time inevitable. The Kantian theory of the origin of the Solar System [that the Sun and planets originated from incandescent rotating nebulous masses] had been put forward but recently and was still regarded merely as a curiosity. The history of the development of the Earth, geology, was still totally unknown, and the conception that the animate natural beings of today are the result of a long sequence of development from the simple to the complex could not at that time scientifically be put forward at all. The unhistorical view of nature was therefore inevitable. We have the less reason to reproach the philosophers of the 18th century on this account since the same thing is found in Hegel. According to him, nature, as a mere “alienation” of the idea, is incapable of development in time — capable only of extending its manifoldness in space, so that it displays simultaneously and alongside of one another all the stages of development comprised in it, and is condemned to an eternal repetition of the same processes. This absurdity of a development in space, but outside of time — the fundamental condition of all development — Hegel imposes upon nature just at the very time when geology, embryology, the physiology of plants and animals, and organic chemistry were being built up, and when everywhere on the basis of these new sciences brilliant foreshadowings of the later theory of evolution were appearing (for instance, Goethe and Lamarck). But the system demanded it; hence the method, for the sake of

the system, had to become untrue to itself.

This same unhistorical conception prevailed also in the domain of history. Here the struggle against the remnants of the Middle Ages blurred the view. The Middle Ages were regarded as a mere interruption of history by a thousand years of universal barbarism. The great progress made in the Middle Ages — the extension of the area of European culture, the viable great nations taking form there next to each other, and finally the enormous technical progress of the 14th and 15th centuries — all this was not seen. Thus a rational insight into the great historical interconnectedness was made impossible, and history served at best as a collection of examples and illustrations for the use of philosophers.

The vulgarizing pedlars, who in Germany in the fifties dabbled in materialism, by no means overcame this limitation of their teachers. All the advances of natural science which had been made in the meantime served them only as new proofs against the existence of a creator of the world; and, indeed, they did not in the least make it their business to develop the theory any further. Though idealism was at the end of its tether and was dealt a death-blow by the Revolution of 1848, it had the satisfaction of seeing that materialism had for the moment fallen lower still. Feuerbach was unquestionably right when he refused to take responsibility for this materialism; only he should not have confounded the doctrines of these itinerant preachers with materialism in general.

Here, however, there are two things to be pointed out. First, even during Feuerbach's lifetime, natural science was still in that process of violent fermentation which only during the last 15 years had reached a clarifying, relative conclusion. New scientific data were acquired to a hitherto unheard-of extent, but the establishing of interrelations, and thereby the bringing of order into this chaos of discoveries following closely upon each other's heels, has only quite recently become possible. It is true that Feuerbach had lived to see all three of the decisive discoveries — that of the cell, the transformation of energy, and the theory of evolution named after Darwin. But how could the lonely philosopher, living in rural solitude, be able sufficiently to follow scientific developments in order to appreciate at their full value discoveries which natural scientists themselves at that time either still contested or did not know how to make adequate use of? The blame for this falls solely upon the wretched conditions in Germany, in consequence of which cobweb-spinning eclectic flea-crackers had taken possession of the chairs of philosophy, while Feuerbach, who towered above them all, had to rusticate and grow sour in a little village. It is therefore not Feuerbach's fault that this historical conception of nature, which had now become possible and which removed all the one-sidedness of French materialism, remained inaccessible to him.

Secondly, Feuerbach is quite correct in asserting that exclusively natural-scientific materialism is indeed "the foundation of the edifice of human knowledge, but not the edifice itself". For we live not only in nature but also in human society, and this also no less than nature has its history

of development and its science. It was therefore a question of bringing the science of society, that is, the sum total of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon. But it did not fall to Feuerbach's lot to do this. In spite of the "foundation", he remained here bound by the traditional idealist fetters, a fact which he recognizes in these words: "Backwards I agree with the materialists, but not forwards!" But it was Feuerbach himself who did not go "forwards" here; in the social domain, who did not get beyond his standpoint of 1840 or 1844. And this was again chiefly due to this reclusion which compelled him, who, of all philosophers, was the most inclined to social intercourse, to produce thoughts out of his solitary head instead of in amicable and hostile encounters with other men of his calibre. Later, we shall see in detail how much he remained an idealist in this sphere.

It need only be added here that Starcke looks for Feuerbach's idealism in the wrong place.

"Feuerbach is an idealist; he believes in the progress of mankind." (p.19)

"The foundation, the substructure of the whole, remains nevertheless idealism. Realism for us is nothing more than a protection against aberrations, while we follow our ideal trends. Are not compassion, love, and enthusiasm for truth and justice ideal forces?" (p.VIII)

In the first place, idealism here means nothing, but the pursuit of ideal aims. But these necessarily have to do at the most with Kantian idealism and its "categorical imperative"; however, Kant himself called his philosophy "transcendental idealism" by no means because he dealt therein also with ethical ideals, but for quite other reasons, as Starcke will remember. The superstition that philosophical idealism is pivoted round a belief in ethical, that is, social, ideals, arose outside philosophy, among the German philistines, who learned by heart from Schiller's poems the few morsels of philosophical culture they needed. No one has criticized more severely the impotent "categorical imperative" of Kant — impotent because it demands the impossible, and therefore never attains to any reality — no one has more cruelly derided the philistine sentimental enthusiasm for unrealizable ideals purveyed by Schiller than precisely the complete idealist Hegel (see, for example, his *Phenomenology*).

In the second place, we simply cannot get away from the fact that everything that sets men acting must find its way through their brains — even eating and drinking, which begins as a consequence of the sensation of hunger or thirst transmitted through the brain, and ends as a result of the sensation of satisfaction likewise transmitted through the brain. The influences of the external world upon man express themselves in his brain, are reflected therein as feelings, impulses, volitions — in short, as "ideal tendencies", and in this form become "ideal powers". If, then, a man is to be deemed an idealist because he follows "ideal tendencies" and admits that "ideal powers" have an influence over him, then every person who is at all normally developed is a born idealist

and how, in that case, can there still be any materialists?

In the third place, the conviction that humanity, at least at the present moment, moves on the whole in a progressive direction has absolutely nothing to do with the antagonism between materialism and idealism. The French materialists no less than the deists Voltaire and Rousseau held this conviction to an almost fanatical degree, and often enough made the greatest personal sacrifices for it. If ever anybody dedicated his whole life to the "enthusiasm for truth and justice" — using this phrase in the good sense — it was Diderot, for instance. If, therefore, Starcke declares all this to be idealism, this merely proves that the word materialism, and the whole antagonism between the two trends, has lost all meaning for him here.

The fact is that Starcke, although perhaps unconsciously, in this makes an unpardonable concession to the traditional philistine prejudice against the word materialism resulting from its long-continued defamation by the priests. By the word materialism, the philistine understands gluttony, drunkenness, lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, arrogance, cupidity, avarice, covetousness, profit-hunting, and stock-exchange swindling — in short, all the filthy vices in which he himself indulges in private. By the word idealism he understands the belief in virtue, universal philanthropy, and in a general way a "better world", of which he boasts before others but in which he himself at the utmost believes only so long as he is having the blues or is going through the bankruptcy consequent upon his customary "materialist" excesses. It is then that he sings his favorite song, What is man? — Half beast, half angel.

For the rest, Starcke takes great pains to defend Feuerbach against the attacks and doctrines of the vociferous assistant professors who today go by the name of philosophers in Germany. For people who are interested in this afterbirth of classical German philosophy this is, of course, a matter of importance; for Starcke himself it may have appeared necessary. We, however, will spare the reader this.

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PAX ROMANA

Robert Briffault



Translator's Introduction—In this issue, we publish an article by Robert Briffault as a continuation of the discussions on The Mystery of the East and Hellenic Liberation (Kargar No. 2, Summer 224). This article allows us to deepen our understanding of ancient societies and history.

I draw the reader's attention to the fact that this historical period—unlike capitalism, which briefly represents a condensed form of politics and economy—is characterized by a primitive or natural economy. It is an era in which economic factors were neither generalized nor had reached the conscious or formal forms familiar to us today. It was a period lacking political economy and consequently devoid of Adam

Smith or geniuses such as Ricardo.

Familiarity with ancient Roman civilization helps us to understand the pre-Islamic societies under the Achaemenids and Sassanids. There exist similarities in primitive economic forms. Although the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic systems in Asia possessed their own specific order—the Asiatic mode of production—within that system, politics, too, was not a condensed economy. The influence of the absolute despotic ruler on historical development, expressed through the establishment of the Asiatic mode of production and its governments, was extensive. This influence was not necessarily closely related to the economy and was more or less affected by Oriental despotism.

Through Briffault's article, we learn that ancient Roman society was based on agriculture. Despite numerous military conquests, it was unable to transform its social order into a stable one. The role of science in that society did not go beyond the surface and had no path for deeper progress; it remained confined within the in-

fancy of the sciences. Nevertheless, the pursuit of money drove Rome forward.

F.K.

* * *

SUPERFICIALLY the origin of Rome somewhat resembles that of Greece-small tribes (*gentes*) in whom a jealous spirit of independence is inveterate. Here the *patres familias*, not the tribal war-chiefs, are the natural rulers wielding stern familial authority, and will become the *patres conscripti* and the ruling patrician aristocracy. As in Greece, phases of 'kingship' were swept away by the insubordinate forces of tribal democracy. As in Greece, violent struggles and conflicts took place between patrician and plebeian, and here again the forces of self-defence proved too powerful to allow of any complete triumph on the part of encroaching privilege. As Athens had its Solonian and Kleisthenean revolutions, so Rome had its Secessions to the Sacred Hill, and its Licinian laws.

But under that superficial similarity lay differences which could scarcely be more profound. While the Greek of poverty-stricken Hellas was perforce a sea-rover, a pirate, an adventurer, tasting of all the rich fruits of the eastern world, the Romans were a tribe of stay-at-home farmers, with all the peasant's limitation of outlook, conservatism, stolid abstemiousness, plodding stubbornness, his close-fistedness and keen eye for the main chance. The necessity of defending their crops and of settling boundary disputes with neighbouring tribes, made it a routine of their lives to be periodically called out on commando. But they were not temperamentally bellicose nor particularly liked war for its own sake. They waged it with cool business-like method and calculation, and early learnt to attain their ends by negotiation, alliances and hard-driven bargains. They intensely distrusted and disliked adventure.

It was a freakish paradox of fate which thrust upon those cautious, unimaginative Italian Boers the part of world-conquerors. When first drawn into wide foreign embroilments after the first Punic War, they proclaimed a policy of no annexations (and large indemnities). Scipio expressed the general and deep traditional feeling when he advocated a Monroe doctrine deprecating all the expansion beyond the Tuscan and peninsula; and we find the same caution recurring even so late as the political testament of Augustus, and in Hadrian's renouncement of the conquests of Trajan. Only when their peasants' eyes were set agape at the sight of the undreamed-of wealth brought from Pontus and Syria by Lucullus and Pompey, did they lose their heads and become infected with the get-rich-quick fever.

What drove them to go empire-building was not any romantic ambition or love of glory, or vanity, such as might actuate an oriental despot, or any hollow ideal of empire and passion for ruling, but purely and simply the desire to make money, to make money quickly. The conquests, as they soon saw, offered plenty of opportunities; the farming of taxes, army contracts, the financing of political aspirants, money-lending at exorbitant rates, and, richest prize of all, the government of a province, when the raising of the tribute was left to the proconsul, and no questions asked. Those were the chief ways of making large fortunes; there were no great industrial enterprises then, no railways or oil-wells, no great commercial organizations. The money had to be invested and, as there were no industrial and commercial shares, or gilt-edged securities, the only possible form of permanent investment was land. They invested their money in land. The original small farmer being more and more frequently absent on active service, his farm, left to the care of some elderly relatives and a few slaves, went to rack and ruin. He was easily mortgaged or bought out. Italy was thus soon divided into vast estates which were productively and economically worked by means of slave-labour which the wars supplied in abundance. After Italy the foreign provinces soon followed. In the famous impeachment of Verres, Cicero brought out the fact that in one district of Sicily there were, when Verres went there as proprætor, 773 landed proprietors, and three years later only 318. Half the province of Africa was at the time of the early Cæsars owned by six landlords.

There is no harm in making money and investing it. But what was to become of the dispossessed farmer? There were no factories or other employment for him to go to, he had perforce to go back to the army or to lounge in Rome at the expense of the state. He had nothing left. "Your generals," said Tiberius Gracchus, "urge their men in battle, telling them to fight for their hearths and homes and the graves of their dear ones. They lie; not one of all those Romans possesses a hearth or a home, or even a family grave. That others may enjoy riches and pleasures, that is what they are fighting and dying for, those Romans who are called masters of the world, while they have not so much as a sod of earth that they can call their own." The wars of Lucullus, of Pompey, of Cæsar had brought in hundreds of thousands of slaves who worked on the large estates. But thereafter the supply abruptly dwindled. Slaves did not breed, they had no families, there were few women. Instead of being cheap, they became expensive; the labour supply failed. The freemen had to be employed; they were employed as coloni; they became bound more and more to the soil; at first they paid rent, then a proportion of the produce, besides sundry customary gifts,¹ or xenia, then had to contribute a certain amount of labour to the working of the villa, to supply transport, etc., and finally, under Diocletian, they were completely bound to the soil, forbidden to move. They too became slaves, predial serfs in all but in name. And they too dwindled. The whole population decreased until it became an ever more serious problem how to keep up the strength of the armies, even for purely defensive purposes. In the early empire those vast frontiers, far more extensive than our battle-line on all fronts in the late war, were defended by garrisons amounting to the absurd number of about 300,000 men.

Greek culture, which they at first fiercely resisted, did not sufficiently transform the enriched peasants to enable them to continue it, or use it as the starting-point of original development. The influx of civilization tended with them in general to coarseness, to the vulgarity and megalomania of the nouveau riche. In the pictorial arts they remained sterile, save for the production of the realistic portrait-bust-the idealizing Greek never carved a real portrait. In architecture, while carrying to high development the engineering aspect of construction, as in the arch and the dome, they perpetrated-and unfortunately perpetuated-as regards the purely artistic and decorative aspect, the most appalling horrors of bad taste, such as the pilaster and the use of mixed orders. Greek drama bored them, they preferred mimes, buffoons and acrobats.

To the end a stodgy pedestrianism remained the mark of their mentality. The sacred fire, the divine folly was never theirs. The very brief and evanescent grand siècle of their literature did not contribute a single creator to the Olympus of world inspirers, scarcely a work of genuine original inspiration-Lucretius, the exponent of Epicurus, and Catullus, the lover of Claudia Metella, are the nearest approach to exceptions. The first brief outgush of imitative production was followed by an almost unbroken sterility. Roman intellect tended forthwith to settle into a rut of cultural traditionalism; it lived under the oppressive weight of the great models, who had set the standard of attainable excellence. The goal of literature was to approximate as closely as possible to the form and language of those consecrated great ones who had fixed the ideal for all time. In what is called the silver age,¹ the rococo Renaissance of Quintillian and Pliny, literary art consisted in imitating Cicero, whose language was as dead" then as during the Italian Renaissance. Other writers, like Fronto and Apuleius, harked back to still older archaisms. "Multi ex alieno sæculo petunt verba: duodecim tabulas loquuntur" (Seneca, Ep. 114, 13). In the last stages of the empire the surviving cultural elements exhibit exactly the same spirit and attitude which centuries later we find in the grammarian-humanist, the antiquity-worshipper of the Renaissance. Like him they lived upon the past. Symmachus, Ausonius, and their contemporary belles-lettists might be transferred without a single mental change from the fourth to the fifteenth century; the ideal of refined culture was exactly the same in the two periods, the same which still lingers on to our own day in the academic tradition of classical scholarship-to indite correctly Ciceronian periods, to compose a sweet thing in the way of well-turned Virgilian hexameters, or Horatian verses clothed in frowzy mythological language, to elaborate the obvious in elegant conversation on 'polite literature,' to take a childish delight in parading one's familiarity with the authors by a plentiful besprinkling of quotations, to rehearse with beatific mental vacuity the consecrated phrases, to look down from the heights of scholarship upon the common herd." Literature, thought, life itself, became a kind of ritual, a round of prescribed formulas and duties, serenely detached from the throbbing actualities of the world, a breviary of correct things to be said, thought, and done correctly.

But side by side with the fossilization of an imitative intellectual culture, there went on a process of genuine growth, one which, apart from the political legacy of Rome, and not altogether distinct even from that, constitutes her most momentous contribution to the world, and the most funda-

mental and distinctive feature of her mental development. That continuous process whose course runs unbroken from the first naturalization of culture down to the final submersion of its last lingering remnants, is one of moral development. In Greece with the first onset of symptoms of weariness in the metaphysical effort, philosophical thought had shown a tendency to concentrate upon the purely human problems of life and conduct. But it was chiefly in Rome that the tendency developed and matured. That ethical aspect was the only one which appealed to the Romans; of metaphysics they took no account. A love of solemn moralizing, a Polonius-like sententiousness was always a trait of their peasant psychology. The creed of Stoicism, so congenial in its affinity to the old austere Latin spirit, became their lay religion, the dominant vein of Roman thought. Its identification with the chief intellectual occupation of the cultivated classes, the sphere of law, the development of jurisprudence, led to the greatest and most permanent concrete achievement of Rome. All Roman thinkers were lawyers; the ultimate goal and practical application of their education, their literary, their rhetorical, their philosophic training, was the lawcourts. was a natural consequence of the administrative tasks and problems thrust upon them by the expanding empire. It was the great discovery of their cautious, matter-of-fact minds- "omnium virtutum et utilitatum rapa- cissimi"¹ -that the only really effective way to manage and rule men is by a certain amount of fairness and justice, that honesty is an asset in business, even if that business be the most atrociously immoral exploitation. They had long recognized that the principle of freedom and justice to conquered populations was the most practically efficient, as well as fiscally the most profitable. In those circumstances the old code of the Twelve Tables required constant adaptation and supplementing by means of case law; heterogeneous populations had to be dealt with under the principles of the *jus gentium*, that is, legal norms common to all nations; and this in time gave rise and place to the conception of a *jus naturale*, natural principles of equity, a notion which, although vaguely supposed to refer to some ideal state of nature,¹ simply amounted to this, that all privilege and social distinctions, all arbitrary traditional usages, must be regarded as artificial conventions, and that justice rests therefore upon the necessary postulate of unsophisticated equality. Fifteen centuries before Rousseau and the *Droits de l'homme*, Ulpian laid down the principle that "All men are born free and equal." From that great and noble growth of Roman law which went on broadening out continuously in its spirit of humanity and justice almost down to the last breath of Roman power, abolishing the fierce patriarchal tradition of parental tyranny, protecting the widow and the orphan, extenuating slavery almost to the verge of abolition-- from that highest achievement of the Roman mind, philosophic thought, the rational theory of life, was from the first recognized to be inseparable. philosophers of Rome were her lawyers and legislators; the juridic and philosophic thought were one.

The growth of Roman law was, indeed, but an expression of an ethical evolution, of the development of a particular ethical ideal, which went on throughout the career of the Roman mind, and which-though I shall not stop just now to judge of its absolute validity-- represented, and is still commonly held to represent, the supreme standard of moral excellence. Of that stream of ethical development the literature of Tacitean diatribes and homiletical tracts on ideal Germans and

¹ Plin, Hist. Nat. 25. 3. 4

Agricolas, the fierce denunciations of satirists, which furnish the materials for the dear old conventional myth of growing moral corruption, are manifestations. So in a more direct way is the long series of moral and devotional manuals, and consolations, from Cicero to Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Plutarch. A whole set of informal institutions attended the establishment of that lay religion of morality. The moral sermon became part of the regular routine of life, and large congregations crowded under the pulpits of the fashionable preachers. From the days of Paulus Emilius it became customary in the homes of the aristocracy to keep a household chaplain, or philosopher; the exhortations and consolations of the most reputed spiritual directors were eagerly sought after at all times of affliction and distress; and auricular confession was Nor was the constantly enjoined and practised. movement confined to the cultured and aristocratic. The capital and the countryside swarmed with itinerant preachers, and the populace were exhorted in their own rough speech to the higher life by the mendicant brothers whose rules and tenets have been described to us by Epictetus. They were vowed to poverty and celibacy, they were fathers to all, men being their spiritual sons and women their daughters in God, they preached as messengers from God the gospel of renunciation and repentance, they were to suffer calmly scoffs, insults and blows, and to love them that did them wrong and persecuted them.

In the closing centuries of the Western Empire the moralizing spirit tended, like the literary, to settle into an established vein of consecrated sentiment, growing somewhat frowzy and conventional. The typical Roman gentleman of the decadence, especially in the provinces- the life of all large and wealthy, cities is always immoral- was a confirmed puritan, the model of staid bourgeois virtues, and as morally correct in his He and his womenfolk were quite early-Victorian in their stodgy beseemingness, strait-laced propriety, and serious earnestness on the subject of moral platitudes. He subscribed to charities, and read family prayers to the servants. If he did not adopt Christianity, it was because his settled toryism was somewhat shy of new-fangled labels; he was not quite sure that the chapel people were quite 'the thing,' and he disapproved of the undignified excesses of his friends who took to monasticism and hair-shirts. But in moral sentiment he was quintessentially Christian, or rather his Christian neighbour's moral sentiments were nought else than his own pagan righteousness associated with extraneous mystic and dogmatic elements.

The intellectual culture of the ancient world, even at its best, suffered from a fundamental disability and weakness. It lacked a solid anchor-hold in concrete knowledge. It was pre-scientific. The power of rational thought depends upon two elements, its method and its data. Without adequate data, without experience, consistency and rationality are of small avail. The patient investigation of details, toilsome inquiry and research, the slow accumulation of facts, on the one hand, and the broad judgments of generalizing thought, on the other, are unfortunately the attributes of two different types of mind. The specialist who dwells in a little world of little details grows to be satisfied and to take pleasure in those minutiae; one little fact exactly ascertained is the prize towards which his mental activities tend; it suffices him, he is not drawn towards broad and new horizons, he is not at home in the thinner atmosphere of generalizations. The thinker, on the other hand, chafes at trifles and details; he who is accustomed to fly on the pinions of thought, cannot

suffer to be confined and crawl among the dust of isolated facts. To number the hairs on the appendages of a new species of shrimp, is a task belonging to an order of mind distinct from that which is drawn towards the great problems of life and of the universe; an inferior, if you will, humdrum, myopic, round-shouldered, order of mind. Only when the multiplicity of facts and details becomes illuminated by a generalizing theory, when each small fact and each small detail is transformed into a witness to a great and universal significance, do they acquire value and interest to the higher type of intellect.

confidence of its dialectic freedom and suppleness, the Greek mind never developed any consciousness of the sacredness of observed fact. It was abstract. Accuracy of thought meant for it accuracy in the operation of discursive reason, logic; but it never formed any conception of accuracy in the basis of the reasoning process, in the materials and data of thought, in ascertained experience. It was ready to disport itself in the dialectical game on any given theme, on any given premises; but so long as those premises were logically defined it did not trouble very much as to their intrinsic validity. It had curiosity, but not the thirst for boarding up the coins of knowledge, not the preoccupation for submitting their value to crucial test. The whole intellect of the Greeks was concentrated upon the intellectual process itself, to the almost entire neglect of the materials upon which that process operates. It navigated adventurously the seas of speculation, but with neither compass nor loadstar; it set out in search of strange lands, but without any means of taking its bearings.

In the whole of classical literature we cannot find above two doubtful mentions of anything like a scientific experiment; that of Pythagoras on the vibration of a cord, and that of Proiemy on refraction. In his encyclopedia on the natural knowledge of his day, Pliny, among a host of grotesque hearsays, does not one use the word "experiment" in our sense. In the most methodical thinkers of Greece, in Aristotle for instance we meet with the most astounding carelessness in matters of easiest verification. He states, for instance, that there is only one bone in a lion's neck, that man has eight ribs, that men have more teeth than women, that men only have a beating heart, the female skulls, unlike those of males, have a circular suture, that eggs float on sea-water, that if sea-water be collected in a wax vessel it becomes drinkable. The Greeks, in short, had no science, and no scientific spirit. It is science and the scientific spirit which constitutes the distinction between the ancient and the modern world.

It was, indeed, on the foundation of the few facts and methods gathered by Chaldean and Egyptian science that Greek thought first arose; and the early Ionian thinkers came nearer to the scientific spirit than almost any Greek in subsequent times. But even with them the chief interest lay with the final synthesis, the generalization; and, with brilliant divination, they used that faculty of inspired guess-work which is one of the most valuable instruments of science and in crowning triumph, but which has little place in its beginnings. Thereafter, the only form of science which was at all cultivated by the Greeks was mathematics, which is a form of logic, and in which they were interested as logic and 'music', not as an instrument of research. Plato would have none but

mathematicians' among his pupils, but the meaning he attached to the word may be gauged from his attitude towards Archytas and Menachmus who had devised some sliding-rules and compasses as aids to mathematical study. "Plato," says Plutarch, "inveighed against them with great indignation and persistence as destroying and perverting all the good there is in geometry; for the method absconds from incorporeal and intellectual to sensible things, and besides employs again such bodies as require much vulgar handicraft: in this way mechanics was dissimilated and expelled from geometry, and, being for a long time looked down upon by philosophy, became one of the arts of war." The man whom, by the influence which his surviving works have exercised, we are accustomed to regard as the most scientific genius of the ancient world, Archimedes, was of exactly the same opinion as Plato; and it was only under loud protest that he consented to degrade mathematics by putting his knowledge to practical application. The Greeks not only ignored the actual ground work of science, experimental research, observation, they persistently decried, depreciated it, and despised it. Aristophanes ridiculed astronomy and geometry. The Athenian Nicias at Syracuse was, when there was an eclipse of the moon, as helplessly a prey to the soothsayers as the merest savage, although Thales and Anaxagoras were acquainted with the Babylonian method of predicting eclipses.

Socrates "brought down philosophy from heaven to earth," as the fact was usually expressed. Why," asked he-how constantly do we hear around us the argument!-Why spend our time and thought in studying the heavens, in measuring the distances of the stars, in fretting about the constitution of matter, of the universe, in studying birds and beasts and trees? The thing which it is of importance to us to study is life, this human life wherein our business lies; not the distant stars, but the human world we live in; not animals and insects and plants, but men. Before seeking to know about the stars, and shells, and trees, it behoves us to seek to know something which lies much closer at hand-ourselves. The proper study of mankind is man. How wise and sensible that all sounds! And how that straightforward common sense has always captured the approval of the plain man. And yet it is an utter and pernicious fallacy. It is through that star-gazing that man has first been placed in a position to measure at all his own stature, the proportion and significance of his life in the universe. That 'natural history', as it used to be called, that harmless, somewhat childish hobby of collecting moths, of studying birds and trees, of botanizing and bird-nesting, that somewhat absurd, trifling pastime has, lo and behold! developed into a science of biology; and the whole conception, the whole significance of man, of his life, of his being, of his world has been utterly transfigured. Man went about for centuries with True Γνῶθι σαυτόν² on his signet-ring, studying himself, studying humanity, pleasantly talking and talking round and round in old circles, to no purpose. And, behold, the only real knowledge, the only illumination, the only revelation which has come about himself, has come from that unpractical star-gazing and studying of beasts and plants. He thought to begin at the beginning by attending to what lay closest at hand, his own self; and he was in reality in vain and futile effort trying to begin at the top. He could not rightly understand himself at all without first trying to understand the world he lived in.

² Know thyself (مترجم)

Through that remote, irrelevant inquiry lay in fact the main road to self-knowledge.

As all their scientific notions had by the roaming Ionians been derived from Egypt and Chaldæa, so the only organized scientific movement in the whole of classical antiquity, that of the Ptolemaic University of Alexandria, took place on the foundations, under the influence, on the very soil of Egypt. With only one or two notable exceptions Alexandrian science occupied itself with systematization and compilation rather than with original discovery and development of method. The first occupant of the chair of mathematics, Euclid, did little more than order and gather together the scattered geometrical theorems of his Ionian predecessors, Hippocrates of Chios in particular and Eudoxos of Cnidus, the friend of the priests of Heliopolis, whose mantle the Apis bull had licked. The only mechanical device which we actually know to have been used by Archimedes, the pupil of Euclid's successor, Conon, the Archimedean screw, had been in use on the Nile before Greece existed. The greatest systematizer of astronomical knowledge was Hipparchos, whose work we only know through the clumsy compilation of Claudius Ptolemæus, a work full of astrological fancies, which perpetuated for centuries the unwieldy methods and doctrines of epicycles. Aristarchos of Samos, who first suggested the simplification of all astronomy on the theory of a central sun and moving earth, could not get a hearing.

It is a notable and striking fact, that Greece and Rome, who so completely transformed the world and opened up a new universe of civilization, did not produce a single practical invention or industrial discovery of any importance. Almost all the crafts and industries of the ancient world, textile fabrics, dyes, papyrus, glass, glazed porcelain, were oriental discoveries and remained essentially oriental products. From the early days of Babylon and Egypt there is no new material discovery of importance to record until the introduction of paper, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass into Europe by the Arabs. The genius which could create a new world of intellect, differing from that of the Orient as noonday from midnight, appeared incapable of extending in any way the material powers and resources of life. So far as material processes are concerned, the Romans excelled the Greeks: they did excel in engineering and the building arts, in road-making, drainage, mining: the Greeks never got so far as making a road or building an aqueduct. The practical and realistic Roman mind was really more disposed towards observation and research than the Greek, but it was entirely governed by the influence of Greek tradition; and when Cæsar wished to reform the calendar, mathematicians and astronomers had to be fetched from Egypt. The Greco-Roman civilization remained prescientific.

Failing that necessary ingredient no real progress in the powers of the human intellect beyond a set limit was possible. A dozen successive Athens could not have carried it any further. It could wander this way and that way, circle round to its starting-point, but it could never establish its advance by any permanent occupation of the conquered territory. And it remained, in spite of all the splendid rationalism of Greece and Rome, essentially destitute of any solid protection or security against the impinging currents and tides of irrationalism. Modern experience has shown time

and again the insecurity and powerlessness of the most brilliant abstract intellectual achievement, until it is grounded in the solid basis of demonstration and unshakable evidence. It has become a commonplace of science that the true discoverer is not the man who formulates but he who substantiates, not the brilliant thinker who first glimpses the vision of truth, but the humdrum plodder who accumulates such a foundation of facts that all the world cannot shake it.

Besides that fundamental limitation ancient culture was inadequately diffused. Although it had no esoteric spirit -the ruling class did not owe their power to tradition, but to wealth - although its circulation was free, the circle of men in the Roman Empire who were at all abreast of the mental resources of the age, was in reality extremely restricted. Even among the wealthy a large proportion were new and vulgar rich, idlers, ingenui, self-made men, who cared for none of these things. There was no organized provision for general education, and no agency, like the printing-press, to make up for the deficiency. In a tiny, compact community like Athens, every citizen came more or less under the influence of existing culture. In the teeming, heterogeneous, shifting population of a vast empire, the case was very different. Those swarming masses of humanity were not mere herds of crushed oriental slaves, with child-like mind patiently slumbering in a twilight of tradition; but, as so many are in our own civilization with its infinitely greater opportunities, restless barbarians outwardly clothed in a thin veneer of cultural contacts, just sufficient to conceal their own ignorance and barbarism from themselves. Their undisciplined mentality weltered in a flood of superstition and mysticism, the usual disease of minds stimulated by the external influences of civilization, yet entirely unequipped and defenseless.

Life was complex, accelerated, restless, full of sudden changes, full of sorrows, of struggles, of desires stimulated and thwarted, of disappointments and illusions. To that troubled humanity the reigns of the dreaming East, offering their substitutes for thought, came as a light and a revelation, supplying exactly that for which they yearned. The Orient came to their rescue as a saviour.

Rome had fought for her existence in a death struggle with the East, and, like Greece, had finally subdued it. But the Orient had its revenge; and it was far more glaring and complete than in the case of Greece. The same year which was signalized by the definite triumph of Rome over Hannibal, saw the advanced guard of castor theocracy established within the walls of Rome, called there by the senate itself in compliance with some oracle which associated the step with certain vague promises of world empire. As the triumphal Procession of Scipio, the most magnificent hitherto witnessed, with es caparisoned elephants and quaint figures of Semitic captives, wound its way to the Capitol amid the acclamations of a people who were henceforth marked as the masters of the world, the strange monotonous strains of an exotic psalmody might have been heard from a chapel on the Palatine, on the site of the old, humble Roma Quadrata. The oriental priests who were chanting those palms were also members of an army which, like that of Rome, was to march from that spot to the conquest of the world.

From that day, amid swarms of Asiatics, astrologers from Chaldaea, wonder-workers from Egypt, Hebrew cabalists, Persian magicians, Syrian sorcerers, Indian fakirs, the Orient poured legion after legion of grave, stealthy, tonsured and mitred priests, sent religion after religion to take possession of the world-city.

To the philosophic moralists of Rome, who eschewed metaphysics, their ethical convictions, aspirations and endeavours needed no external dogmatic or emotional support, sought no other religion than the divinity within their own breast. The kingdom of God was within them. They looked with disgust and abhorrence on those barbaric and effeminate superstitions, and strove long to put them down and exclude them. But the mind of the ignorant and troubled masses, and above all the women, found exactly what they, thirsted for in the mystery of those eastern cults. A marvelous peace fell upon them in the extra-mundane atmosphere of the dim sanctuaries, sounding with solemn music, now wafted as from a distant sphere, now weeping with the tenderness of human sorrow, presently bursting forth into transfigured ecstasy of triumphant hope. The grave rituals, the chanted hymns and litanies, the solemn intonation of the Mithra clergy as they called upon the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," soothed their troubled passion as with a delightful balm; and they were thrilled with a strange excitement as the tinkling bell of the acolytes announced the culminating mystery of the service, and amid clouds of incense, the officiating priest turned to the kneeling crowd and raised breast-high the sacred chalice filled with the wine of life. They were born again to a new life as the cleansing baptismal waters washed away the stains of misery and sin; and what emotion overwhelmed them when, after a stern preparation of fast and penance, they were admitted to partake of the sacramental communion, of the consecrated bread which was the very body of the God! The women found ineffable comfort in unburdening their sorrows before the Queen of Heaven who bore in her arms her Divine Son, and who seemed to mingle her tears with theirs as she mourned over the Dead God. The thought of death itself lost its sting for the votaries who received the assurance of eternal life from the votaries and Mediator who had triumphed over the grave.

East and West have not only met again and again, they have indissolubly commingled. In the Hellenistic Orient of the Macedonian Empire the dawn-myths and hieratic rituals of the East and the dialectics and metaphysics of Greece had come together, and brought forth strange hybrid chimeras; new religions innumerable, countless illuminated and ascetic sects, Essenic and Ebionitic, Nazarene and Therapeutrid, swarmed from the ancient brewing-vat. And in Antioch and Alexandria all the mysticism, occultism, trismegistal philosophumena, and abracadabras of Jewry, magic Egypt, and Orphic pseudo-Hellas, held their Sabbath of Unreason. Platonism had become Plotinism, philosophy theosophy, metaphysics gnosis. The Word had become God.

The Isiac and Serapic cults of Rome were no more the religion of ancient Egypt, Mithraism was no more the Mazdæanism of Persia, than Christianity was Judaism. Religions interchanged their symbols and rituals, became transformed into a new syncretic uniformity more homogeneous

than the primitive seasonal rites whence they had sprung, and the worshipper passed from shrine to shrine as he might from one saint's chapel to the adjoining one.

As once the corrupted fragments of Hellenic thought, so likewise the ethical spirit of Rome was absorbed in the popular ferments of mysticism, and blended with the ascetic fervour of the East. The guilds and brotherhoods which were attached to each cult fostered the feelings of human fellowship and mutual help. Mithraism in particular, owing to its Avestic origin, the simplest and therefore the purest of popular cults, addressed itself to the poor, the lowly, and disinherited; the master knelt beside his slave in the mysteries, and was not infrequently called upon to regard him as his spiritual superior. That cult seemed about to absorb and supersede all others, and to become under the imperial patronage of Aurelian the official religion of the Roman world.

That position was, however, ultimately assumed by a cult that became the most luxuriant syncretic product of the Hellenistic East, sheltering within the mystic shadows of its dense vegetation of rich allusiveness, every religious idea and every theosophic thought that the world had ever brought forth. It came, like Mithraism, from Antioch, but from the Jewish instead of from the Persian elements of the eastern metropolis, or, as some think, originally from Judæa itself, where the nucleus of its ideals had indeed long developed in the monastic communities of the Essenes and Nazarenes. Hence, as formerly the Jews had violently repudiated their spiritual debts to Babylon and Persia, it insisted on its exclusiveness, refused to recognize in any way, and even denounced its creditors. While, in an even higher degree than other cults, it gave voice and emphasis to the reigning ethical spirit, and was like them an agape, a religion of love, it was unfortunately distinguished from them by the darkling taint, the old delirium hebraicum, of uncompromising intolerance. Professor Falta de Gracia goes certainly too far when he says that it was "the religion of hate"; but it gave expression to the seething discontent of human suffering, to the detestation of the intolerable order of the established world, to all the inarticulate forces of hostility against the Roman government; and it was that *odium generis humani* which gave it an immeasurable significance and advantage over all competitors.

The fall of the Roman Empire has ever been the grand theme of historical philosophizing. The event is generally held to be accounted for by uttering the word corruption. So far as political corruption goes, Roman administration was as corrupt in the days of Marius, when a petty African chief, Jugurtha, bought with gold every envoy and every general that was sent to put him down, as at any subsequent time, not excepting the fourth and fifth centuries. And as for moral corruption, since the primitive, dour austerity disappeared in large measure after the second Punic War, the society of the Roman Empire was marked, as we have just noted, by a continuous development in austere morality. The gross, obvious reason why the Roman Empire fell is not, as usually stated, that it was too big, but that it was too small. It fell because there were too many barbarians outside it. Had there been no German hordes wanting a place in the sun," the Roman Empire, in spite of its many deficiencies and inefficiencies, might have continued indefinitely- which would have

been a great calamity. Of course if it had remained a huge military organization, stiff with swords and military discipline, instead of being a very, liberal conglomeration of free and self-ruling municipia, it might have held off the barbarians; and its survival would have been a still greater calamity.

The intrinsic cause that doomed and condemned the Roman Empire was not any growing corruption, but the corruption, the evil, the inadaptation to fact, in its very origin and being. No system of human organization that is false in its very principle, in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that falsehood is carried out and maintained, any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering. It is doomed root and branch as long as the root remains what it is. The Roman Empire was, as we have seen, a device for the enrichment of a small class of people by the exploitation of mankind. That business enterprise was carried out with all the honesty, all the fairness and justice compatible with its very nature, and with admirable judgment and ability. But all those virtues could not save the fundamental falsehood, the fundamental wrong from its consequences. Their effects worked inexorably. The supply of slaves failed, the supply of soldiers failed, the supply of labour failed. And-essential fact-the exploited populations came to feel more and more as time went on that the carrying on, the maintenance of the whole thing was no business of theirs. They came to see, or be vaguely conscious, that they were not in the least concerned with that social machine which was run not for them, but for the benefit of a small master class. In vain official voices were raised to appeal to their 'patriotism', to their duty of helping, and defending, and saving 'the State'. Those appeals left them perfectly cold and indifferent; they, answered bluntly that they felt no patriotism whatever, that the 'cold monster,' the State might look after itself. They became Christians. They made up their own little organizations for mutual help and protection, and resistance against 'the State'. They utterly disowned it and denounced it, they refused to serve it; it might go to perdition for all they cared, it was no country, no 'patria' of theirs, their kingdom was not of this world. In Gaul in the third century the peasants, the coloni, broke out into open revolt, into anarchy and plunder, just as they did later at the time of the Jacqueries and of the French Revolution. Though partially put down for a time by Maximian, the Bagaudae insurrection continued till the end.

When things got most desperate the Roman government had the good fortune to find a strong man of extraordinary ability and energy, Diocletian. He set to consolidating everything in the most vigorous manner, raised the army to four times its strength and reorganized it, strengthened the entire network of administration and central government and made the latter absolute. His aim was to stay all further disintegration by rigidly pinning things down with iron bonds in their existing state. When a social structure visibly threatens to topple over, rulers try to prevent it from falling by preventing it from moving. The whole of Roman society was fixed in a system of castes; no one was to change his avocation, the son must continue in the calling of his father. Sedition, discontent, disloyalty, were dealt with a strong hand. Though partial to many Christian religious ideas and counting many personal friends in the sect, he even decided to put down Christianity.

His successor, Constantine, tried the opposite policy, that of conciliation and concessions, had the ingenious ideal to avail himself of the admirable network of Christian organization, Christian trade-unions, to assist and strengthen the government.

But evils secularly developed and lying at the very root of a social order are not to be remedied at a stroke by either vigorous or ingenious political measures. Whether vigorously put down or conciliated, the masses of exploited population and the municipia remained indifferent and hostile. When the barbarian flood broke through, they not only did not resist, but welcomed them, and joined with them. "The powerful decide what the poor have to pay. The poor thirst for freedom and have to endure extreme servitude," writes Salvianus in the fifth century, "I wonder only that all the poor and needy do not run away, except that they are loath to abandon their land and families. Should we Romans marvel that we cannot resist the Goths when Roman citizens had rather live with them than with us? The Romans in the Gothic kingdom are so attached to the Roman government that they prefer to remain poor under the Goths, to being well-off among the Romans and bear the heavy burdens of taxation." With unfailing instinct, the clergy saw in the wild Barbarians a better promise of power and influence for the Church than in the officially converted Roman Empire which, in spite of Constantine and Theodosius, remained 'the Beast,' the enemy. They accordingly smiled on the invader, encouraged him, flattered him. The Roman clergy; were undisguisedly pro-German. They resolutely winked at, and minimized any 'atrocities'. Had there been a massacre? Well, men had to die sooner; or, later. And when Alaric put Rome to the sack, looting, burning, and ravishing, St. Augustine employed himself in composing a dissertation on the question whether or no the outraged virgins would be entitled to the crown of maidenhood in the next world.

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