

**The Horrific Execution of Three Kurdish
Kulbar
The brutal operations of the Islamic
Republic
The 12 days that shook Iran**

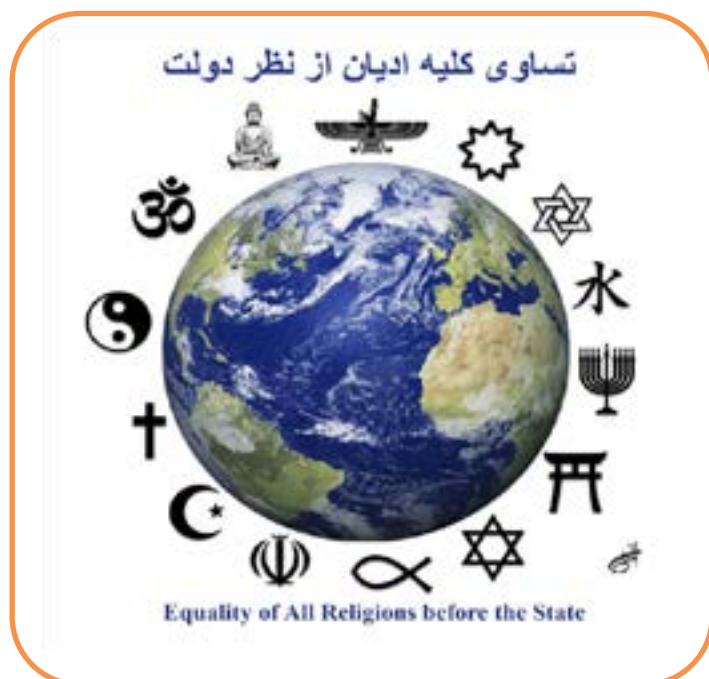
Kargar, Vol. 3, Issue 8, August 2025 (Mordad 1404)

**Insistence on enrichment, nuclear bomb production,
and continuation of war for the destruction of the
Jewish state.**

**“Zedd-e Akhund”: A Weapon of Imperialism,
Liberal Bourgeoisie, and Remnants of Monar-
chy Against Freedom and Self-Determination of
Mellat**

The Historic Capitalist Tasks

**The Lie of the Islamic Republic, Imperialism, and
the Shia-Bazaar Professors about the Services of
Pahlavi Despotism**



**The Jewish Question
Chapter Two**

From antiquity to the Carolingian epoch

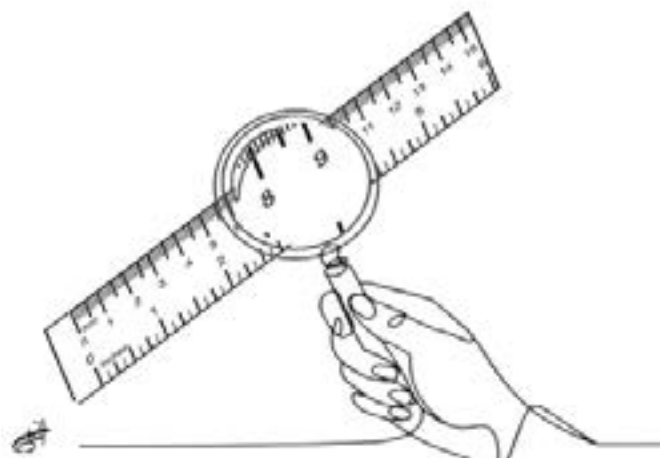
کارگر

کارگر، دوره سه، شماره ۸، مرداد ۱۴۰۴

Culture and socialism



Different yardstick to measure Right and Reaction



In Our Opinion

The Horrific Execution of Three Kurdish Kulbar

The Need for Establishing Kurdish Sovereignty to End Framing and Execution of Kurdish Youth



The execution of three Kurdish Kulbar—Idris Ali, Azad Shojaei, and Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul—is a deeply painful tragedy.

The Islamic Republic, a system inherited from the despotic rule of the two Pahlavi, resorts to executing members of the Kurdish nation-ethnicity.

Ethnic or national persecution has a long-standing history that stretches across the modern era of despotism.

It began with the suppression of Kurdistan and other tribes and ethnicities through the establishment of Reza Khan's dictatorship in the first quarter of the twentieth century, aligned with the British policy of centralism in Iran.

The main pillar of monarchical despotism was the suppression of ethnicities, and later, the Shia-Bazaar state pursued the policy of denying the national rights and restraining ethnic-nations through punishment, resorting to frame-ups and executions.

Idris Ali and Azad Shojaei were working as Kulbar in the border region. Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul was engaged in trade and was an Iraqi Kurd.

The execution of these three individuals also reflects the hostile stance of the Islamic Republic toward the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil. Iraqi-Kurdish citizens, unlike nationals of other countries, are treated as nothing and, like other defendants, are denied basic legal rights and executed in secrecy in Urmia prison.

The execution of the hardworking Kurdish people—such as these three Kulbar—has a long history.

Between 1981 and 1988, Kurdish minibus drivers were executed under the false accusation of transporting unauthorized parcels. Many Kulbar have been shot and killed by “border guards.” There is no doubt about the baselessness of these accusations.

Neither minibus drivers nor Kulbar have much knowledge of the contents of the packages they carry; they function like couriers or transportation companies.

The history of ethnic discrimination against the Kurdish people is long-standing.

The first Pahlavi, during his war against Kurdish tribes and national governance, according to reports, “inflicted heavy casualties upon them.” This war led to the suppression of Kurdistan by the central government in Kurdish urban centers in 1929.

After Reza Khan’s 20-year dictatorship (until 1941), Kurdistan succeeded in establishing the first Kurdish government in Mahabad under the leadership of Qazi Mohammad (February 1946).

However, the first head of the Kurdish government, Qazi Mohammad, along with his brothers, was hanged by the military of the second Pahlavi (April 1947).

With the fall of the despotic monarchy in 1979, Kurdistan briefly experienced a period of political freedom.

This golden era was cut short when Khomeini issued a decree, and under the command of Mehdi Chamran and military forces including the IRGC and army, the city of Paveh was “cleansed of counter-revolutionaries” in August 1979.

Kurdistan then fell under the control of the central government, and the legacy of imposed and enduring underdevelopment was continued.

The Shia-Bazaar of the Islamic Republic has declared the national sovereignty of Kurdistan—as with other ethnic-nations within Iran—an unforgivable sin, condemning its members to death with baseless confessions and accusa-

نشریه سوسیالیستی کارگر (گاه نامه)
سر دبیر بابک زهرائی

Kargaronline.com

kargar.co

support@kargaronline.com

contact@kargaronline.com

برای مقالات و گفتگوهای قبلی (ویدئو و صوتی) به این آدرس
رجوع کنید :

babakzahraie.blogspot.com

babakzahraie@gmail.com

tions of “corruption on earth.”

These executions have especially intensified after the 12-day war.

The Islamic Republic’s persistent ethnic hostility is a dark legacy of the two Pahlavi, following the prescribed British and later American policies.

Ethnic-nations, who constitute more than half the population, have no reason for conflict with any other ethnicity—especially not with the Persian nation. In fact, all ethnic groups in Iran are fundamentally united in their struggle for national liberation.

Thanks to the shared understanding of Middle Eastern nations, the sovereignty of Kurdistan brings Iran into unity with the people of the Jewish state.

The sovereignty of Kurdistan softens the country with the fragrance of freedom for ethnicities and religions.

All popular urban and rural classes, women’s rights, religious minorities, ethnic-nations, youth and students—and most certainly workers and farmers—benefit from the development and growth of ethnic rights.

Without the national sovereignty of ethnicities, the pursuit of independence and freedom or the sovereignty of the nation is nothing but an illusion.

Due to being kept away from fulfilling the historical duties of capitalism as a result of the anti-ethnic policies of the Pahlavi and the Is-

lamic Republic, Kurdistan suffers from Iran’s numerous problems in an intensified form. This suffering, caused by the prevention of its development during the rule of the two Pahlavi and later the Islamic Republic, has deepened.

To resolve the land issue, capitalist-democratic reforms aimed at granting land ownership to landless and impoverished farmers are the key to an agricultural leap in Kurdish society.

Additionally, the right of women to independently organize and respect for their way of life must be upheld.

There must be respect for religious freedom, including Sunni, Christian, Shi’a, dervishes, and others.

Eradicating illiteracy by reconnecting the Kurdish people with their identity and roots—through Kurdish-language education in all state educational institutions and media—is a fundamental need of Kurdish society.

Through the promotion of Kurdish language, Kurdistan can gift the entire country the ability to speak multiple languages—something the whole society needs—while Persian monolingualism, imposed through anti-ethnic policy, has been propagated by Pahlavi–Shia–Bazaar chauvinism.

The development of industries in both urban and rural areas can be realized through the expansion of councils, unions, and associations of workers, the unemployed, and farmers.

Kurdistan needs the establishment of full employment, the expansion of urban and rural de-

velopment, the extension of water, electricity, and gas networks, the flourishing of artistic and intellectual freedom, respect for civil and political rights, and an end to arrests, imprisonment, trials, and executions of Kurdish people. All these rights depend on the restoration and establishment of a national government of Kurdistan.

Kurdistan can transform the death-prone border region, enforced by Islamic Republic border guards, into a border of ethnic solidarity.

The arrest and execution of Kurds by the central government cannot be expected to come to an end. Nor can one expect the eradication of poverty and destitution, or sufficient economic development in industry and agriculture, or the expansion of free education and healthcare across the Kurdish region—without the establishment of a national government in Kurdistan.

The 45-year record of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Islamic Republic's central government in Kurdistan is extremely negative.

Kurdistan needs an executive branch aligned with the needs of national liberation; a legislative branch to declare a charter of rights and legislate Kurdish national freedom; and a judiciary elected by the Kurdish people, based on the principles Bill of Rights. Kurdistan can serve as a model for all ethnic groups residing in Iran.

It can qualitatively elevate the political standing and organizational strength of workers and farmers throughout the country.

Above all, the national potential of eight million people in the Kurdish regions—spread across eleven cities with populations over ten thousand, and cities like Sanandaj, Saqqez, and Marivan with populations over one hundred thousand—is remarkable.

Urmia, with a population of over seven hundred thousand, due to its blend of Kurdish, Azerbaijani Turkish, Syriac, or Assyrian languages, is the crown jewel of Kurdistan. Urmia lies on the route connecting Khoy and Salmas to Mahabad and Sardasht.

The integration of smaller and larger parts of Kurdistan—through the expansion of roads, railways, air travel, water, electricity, and gas networks—is entirely dependent on uniting the popular urban and rural classes of Kurdistan around the establishment of Kurdish national sovereignty.

The entire social, economic, political, and cultural program of the central government has acted against Kurdish ethnicity.

To maintain such conditions, the Islamic Republic resorts to fabricating charges and executing Kurdish youth.

To establish a national government in Kurdistan, the Kurdish people expect support from their kin and allies.

Their kin are other national minorities, peoples such as Turks, Baloch, Arabs, etc. Their allies are the working class of Iran, who are the natural, historical, and primary supporters of the Kurdish people and other ethnic groups; the working class is the guarantor of achieving in-

dependence and freedom. Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Karaj, Shiraz, Tabriz, Qom, and Ahvaz—with populations over one million—are the pillars of urban civilization in the country, and all are allies of Kurdish national sovereignty.

By supporting the national rights of Kurdistan, Iranian workers and people, in truth, strengthen their own rights. All the demands of the popular urban and rural classes face opposition from the central government.

Mutual support among women, religious minorities, ethnic-nations, workers, and farmers isolates the anti-national stance of the central government—a stance rooted in the British–Reza Khan doctrine and continued by the Islamic Republic.

Kurdistan can unlock the sealed gate of Independence and Freedom in the country.

That is why the establishment and expansion of religious freedoms, ethnic sovereignty, the sovereignty of women's rights, youth, workers and farmers, and migrant and Afghan workers, all signify the path toward independence and freedom.

It is necessary for the ban on publishing Kargar (Worker) and the activities of the Kargar Party to be lifted.

It is necessary for the rights of the working and laboring people in both cities and villages to be recognized, including the establishment of a people's government.

To eliminate the anti-Jewish-Zionist and anti-American stance of the central government of the Islamic Republic, the national sovereignty of Kurdistan and other ethnic groups is essential.

Aghvam, the ethnic groups of Iran have no reason for hostility toward the Jewish people and, through the experience of their own situation, are aware of the duty to defend the existence of the Jewish state.

The ethnic groups of Iran have no need for a nuclear enrichment program or the production of nuclear weapons, and they reject it.

The development of Kurdistan brings with it the advancement of all ethnic-nations, as well as the growth of the rights of women, youth, workers, and farmers.

What the nation needs is a workers and farmers government that places the ethnic-national rights of the peoples at the top of its priorities and actively supports them.

The glorious path of history is the establishment of an independent government, which is a workers' and farmers' government that will put an end to the economic crisis and reactionary wars of Islamic Republic.

[Back to the first page](#)

In Our Opinion:

The brutal operations of the Islamic Republic:

The expulsion of thousands of Afghan families; hundreds of thousands of children, youth, women, men, and the elderly.



The daily expulsion of tens of thousands of hardworking Afghan people is a clear sign of weakness in the foundations of the I.R.I. This action comes in the wake of the exposure of the regime's falsehoods during Israel's defensive operations in repelling the I.R.I.'s catastrophic plans to produce a nuclear bomb. These displacement operations also revealed other false statements by the Shia-Bazaar in blaming Israel for displacing the Arab Palestinian nation.

The expulsion and displacement of hundreds of thousands of men and women, whole families, fits only within the framework of the I.R.I.'s thinking, which is carried out under the 1931 law of the Pahlavi dictatorships! The reactionary enrichment program for producing a nuclear bomb against Israel reflects the hostility of the I.R.I. not only toward the Jewish people but toward all the ethnic groups and nationalities of Iran and the Middle East.

Although the I.R.I., which intended to weaken the working and toiling people, failed to inflict major blows on the inhabitants of Israel, it instead directed its blow toward Afghan migrants. Right after suffering the biggest setback by Israel defensive action the ruling IRI targeted the weakest sections of working class, namely the Afghan immigrants. Yet this inhumane treatment of the Afghan people and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Afghans living in Iran will be recorded among the savage and racist acts in human history. The hardworking people of Iran, true allies of the Afghan people, awaken with this event. This course of action exposes the hostility of the Shia-Bazaar regime toward working and farming communities, women, the Kurdish, Baluch, Turkish, Arab, and other nations living in Iran, as well as students and youth—in short, the popular urban and rural classes.

The establishment of the I.R.I. by the Shia-Bazaar has on the one hand filled the ruling ranks with state managers and the wealthy classes, and on the other hand pursued the political repression of Mellat, the nation, through the military-security apparatus. Having endured the worst hardships, hundreds of thousands of deprived Afghan people and migrants—as the weakest section of the working class—have become victims of the I.R.I.'s after its defeat in face of Israel's self-defense.

The I.R.I. is a power that has, in essence, been supported by world powers to limit and disallow Iran's quest for Independence and Freedom; and for this very reason it has resorted to inhumane aggression against the proud Afghan nation. The imposition of suffering on the people by the I.R.I., backed by the military-securi-

ty apparatus, is rejected and discredited by the hardworking workers and farmers of Iran and Afghanistan. In every neighborhood across Iran and Afghanistan, the unshakable solidarity of all with the trampled rights of Afghan migrants must resonate. The merciless and compassionless policy of the I.R.I. toward the Afghan people underlines the need for the solidarity of all the toiling peoples. There is a need for the unity of Afghan, Iranian, and Israeli workers and farmers.

End the expulsion of the members of the Afghan brother and sister nation. Let us adorn all of Iran with the unity of all, the organization of independent councils of workers and farmers, and the solidarity of all workers and the migrant community. Iran needs political independence from the Shia-Bazaar and the establishment of the workers and farmers government to open the doors of liberty and reason in the country—the path of Independence and Freedom.

[Back to the first page](#)

The 12 days that shook Iran

The Shi'a-Bazaar regime has been subjected to an unprecedented situation in its history during Israel's response to the Islamic Republic's war against the Jewish state and its plan to impose a second Holocaust through the production of nuclear weapons, which started on October 7, 2023, with the largest massacre of Jews since World War II by Hamas–Islamic Republic. The regional "axis of resistance" of the I.R.I. has either fallen apart one after another or is about to fall apart.

The brutal dictatorship of Assad has ended in Syria. In Lebanon, Hezbollah has diminished to a shadow of the powerful Middle Eastern organization it once was. After fighting Israel for almost two years, killing Jews, Hamas has lost tens of thousands of its fighters and destroyed Gaza, which it had used as a shield. It has also become isolated despite ongoing hostage-taking. Both Hamas and the old leadership of the Palestinian Authority are being rejected by Palestinian forces, including hundreds of thousands in the West Bank, who are moving toward recognition and collaboration with Israel. The varied peoples of the Middle East have been increasingly asserting their autonomy.

Washington's attempts to stop Israel's progress in the self-defense war we are seeing since October 7, 2023, have not been successful. Israel's successes in self-defense further demonstrate how Washington's influence in the area is eroding. In the natural resource-rich Middle East, Tel Aviv has been able to repel the historical siege ring imposed by the Washington-led administrations and its imperial allies through self-defense more than at any previous point

since the establishment of the Jewish state.

Iran has demonstrated more than ever before that its own aspirations for freedom and independence are inextricably tied to the defense of the Jewish state's existence. By using anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, and anti-American phrase-mongering, the Islamic Republic and its imperial supporters were able to subjugate women, young people, religious minorities, Aghvam, ethnic groups, which together make up at least half of the population, urban and rural popular classes, migrant and Afghan workers, artists and intellectuals, professionals and specialists, scientists, small business owners, and civil and political liberties for decades.

The repressive threads that have tied the country for more than 45 years are untangled by the Republic's loss in the face of Israel's 12-day defensive campaign to destroy the reactionary program of nuclear enrichment, explosive hypersonic missiles, and atomic weapons. The Islamic Republic has caused poverty, unemployment, inflation, and water and energy shortages, all of which the people no longer choose to face. Establishing national rights of the peoples and achieving the resulting capacities of independent actions of Mellat are the necessary steps to overcome Washington's sanctions.

Events throughout the Middle East corroborate what is occurring in Iran in the wake of the 12-day war:

It is clear that Syria's independence and freedom and solidarity in support of the right of the Jewish state to exist are closely related in post-

Assad-Ba'ath Syria. It became evident during the slaughter and persecution of the Druze in southern Syria that a central government affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood poses a threat to all Syrian minorities, including Kurds, Turkmen, Christians, Yazidis, and Alawites. In order to maintain its society, Syria is forced to declare the sovereignty of all of its minorities and its support for Israel's existence. With the Muslim Brotherhood replacing the Ba'ath, the treaty that created Syria—defined and decided by the imperial powers of France, Britain, and eventually the United States—cannot safeguard the lives of the nation's minority.

The historical progression toward Lebanon's freedom from Hezbollah's hold demonstrates Lebanon's inseparable bond with Israel's right to exist. A proposal for the sovereignty of all minorities connected to the preservation of Israel's existence is necessary to preserve Lebanon's existence because the imperial powers' definition of the country is unable to guarantee the security of its different populations and minorities upon the false path charted by Hezbollah against Israel.

Iraq as a failed state is a prime example: Recognizing Israel's right to exist is closely related to protecting the lives and dignity of minorities. Through the sovereignty of all Middle Eastern communities, the Kurdistan Regional Government—the only bright spot in Iraq following the brutal Saddam-Ba'ath era—shows the way forward. The road to minority autonomy is the road to national sovereignty, from Afghanistan to every nation in North Africa.

By maintaining the order left over from the bloody despotism of the Pahlavi monarchy and depending on anti-American and anti-Jew-

ish-Zionist rhetoric, the Islamic Republic suffers from political hegemony in the Shia-Bazaar system, which dates back to support for the CIA-led coup of August 19, 1953. Israel's defense during the 12-day battle has revealed the reactionary Shia-Bazaar narrative to be empty hyperbole. Similarly, it is now much harder to uphold the order left over from the Pahlavi tyranny, which is the cause of all of the nation's political, social, cultural, and economic problems.

The country's attempts to combat the Shia-Bazaar system's policies that cause hardship, unemployment, inflation, and the water, electricity and gas crises have regained their impetus.

Mellat, the nation's historic power is the foundation for the entire set of positions calling for the lifting of restrictions on the Kargar journal, Fanus publications, and the Kargar Party, the abolition of the prohibition on the detention and imprisonment of political prisoners, the abolition of the death penalty, the abolition of the war against the Jewish state, the end of uranium enrichment and the use of ballistic missiles for carrying nuclear bombs, the restoration of women's rights, the rights of religious minorities and Aghvam, ethnic groups (national minorities), the right to independent organization of workers and farmers, the rights of migrant and Afghan workers, the right to civil and political liberties, and the right to free movement of the popular urban and rural classes. Regardless of whether the Islamic Republic's relations with Washington change or not, Mellat's stance and option cannot be abandoned and is the only salvation.

Capitalism's historical problems can only be resolved by utilizing the national liberation move-

ment's innumerable assets. Only through independent organization and the unity of workers and farmers to establish a national government will it be possible to eradicate poverty and illiteracy, establish universal employment, eradicate inflation, guarantee free healthcare and education for all, and resolve the water and electricity/gas crises. Only the resources of a national government and the realization of the people's right to self-determination can resolve the economic and social system's crises, which the Islamic Republic still forces on Mellat, the nation, as a result of the Pahlavi monarchy's sinister legacy.

Iran must be exposed and seeped in women's rights and solidarity. Equal rights and employment for women must be proclaimed essential to society's progress.

The Iranian people are entitled to the equality of all religions before the state. Without the separation of religion and state (mosque and state), which has been a human historical achievement since the 18th century, Iran would not be able to break free from the bonds of monarchy and the Shi'a-Bazaar.

Iran must ring the bell of religious freedom.

To complete the historical tasks of capitalism and end the sufferings brought about by the long-standing domination of Pahlavi despotism and its continuation through the Islamic Republic, national governments—like those of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Baluchistan, and other Aghvams, ethnic-national groups, living in Iran—are crucial. The establishment of national governments is necessary to ensure full employment, the expansion of industry and agriculture, and the resolution of the severe water and electric-

ity/gas crises among Turkic, Kurdish, Baluch, and other ethnicities, which suffer more severely due to national oppression; as well as to meet the demands of the people throughout the country. Mother tongue instruction must be implemented by Aghvam governments as a means of reviving the nation and benefiting its working people. The seeds of international cooperation must be sowed, and the expulsion of hardworking Afghans must halt permanently.

Workers' and farmers' unity and autonomous organization are needed in Iran. As a fundamental tenet of organization and industrial development in the nation, workers' control over production through councils, Anjoman, or unions must be acknowledged. The vast majority of hardworking people who build the nation own the economy. Workers' control over production and the policy of the state monopoly over foreign trade are necessary to protect the nation's foreign exchange resources from the volatile rise and long-term poverty caused by the Pahlavi-inherited state and economic system.

Iran ought to be the Mecca, epicenter, of intellectual and creative freedom. In order to achieve freedom and political independence from capitalism, the country must first eliminate the restrictions on Kargar journal and the Kargar Party. The mass of workers and toilers urge that all traces of monarchical reaction be rejected.

Iran requires political independence from the Shi'a-Bazaar as well as a government of workers and farmers, the only truly national government. In order to break the bonds that have hindered its industry, agriculture, and culture's growth for a century. Then and only then will Iran's people and nations be able to unlock all the doors to enlightenment and freedom.

[Back to the first page](#)

Insistence on enrichment, nuclear bomb production, and continuation of war for the destruction of the Jewish state.



Israel's 12-day defensive war in response to the Islamic Republic's acceleration in producing atomic weapons has transformed Middle East politics and ended more than 70 years of the Jewish state's isolation since its founding. The historic defender, Israel—surrounded by a Middle East hostile to Jews and Zionists—has raised its spear against the aggressor, the Islamic Republic, and the two have switched positions in terms of regional influence. Since October 7, 2023, the I.R.I. and its “Axis of Resistance” have been in decline, and the defeat from the 12-day war cannot be remedied by any measure.

The international condition of the Washington-led imperial order reinforces the Islamic Republic's decline. Washington has experi-

enced the continued weakening of its international standing since the victory of the 1979 revolution in Iran. The downward trajectory of Washington and the native bourgeoisie in Iran are intertwined, highlighting Washington's strategic dilemmas beyond the unfavorable fate of the Islamic Republic.

Meanwhile, Israel—due to its defense of its own existence—has, since October 7, strengthened its position more than ever before.

The situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the 12-day war brings to life the old tale of the king who has no clothes. Yet the Islamic Republic's widespread propaganda not only denies the regime's nakedness but also continues its more than 45-year war against the Jewish

state. From the top of the I.R.I. leadership and official policy to the reformist human rights opposition and the remnants of Stalinist–guerrilla groups (the Tudeh Party, Aksariat, Majority faction, and the Republicans), all unanimously resort to distorting reality and, by denying the reactionary policy of uranium enrichment and the war to destroy the Jewish state, beat an empty drum.

Young workers must be aware that the Shia-Bazaar regime and its various factions cannot abandon their anti-national-democracy programs. The simple reason lies in the consistent position of the Shia-Bazaar, which—from its support of the August 19, 1953 coup to preserve the second Pahlavi monarchy, to its role after the 1979 revolution in establishing the Islamic Republic—has pursued and continues to pursue this path.

For all involved, the documented approach in the Islamic Republic’s media and publications is to deny the truth and present content aimed at securing a greater share of Shia-Bazaar governmental power. Here we address the main points of the ruling elite’s critics who insist on the anti-national programs of the Shia-Bazaar regime based on their own statements (all points, headings, and quotes are from the editorial of Shargh newspaper dated Tir 26, 1404 / July 7, 2025, which republished the government critics’ declaration titled “Which Paradigm”).

1- “The country’s problems stem from a lack of engagement with various countries in the world and constructive negotiations with the U.S. and Europe.” The reactionary program of uranium enrichment and the production of nuclear bombs—“the regime’s red line”—intended

for use in the destruction of Israel, is explicitly concealed.

2- “A fundamental change in approaches to popular participation.” In the political culture of the Islamic Republic, the people are referred to as certain segments of the ruling structure itself. The “people’s” dialogue in publications and public media in the Islamic Republic is the freedom to voice nonsense in name only. Factions of the regime seeking greater participation in management positions refer to themselves as “the people” in opposition to the fundamentalist faction, which generally controls the country’s economic income sources and commands the Revolutionary Guard and Basij forces. Likewise, the fundamentalist faction also refers to itself as “the people.”

3- The critics’ statement in the Shargh editorial calls for “releasing political activists from prison.” It is worth noting that the demand for the release of “political prisoners” is reduced to “political activists.” In any case, the demand of the people and the working class of Iran is the release of all political prisoners, regardless of whether they belong to reformist, human rights, or other currents, and the lifting of bans on the publication of Kargar, Worker, the activity of the Kargar Party, and Fanus publications.

Reducing these demands to the release of reformist and human rights “political activists” is incorrect and distorts the people’s position. The essential duty is the release of all political prisoners and respect for civil and political rights—just as in the post-1979 revolution era, when the demand for establishing a Constituent Assembly to advance the rights of the people was reduced—through the proposal of

Mahmoud Taleghani (Ayatollah) and Mehdi Bazargan—to the formation of the Assembly of Experts, a body exclusive to the Shia-Bazaar establishment. This reduction had disastrous consequences for the people. This shift from the people's position to that of the Shia-Bazaar was supported by all government officials, whether in office or removed since, and the position opposing the people's independent interests was pursued by all in the founding of the Islamic Republic.

The issue of freeing political prisoners/ ending house arrests and halting executions based on Shia jurisprudence or the constitution of the Islamic Republic is a vital one for the country. Humanity recognized the Bill of Rights following the American independence revolution in the late 18th century and placed the separation of church from state at the forefront of human duties. Resolving this vital issue of civil and political liberties in a semi-colonial society like Iran is only possible through the independent organization and unity of workers and farmers and separation of mosque and state.

From the Constitutional Revolution until today, the legal framework has been dictated by Shia-Bazaar authority, first through despotic monarchies and then through the Islamic Republic, functioning as a denial of the people's rights. The key to national success in securing civil rights and political freedoms lies in inclusive unity and the independent organization of workers and farmers.

However, a few words are necessary regarding the population of political prisoners or “political activists.” Just as the revolutionary transformation of 1979 and the liberation of Iran from

Pahlavi despotism occurred without the role of the political prisoner population, it seems a similar truth applies to the imprisoned “political activists” in the Islamic Republic—just as today Iran needs to end nuclear enrichment, missile production, and the war against Israel. The imprisoned “political activists,” like much of the ruling structure, are often anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, and *Zedd-e Akhund*, anti-clerical.

The demand for the unconditional release of political prisoners and the lifting of house arrests is valid regardless of the political positions of the individuals, even if those positions—like those of the ruling elite—do not align with, or even contradict, the desires of the people and the needs of the country. For example, on October 7, 2023, prominent human rights leaders who were in prison expressed no condemnation of the largest mass killing of Jews since World War II but quickly denounced Israel's entry into Gaza in pursuit of Hamas criminals. Political prisoners in the Islamic Republic often view international affairs through the lens of imperialism, much like the ruling elite, and tune their political stance to align with and endorse their own imperial-friendly politics. This fact is not surprising and is nothing new to us regarding political prisoners in the Islamic Republic.

Similarly, during the prison years from 1981 to 1988, many political prisoners supported Saddam Hussein's war against Iran, backed Washington's position and its allies (as did the liberal bourgeoisie and the leaders of Iran's 8-year war), and, like the war leaders in the country, blamed Iran for the Iraq-Iran war. Moreover, following the guerrilla/people's movement tradition before the revolution, they denied the basic rights of fellow prisoners and created a

“prison within the prison,” mimicking the methods of underground militant group safe houses. This category of prisoners—mostly composed of lower-level supporters of political factions and labeled “steadfast” by the prosecution—made up less than twenty percent of the prison population. The rest had either been executed or became Tavvab, repentant.

The entry of Tudeh Party prisoners (1982–1983) and their joining the activities of the guerrilla-oriented factions—jumping from the branch of supporting the Islamic Republic to the branch of liberal bourgeois politics after the arrest of the party’s leaders and activists—by following the prison-within-the-prison practice, unfortunately paved the way for the 1988 executions, whose main target was the execution of the leaders and cadres of the Tudeh Party. This happened despite the Supreme Judicial Council having announced that “we oppose your execution,” and the Tudeh Party prisoners could have used the opportunity to their own benefit. But like their new found comrades among the populist in prison they became adamant in changing society from within prison and following a course of deadly confrontations in prison.

Now too, the majority of prisoners—like the ruling elite—follow international anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist sentiment and believe in cleric-hatred. (It is clear that in the past, holding an unconditional stance in defense of Iran against the aggression of Saddam–US meant one could not expect international awards—just as today, condemning the October 7th mass murder of Jews without conditions will not win anyone prizes from Europe.)

The entire Islamic Republic and its political affiliates, both inside and outside the country, beat the drum of defending the “oppressed” in Gaza while evading unconditional condemnation of Hamas’s crime on October 7. In every situation, aligned with the positions of global imperialism and the United Nations, they seek to support Hamas’s reactionary war against the existence of the Jewish state.

The signs point to a situation similar to the years of the Iran-Iraq war and the factional struggles of the Shia-Bazaar ruling elite. Back then, the disputes were anti-Soviet; now, they involve support for Moscow. Today, they seek help from the central axis of anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist sentiment to overcome the crisis of Shia-Bazaar rule following the 12-day war and aim to unify the entire ruling elite under this banner—with assistance from imprisoned “political activists,” as proposed by the “critics” of the regime.

The critics, in general—like the entire Shia-Bazaar establishment—support the capitalist economic foundation, the order left behind by monarchical despotism, and call for international policies similar to those of the former monarchy. These are the same positions they have supported since before the revolution—just like the rest of the ruling structure—and they have consistently opposed the 1979 revolution.

4- “Reforming the IRI broadcasting so that it becomes a media reference for the people.” Here too, the real aim of the critics is merely to gain greater access for themselves to national television. There is no mention of the direct demands of workers, farmers, women, religious minorities, ethnic and national groups, migrant

and Afghan workers, and youth—or access for their independent organizations to the IRIB. In reality, these criticisms are a dispute over wealth distribution between government managers and the private sector, and between the state and military forces like the Revolutionary Guard, a conflict among factions of the ruling elite that has been ongoing for over four decades since the founding of the Islamic Republic.

5- “Attention to merit and professional capability...” continues the Shia-Bazaar strategy of obstructing the independent organization of workers and farmers and the entire popular urban and rural classes, under the guise of addressing the country’s issues. This capitalist government strategy has been pursued for over a century by successive despotic monarchies and the Islamic Republic. The foundation for utilizing experts and scientists in the country lies in the independent organization and unity of workers and farmers as a source of attraction for science and expertise in the cause of national independence and freedom. Otherwise, the mass of experts—as shown throughout a century of despotism from the Qajar and Pahlavi to today—remain ornaments for the royalist ruling elite now embodied by the Shia-Bazaar. As we see, continuing the same policies has led to the regressive path of nuclear enrichment and hypersonic missiles, while bringing no meaningful progress for the toiling people. Spending billions of dollars on government military programs and starving the urgent economic, social, political and cultural needs of Mellat.

6- “Regulating monetary policy... and preventing rent-seeking and corruption.” These are hollow demands from Shia-Bazaar circles, which are impossible to achieve without work-

ers’ control over industrial production and a state monopoly over foreign trade. Without workers’ control of industrial production, the banking system cannot be used for the country’s independence and freedom; instead, these institutions fall into the hands of supporters of imperial poles and economic corruption. The continuation of the monarchic state’s policies under the Islamic Republic has led to the rise in the dollar’s value from nearly seven toman to one hundred thousand toman, pushing one-third of the population below the poverty line.

7- “The need for the military to exit business operations.” This too, without the independent organization of workers and farmers in the country, is nothing more than an empty slogan. The management of industry and agriculture—whether state-run or private—can only serve the needs of the country and advance independence and freedom by strict observance of the independent organization of workers and farmers and their control over production.

Shargh’s editorial admits that the drafters of these demands were themselves high-ranking officials in government and “have participated in creating the current disorder with their own methods.” The common ground between the drafters of the demands and the authors within the ruling elite is their support for nuclear enrichment and their anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist stance. With Israel now dominant in regional politics following the destruction of parts of the Islamic Republic’s nuclear enrichment facilities, the entire Shia-Bazaar intensifies its anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist slogans. They articulate the I.R.I.’s opposition to surrender in this way: “But this is not surrender to America. It is surrender to a racist, fanatical, child-killing, ex-

pansionist, vengeful group that believes only in the orders of murder, vengeance, and genocide written in the Torah and Talmud.”

Simply put, the leaders of the Islamic Republic have a problem with the Torah and the Talmud, and Jew-hatred—just like all other similar groups in the tradition of Nazism—dominates the discourse of the Islamic Republic. Whereas the explicit verse in the Qur'an, in Surah al-Baqarah, says:

"O Children of Israel, remember the favor I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over all the worlds." (2:47)

The first and last word of regime intellectuals in the Islamic Republic is defense of the reactionary policy of nuclear enrichment, missile construction and launch, anti-Jewish-Zionist hatred, and war with the Jewish state. Thus, historical facts are presented in reverse—contrary to truth—to support the Islamic Republic's official narratives, which are a continuation of the Pahlavi regime's reactionary path, as evident in the government critics' declaration published in Shargh's editorial. For example, the temporary ceasefire in the 12-day war is attributed by regime critics to the power of the Shia-Bazaar's hypersonic missiles. Or, from prison, they write that you have provoked the Zionist regime against Iran and that, supposedly, if we were in power, we would put Israel back in its place!

One of the most prominent intellectuals of the Islamic Republic—who has been at the top of the regime's intellectual elite since the purge of over a thousand university professors in the early post-revolution years (along with Abdolkarim Soroush and Jalal al-Din Farsi, he direct-

ed the purge under the banner of the “Cultural Revolution”)—is someone who openly says he does not believe in a war to destroy Israel, considers missile power the reason for Iran's strength (Sadegh Zibakalam, Shargh newspaper, Monday, Tir 30, 1404 / July 21, 2025), and defends Iran's “right” to nuclear enrichment. Yet Iran's missile power—like its nuclear enrichment capability and war against Israel—are sources of disgrace and misfortune for the nation and are the outcome of a deviation from the path of Independence and Freedom in the country.

One independent workers' council, one independent farmers' association, outweighs hundreds of nuclear enrichment centers and hypersonic missile production and deployment facilities, in terms of fulfilling the historical need for achieving national independence and freedom. Nuclear enrichment is a deviation from Iran's goals of independence and freedom and an obstacle to achieving them. All the supposed progress and credibility of intellectuals in the Islamic Republic is measurable by their opposition to nuclear enrichment, missile production, anti-Jewish-Zionist hatred, and war against Israel, and by their alignment with Melat, the people.

The Middle East needs the expansion of the independent power of workers and farmers and their peaceful unity—and such support for a promising future is scarcely seen among notable figures in the Islamic Republic. What is lacking among the Islamic Republic's intellectuals is instead found among the ranks of workers, hardworking Afghan migrants—in short, among the popular urban and rural classes who carry the promise of the country's future.



The Principle of Equality of Religions from the Perspective of the Workers' Government

Workers ask: is there a superior or better religion? From the viewpoint of followers of each religion, their own faith is the best. The idea of a superior religion traces back to tribal monarchies and the despotic Asian system, where the general population counted for nothing—and this notion has nothing in common with the needs of the working people in the capitalist era. With the emergence of capitalism—that is, the articulation of capitalism's historical tasks in the 18th century in Europe and North America—from the perspective of the new capitalist state, all religions are equal and none is superior to the others. In simple terms, Sunni is equal to Shia. While followers of both religions may believe the other is destined for hell. Shia is equal to Sheikhi and Baha'i; Christianity and Zoroastrianism are equal. Shia and Judaism are equal. Shia and Buddhism, as well as the modern dervish religions, are all equal.

After the 1979 revolution, due to the dominance of the Shia-Bazaar, the curtain of religious freedom—just like during the despotic monarchy—was once again pulled down, and a faction of the Shia-Bazaar (with the support of Washington) seized control of the state and the country. The suppression of religious freedom came hand in hand with the trampling of all the people's independent rights. Women's rights were violated. The rights of Aghvams, ethnic and national groups were violated. The rights of workers and farmers were trampled. The rights of students and youth were abolished. The rights of migrant and Afghan workers were attacked. The rights of artists and intellectuals—and in a word, civil and political liberties—were assaulted by the Shia-Bazaar. This process continued for more than four and a half decades.

Until the Shia-Bazaar's defeat in the 12-day war against Israel's defense revealed itself, and statements like those of proponents of Shia superiority and violence against Jews and others were exposed as hollow, causing them to lose

their support base in an unprecedented way. The Islamic Republic's approach—as a continuation of the Pahlavi despotism in both minor and major economic matters, which is responsible for the vast economic crisis—lost even more of its credibility.

The writers of Shargh newspaper claim that the country's problems are due to “the flawed implementation of governance and the decisions made within the bureaucracy, in which these gentlemen are either directly or indirectly involved,” and that this deficiency can be resolved by increasing the power of the reformist faction within the government. However, since the country is “facing the political designs of imperialism and Zionism, the theory of a land extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, and the neutralization of regional countries,” we must “open our eyes and see everything in its proper place”... just not open our eyes for even a moment to the truth of the reactionary nuclear enrichment program and the reactionary war for the destruction of Israel, which form the foundation of the Islamic Republic's policy.

Adding to the government mass of anti-Jewish-Zionist supporters, a concentration of nuclear enrichment advocates, missile builders, and supporters of war against Israel—whether from political prisoners or those residing abroad—into the current cadre of the Shia-Bazaar regime cannot reverse the downward spiral into which the Islamic Republic has fallen. Expelling hundreds of thousands of hardworking Afghan people from the country cannot block the main movement for national independence and liberation from the deep economic crisis, nor can it end the cycle of poverty, unemployment, inflation, and the unprecedented shortag-

es of water, electricity, and gas. The repressions applied through arrests and executions has not moral reasoning and support among Mellat.

The entire Islamic Republic and its affiliated theorists focus on promoting imperialist solutions that exploit the existing channels of the Shia-Bazaar regime, liberal bourgeoisie, and remnants of the monarchy to obstruct the forward momentum of Iran's working and toiling people. Erasing the memory of the 1979 Revolution as much as possible is actively pursued by the Shia-Bazaar regime and its political and academic affiliates inside and outside the country.

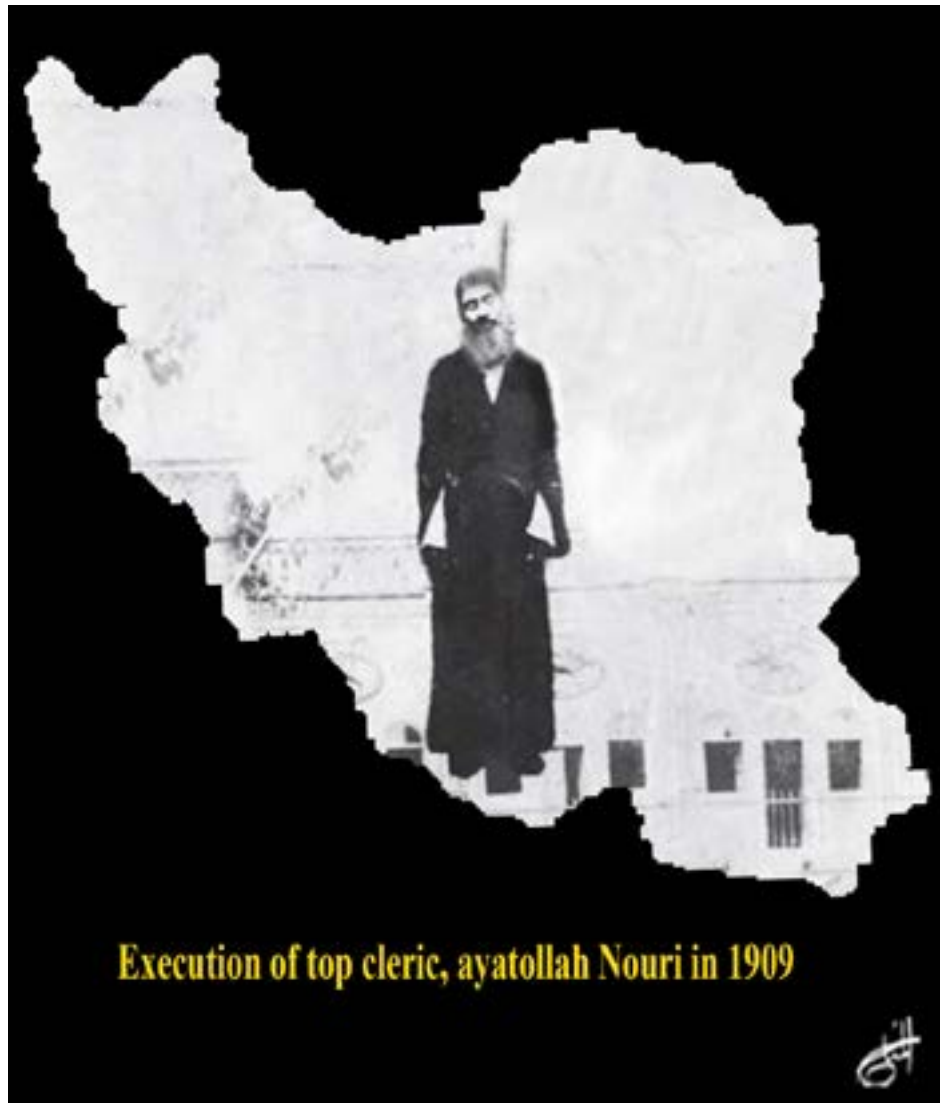
The concrete empowerment of the popular urban and rural classes—through enduring the defeats suffered by the Islamic Republic in its failed pursuit of regional dominance, nuclear enrichment, and war to destroy Israel—increases Mellat's independent potential. The solution lies in establishing sovereignty independent from the Shia-Bazaar: the government of the majority, that is, a workers and farmers government. A path that can discard nuclear enrichment, the production of weapons of mass destruction, anti-Jewish-Zionist hatred, and war against the Jewish state—in short, the militarism of the Shia-Bazaar—and bring about national independence and freedom, along with solidarity among the peoples of the Middle East.

Masoumeh Taban

Tir 1404 / July 20

[Back to the first page](#)

"Zedd-e Akhund": A Weapon of Imperialism, Liberal Bourgeoisie, and Remnants of Monarchy Against Freedom and Self-Determination of Mellat



After the twelve-day war, we witness attempts by currents affiliated with imperialism, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the remnants of mon-

archy, each trying to stamp their seal on these events. Therefore, young workers need to investigate the facts behind *Zedd-e Akhund*, An-

ti-clericalism, its role in current politics, and its historical background since the Constitutional Revolution. *Zedd-e Akhund* is about steering the working people into the political dead-end desired by Washington and native capitalism in Iran. In other words, the result of cleric-hatred is the diversion of the potential of the urban and rural popular classes away from independence and freedom, in favor of despotic regimes acting against the interests of the nation.

Before entering the discussion of *Zedd-e Akhund*, it is necessary to understand that this subject has a long history, at least since the time of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. The reactionary struggle of the liberal bourgeoisie against religion goes back even further, to the 18th-century revolutions in Western Europe. For instance, during the French Revolution, in a Catholic country, the liberal bourgeoisie believed that religion had to be completely eliminated from society. However, the contradiction between the state's attempt to uproot religion and the demand for freedom of expression and democracy led the government to moderate this stance. The relationship between religion and the state, in the form of their separation, was properly articulated in the first article of the *Bill of Rights* arising from the 1776 independence revolution.

During the course of the Constitutional Revolution of the early 20th century, the leadership was basically composed of Mashrooté and Mashrooá. What were the reasons for the defeat of that revolution? Obviously, the responsibility lied with the leaderships that were supporters of Qajar and were not able to abandon their support to monarchy. This simple truth was abandoned. In its place the reason for the

defeat of Mashrooté revolution was proposed to be Akhund, the 'clergy' and Shia was introduced as the culprit for defeat. The famous historian, Ahamad Kasravi was the one who introduced this false narrative. Many followed his false assessments afterwards. The chapter of Akhund-setizi, anti-clericalism was opened there and then and was propagated by the liberal bourgeoisie thereafter. Reza Khan dictatorship, which can be construed as British policy, rode this wave to power. Reza Khan banned on the one hand Akhund from appearing in public with their robes and on the other established Hozeh Elmieh, Qom Seminary. Therefore it is necessary to review Akhund-setizi for today's needs.

Fortunately, the talk by "historian, Iran-expert, researcher and writer", the famous Abbas Milani at the head of Hoover Institute in northern California to promote Akhund-setizi can help us in clarifying the subject. The presenter of the aforementioned video talk tries to bolster Akhund-setizi with the help of Reza Khan. His explanations on this ground almost entirely are false or out of context; which is in contradiction with fact-based reasoning and even academic standards. In this article, while thanking from the presenter we will criticize the presentation with the sole aim of clarifying a number of facts for our young workers. We will check the talk on justifications for Akhund-setizi and in support of Reza Khan.

First- Millani says Reza Khan contrary to Nasser al-din Shah, who gave away all the mines, forests, roads and in a word the entire country through Reuters contract make the country rich. In this regard, it is necessary to special attention to the pre-capitalist and capitalist eras. The

same colonial forces that sought concessions from Nasser al-din Shah in a consequent period placed Reza Khan to power and made the Pahlavi monarchy from him. By eliminating historic facts, the presenter introduces Nasser al-din Shah as a an uncultured and partying person while Reza Khan is his opposite. Mr. Millani is wrong on both the two personalities and their actions.

We must know that Nasser al-din Shah contract is during per-capitalism while Reza Khan's contract for building railway is after the dawn of capitalism and after the defeat of Constitutional Revolution.

During Nasser al-din Shah land, mine, forest, road and highway were not bought and sold and thus did not have a measurable monetary value. In a similar situation, it is not possible to criticize the Indians of 17th century in what is now Peru to have given their gold dishes and utilities to the conquistadors for artifacts that were not valuable. For the south America natives gold was just a different metal and there did not exist an exchange and money economy.

Nasser al-din Shah was after currency from the Tsar empire in north and British empire in south for international trade and the countries resources for him which he signed over were secondary. If Nasser al-din Shah knew, like the Peruvian natives, that the value of their wares was much more than what they were getting in return, surely he would not sign such agreement. But our presenter tries to put forward an ignorant Nasser al-din Shah on binge (a fact that is often true about the Pahlavi and their cadre during the 20th century). According to our prejudiced presenter, Nasser al-din Shah

was so bad that he would give millions and receive thousands in return. Which unfortunately resembles sophistry. The reader needs to note that in Millani presentation the role of the colonialist, namely the British relations with Nasser al-din Shah and Reza Khan is forgotten.

Here, it is necessary to ascend a few steps and examine the framework of the discussion from a deeper perspective. The key to understanding the issue lies in recognizing the difference between the eras of Naser al-Din Shah and Reza Khan. The era of Naser al-Din Shah marks the final stages of the clash between the old Eastern Asiatic society and the global capitalist system. The latter, by contrast, represents the direct presence of international colonial capitalism after the dissolution of the old Eastern society and its entrapment by imperialism. It is not without reason that our speaker from the Hoover think tank has come to the aid of Reza Khan. In any case, historical review—regardless of its source or purpose—requires giving primacy to the truth.

During the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, the Qajar dynasty was faced with realities that had no precedent in the thousands of years of the former Asian system of governance: namely, the confrontation with the capitalist economic-social system. The old Asian order lacked political economy. The source of wealth for previous rulers was royal treasuries, the taxation system, income from merchants who traveled the lands of ancient history, and conquests and plunder. However, Naser al-Din Shah had to reach out to the Russian and British governments to receive loans and foreign currency for international trade and his use—a resource that never existed in the historical structure of the old Asian order.

The Qajar monarchy found itself historically humiliated in the face of this reality. Mr. Milani presents this reality as a personal shortcoming of Naser al-Din Shah, who allegedly wanted to keep his country away from the West, which—without expressing the substance of events—is at the very least meaningless and in fact misleads one in understanding the issue.

In the 19th century, the shut-in Asian/Eastern society, which had repeated itself for thousands of years, was confronted with the reality of the superior capitalist system in a terrifying collision. A collision more painful than the blows of the whip. Blows which, in the poems Marx quotes from Schiller, are painful but liberating. Because at the end of this painful process, a capable Mellat, nation, is ultimately born in Mamlekat-e Mahroosseh, the protected land of, the Qajars. (The reactionary negation of Mellat, the nation that emerged at the end of Asia's long history, due to its collision with international capitalism, is displayed by the Reza Khan types. That is why the theorists of imperialism, monarchy, and the Shia-Bazaar celebrate the rise of Reza Khan's reaction in the twentieth century.)

The old Asian society in the pre-Islamic era, during the emergence and rise of Zoroastrianism, experienced many victories and defeats. Defeats that led to the fall of ruling dynasties, such as the extinction of the Achaemenids by Alexander the Macedonian or the collapse of the Sassanids after the rise and domination of the Islamic Arabs. After that, the restoration of the old Persian empire never occurred again. The Asian order continued within the unchanging framework in which "religion is politics."

All conflicts in old Asia were of the kind that occurred with their own type. Economic and cultural growth and intermingling took place through these confrontations, but the economic and social system did not change in the slightest. The events of the 19th century are entirely different.

The 19th century in the history of Iran was spent trying to tame the rebellious old Asian order. Fath-Ali Shah Qajar suffered the defeats of Golestan (1813 AD) and Turkmen Chay (1828 AD) at the hands of the more advanced society of Tsarist Russia.

The protected realm of the Qajars had no solution to prevent or repel these defeats. Continuing in this process, the Qajar state lost Herat. Ultimately, the Qajar army in Bushehr (1838 AD) surrendered and was defeated by 500 British naval troops.

Throughout the 19th century, the Qajar monarchy and its entire governmental apparatus became an entry point for colonialism among the tribes and clans. Naser al-Din Shah's trip to Europe and the receipt of money in exchange for treaties took place within this framework—not due to Naser al-Din Shah's recklessness or illiteracy—a man who, as the Qajar crown prince, had received the highest teachings of Shiism, literature, hunting, and horsemanship from the best available tutors in the Qajar court during his youth in Tabriz.

Over the course of the 20th century, the developments leading to the end of the uncontested dominance of hereditary Eastern despotism were left behind. Reza Khan was appointed as an agent of the British. Colonialism no lon-

ger needed the tools of earlier periods to enter through direct relations with tribes and clans, and it entrusted the suppression of everyone to Reza Khan and, from then on, maintained indirect relations with the pillars of the old power. For the resistance posed by the old elements of society that had existed alongside the old hereditary monarchy and served as a source of economic-ideological sustenance for him, such as the Bazaar and the Shia, he had a program of suppression and appeasement. Thus, the series of accusations that our speaker directs at Naser al-Din Shah are many times more applicable to Reza Khan. For the suppression of society, the colonial power had no need for an enlightened man with cultural knowledge of the old society as a whole, but rather someone who would pave the way to power through kicks and blows and possessed no instruction beyond that of a military man or a Cossack.

Here, we do not intend to recount the pages of the nation's history after the removal of Reza Khan in Shahrivar 1320 \[September 1941]. The persistent efforts to amass wealth and addiction in the period after Reza Khan's fall are reported in the pages of Iranian newspapers. Was the continuation of the Pahlavi monarchy guaranteed after Reza Shah's exile? Apart from Stalin, none of the world powers believed so. London turned to the remnants of the Qajar dynasty to restore the old monarchy. However, the Qajar heir no longer knew Persian or spoke it. The second Pahlavi came to power out of the imperial powers' desperation, a position consolidated by the CIA-led coup of 28 Mordad \[August 19, 1953], which imposed the Pahlavi-SAVAK regime on the Iranian nation and was ultimately ended thanks to the Revolution of 1979.

Second – The cultural comparison and the personalities of Naser al-Din Shah and Reza Khan—the former belonging to the pre-capitalist era and the latter trained in the Cossack military school during the capitalist period—testify against the speaker's positions and conclusions. The reader may refer to the article "Dar al-Hekmat" (Kargar No. 2, Series 3) to learn that in pre-capitalist centuries of the East, princes and kings spent much of their time in their libraries; even more than on state affairs. It could not have been otherwise, as culture was largely confined to that environment. In the old Asiatic system, the majority of the population, as Marx put it, lived in historical slumber, and apart from the suffering they endured, history held nothing for them—whatever befell them or whatever they heard about, they attributed to natural events, like earthquakes, and were mostly indifferent to them. Literary development was confined to the elite and to the margins of the Asiatic ruling apparatus, and within this limit it took shape, and rulers were often not indifferent to cultural productions, both of their own time and earlier ones—such as the Quran and Hadiths, which were operative systems for all of them, and the translation of ancient Greek cultural works was also of interest to Middle Eastern rulers.

Naser al-Din Shah brought photography to Iran from his travels to Europe and left behind many photographs, even from his own harem, which provide insight into the character of the Asiatic despot. The same monarch who ordered the execution of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir (a reformer prime minister). He also met with the famous Molla Hadi Sabzevari (author of *Sharh al-Manzumeh*) and asked him to write a treatise on "Creation." Would such a request ever cross the mind of Reza Khan the Cossack?

Reza Khan was appointed over the emirates of Iran during the era of industry and oil production, a time when the era demanded universities. Did Reza Khan build universities, at the very least with the standards of cultural freedom and debate that existed in the emirates of old Asia—like Jundi Shapur before the advent of Islam? No. Before establishing universities, Reza Khan and British policy sought to create an extreme apparatus of political repression. No one had the ability to express opinions under the quasi-fascist suffocation of Reza Khan in Iran. Reza Khan ultimately looked for his model of governance in the rule of Hitler and the Third Reich.

The speaker claims that many intellectuals of the time had gathered around Reza Khan, and this is supposed to elevate Reza Khan's cultural value in the eyes of the speaker. However, the speaker does not mention that Reza Khan killed some of these individuals, such as Davar. His chief of police, Ayrom, who sensed mortal danger, feigned illness and went to Germany, never to return, and the community of intellectuals who came to understand Reza Khan abandoned him. This kind of distortion of facts does not even fit within the standards of attention to truth in the academic realm.

The era of industrial emergence is entirely different from pre-capitalist conditions and brings a different level of precision and urgency to society. The speaker claims Reza Khan was punctual and began meetings on time. What happened to someone who perhaps arrived late to a meeting? Presumably, he would be beaten by Reza Khan. Is that right? Did Reza Khan beat people? Mohammad Masoud, the renowned Iranian journalist who published the newspaper

Mard-e Emrooz (Today's Man) during the rise of political freedoms in World War II, reports in detail with photographs on Reza Khan's inspection trip to Chalus by the Caspian sea during his despotic rule, describing how by the pool at the governor's office, among the standing attendees who had risen in respect for the king's arrival, he physically beat the governor. What does that mean? We have a question for Mr. Milani: does that mean the man was a thug? Of course, our speaker modestly admits that Reza Khan was not a liberal!

Mard-e Emrooz reports like this on the downfall of Reza Khan: "The twenty years food was vomited in twenty seconds!" Compare such truths, experienced by the Iranian people, with the fabricated glorification of Reza Khan by the speaker. Now, nearly 80 years later, at a time when the speaker is free to express opinions, despite having access to sources and libraries many times greater than what Mohammad Masouds had, he prefers to conceal the truth. One must ask the speaker: with such descriptions of Reza Khan, wouldn't it have been better if each of the societies in North America and Western Europe, instead of carrying out revolutions for freedom, had managed to acquire a Reza Khan of their own and completed history "on time"?

Third – Our speaker says that Reza Khan built the railway with taxes on sugar and sweets, and for that he gathered dozens of foreign companies—"forty-two countries," he says—something Naser al-Din Shah had sought but failed to accomplish. The speaker avoids explaining the historical context of the event. During the Qajar era, a limited railway between Tehran and pilgrimage centers was established.

Reza Khan was appointed by the British through the coup of 1299 \[1921] in response to the triumph of the October 1917 Revolution in Iran. Under the guise of modernization and reform, he attracted a number of supporters of the Russian Revolution. Tsarist Russia, which had swallowed parts of northwestern Qajar Iran in the 19th century, disappeared from the face of the earth with the October Revolution in 1917. And there were no few intellectuals who cheered for this event—like Seyyed Zia, who was in Russia during the 1917 Revolution and said, “Witnessing these events was unbelievable to me.”

The imperial powers pursued a plan for rapid access to the Soviet Union’s borders in northern Iran with military objectives and implemented the railway project funded by the Iranian government. At no cost to them—paid for with Iranian taxes and oil revenues. The speaker’s own evidence contradicts his claims. Not only the railway but all roads and tunnels connecting to the north of the country are military installations. The speaker does not say why Reza Khan did not line up forty-two countries to build a steel mill and other foundational industrial facilities in Iran. Because foundational construction—like the oil industry, railways, steel industry, and so on—was completely outside of Reza Khan’s decision-making, and he was merely an agent of suppression over the people in the native country. Reza Khan was allowed to establish a limited number of light industries such as textile weaving, and to meet the needs of these light industries, he sent a limited number of male students abroad for education.

The image of reality is completely different from the speaker’s claim about Iran’s indifference to the “West” during the Qajar period. During the entire reign of Reza Khan, was there any figure equivalent to Seyyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, who traveled abroad and attempted to articulate Shia thought in dialogue with Western culture? And he is not the only one. The speaker, in contradiction to the standard of respect for truth, distorts or completely misrepresents reality whenever it suits his agenda. His minor goal is to impose anti-clericalism and nothing more.

Fourth – The speaker claims Reza Khan wanted girls and women to be present in society. However, images of women’s comings and goings in public places during the Qajar era contradict the speaker’s claim and do not depict women in total darkness: Islamic mysticism in Middle Eastern history was founded over a thousand years ago by a woman, Rabi’a of Basra. In Islamic history, women are present in the sectarian struggles of Shia and Sunni, as well as in mythological texts like the *Shahnameh*. Again, the significance of the October Revolution during Reza Khan’s era, which stimulated women’s movements worldwide, is omitted by the speaker.

The speaker claims: Reza Khan wanted girls and women to attend school and be equal to men. He seems unaware that this was not true for Reza Khan’s own daughters and wives. Only his sons were sent abroad for education. His daughters did not even attend domestic universities. Women’s right to vote came decades later, through the White or Green revolutions proposed by Washington in Iran. The daughters of Reza Khan’s government officials were

sometimes allowed to attend a few grades of school, but his government apparatus, like himself, opposed the presence of women in schools and universities, and they were merely forced to appear unveiled alongside men in formal ceremonial displays.

If the aim was women's participation in society, why then did the chador, veil, and headscarves of girls and women have to be torn to shreds in public under the boots of policemen? Reza Khan's unveiling campaign amounted to the exile of veiled women—i.e., the majority of society—to the corners of their homes, removing them from public life. Such violence against women is unprecedented in centuries of Middle Eastern history. Justifying and defending this unbridled assault on women's rights by Reza Khan, as done by our speaker, is an academic disgrace.

After society's stagnation due to the support of the National Front leadership and Stalin for the second Pahlavi monarchy, and the imposition of the 1953 coup d'état, which cast history into a dark retreat, it was only with the emergence of a new generation and the 1979 Revolution—which crushed Pahlavi despotism—that we witnessed a response and return in the form of the Islamic Republic's answer to Reza Khan's unveiling and the continued negative consequences it left behind.

Fifth - The speaker claims that Reza Khan brought democratic rights to Iran! Over his 20 years of despotic rule, Reza Khan turned himself into the biggest landowner in Iran. Democratic rights begin with peasants' rights to land—at the very least akin to the abolition of serfdom in mid-19th century Tsarist Russia, which stands

among the greatest events of that era, alongside the abolition of slavery in the United States. Democratic rights include women's rights—not the crushing of veiled women. Democratic rights mean the national rights of Iran's ethnic groups and tribes, all of whom were suppressed by Reza Khan. Democratic rights mean freedom of expression and assembly, and Reza Khan's hostility toward them knew no bounds.

Sixth and conclusion – How is it that Mr. Milani has turned to Reza Khan and engaged in distorting the truth? The core of our speaker's message is Zedd-e Akhund, anti-clericalism. In order to advance this position, he presents Reza Khan and, as he pleases, resorts to falsifying the facts.

Young workers ask: how is it that our speaker became an anti-clerical?

He speaks of Naser al-Din Shah's travels to Europe and the dispatching of students abroad. Yet, he himself studied abroad and returned to the country with a like-minded group. The baggage of experience carried by our speaker and his peers includes "besieging the cities through the countryside" and similar notions, taken from the first generation of Maoist political tendency. This group's path eventually led to prison and trial by SAVAK.

Pahlavi monarchy called it so the battle against the "Red" and "Black" reaction. If you came from a red [leftist] background, you had to submit to propaganda against the black reaction, the Shia, in order to be free and gain position within his system. If you came from an Islamic background, you had to campaign against Marxism. Did the ideas of the named individu-

al, who came from a “red” background, change throughout these developments? The various works Mr. Milani has written on Iranian history and its figures, presented in the same manner as the speech in the video being critiqued in this article, unfortunately do not advance the understanding of truth or social thought, despite their numerous volumes. Frozen in anti-clericalism before and after SAVAK detention, the proponents of this line still repeat the same discourse today under academic guise. The leader of this tendency, Parviz Nik-khah, was unfortunately executed after the 1979 Revolution, in line with the capital punishment standards applied to collaborators of the Shah’s regime, put forward by the Maoist and populist-guerrilla tendencies. Unfortunately, our speaker has no lesson from history that would meet the needs of Iranian workers and toilers, and he continues to observe the interests of non-national forces and nations without regard for the truth. Instead of looking to Iran’s future through the independent unity of women, workers and farmers, Shia and Jews, and the freedom of all religions, he turns to the country’s dark and reactionary past.

A clear example of anti-clericalism is the hanging of Ayatollah Noori in 1909. Less than a month after the execution of Noori, the constitutional revolution’s mujahideen—the armed organs of the people—were disarmed and dissolved. Soon after, Sattar Khan was targeted in an assassination attempt and died sometime later from his wounds. With the dissolution of the constitutional mujahideen, the center of governmental power shifted from the people’s organizations to the parliament, and from parliament to the cabinet. It took only time, in the cabinet, a lone Cossack took power through beating and coercion. Thus, the glorification of

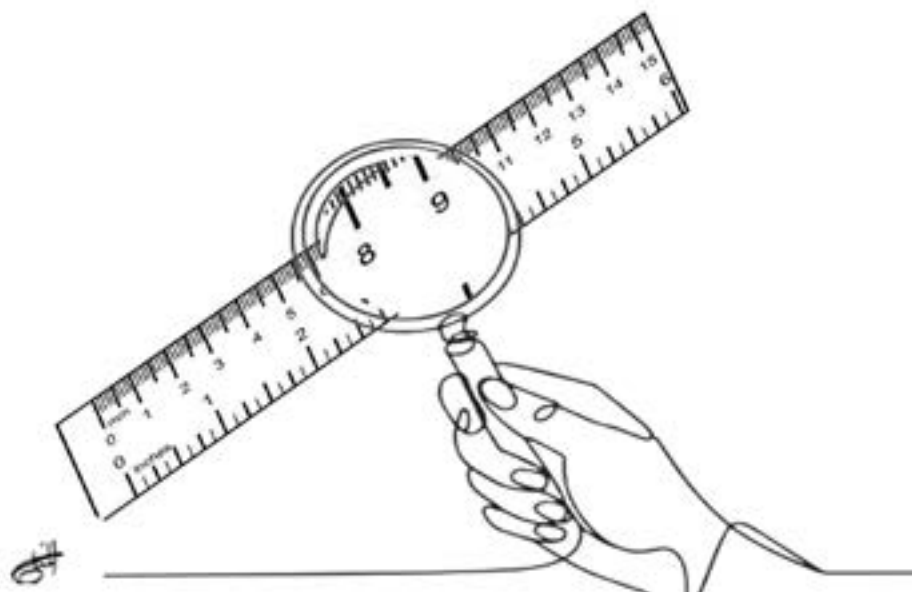
Reza Khan serves the aim of stripping Mellat, the nation, of power. Young workers know the famous maxim: “Gar hokm shavad ke mast girand, dar shahr har ankeh hast girand” “if the decree were issued to arrest the drunkards, then all would be seized in the city.” Anti-clericalism ultimately seeks to prevent the independent organization of the working people and block access to their long-cherished aspirations for national Independence and Freedom.

Dara Barzegar,

Tir 1404 / July 2025

[Back to the first page](#)

Different yardstick to measure Right and Reaction



Why not mention genocide in Lebanon or Palestine? The reader states, "I disagree with the accusation that Israel's committing genocide against the Palestinian people. How would you answer this?...

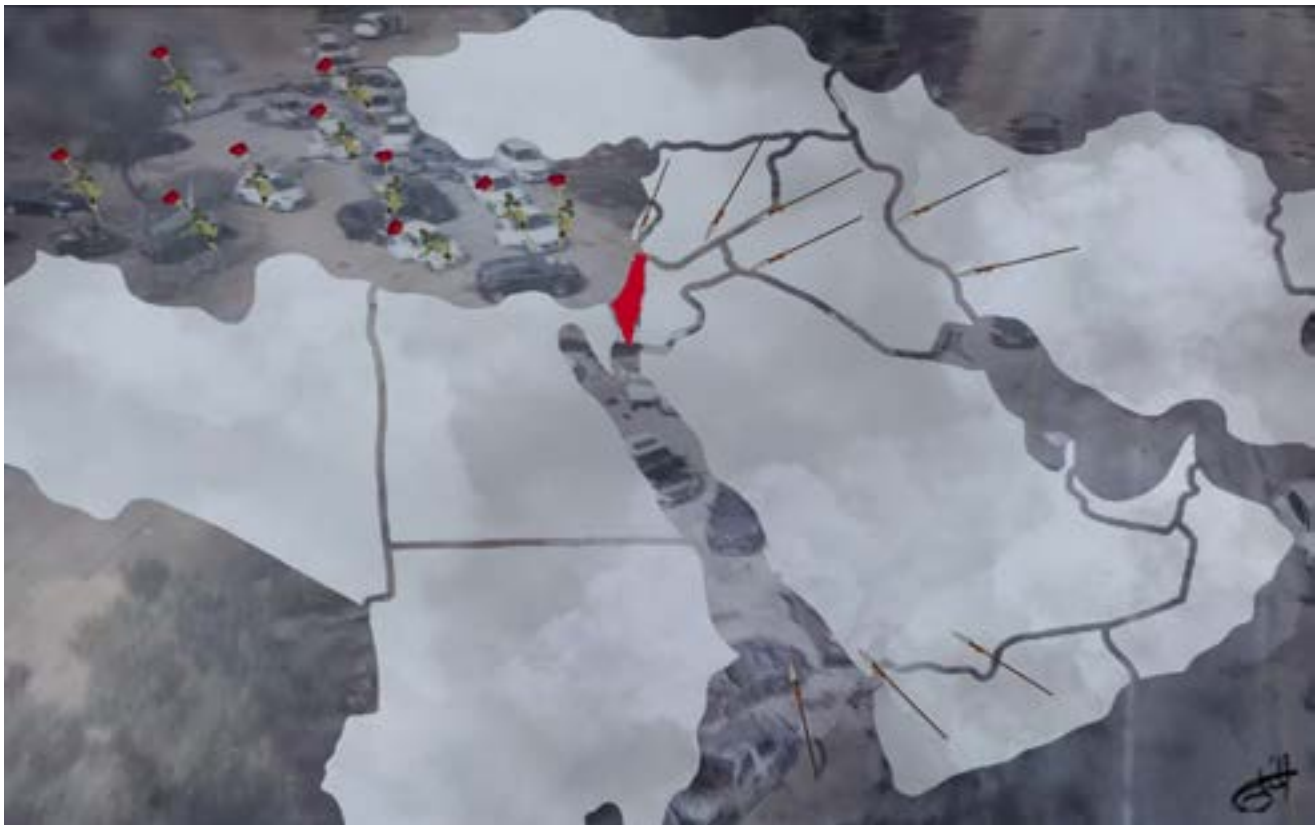
Pouya Rahgozar responds: The Kargar writers, while expressing sympathy for the suffering and hardship of all human beings, maintain that the massacre and rape of women on October 7, 2023, in southern Israel—the killing of over 1,200 people and the taking of more than 200 hostages, from infants to elderly men and women, and the continued sexual assault of women in captivity—should not be pushed aside by the narratives of financial capitalism. It appears that much of the false sympathy for the Palestinian people, expressed by international financial capitalism and its representatives across the world, aims to undermine the Jewish state's right to self-defense. In other words, how dare the Jewish people, against the historical norm of the Holocaust, respond with self-defense in the face of mass murder? Jews are not supposed

to defend themselves or have a state, and international capitalism, through false propaganda, seeks to vilify the Jews' courageous defense of their right to exist. The position of the Shia-Bazaar ruling elite and its government critics follows the same line.

But Israel's self-defense since October 7 has changed the Middle East as a whole, and the Islamic Republic's policy is currently facing an unparalleled dilemma.

Only the political opinions of the working class are reflected in Kargar journal, which are objective facts freed from the deceptive propaganda of finance capitalism and its international representatives. Independent news organizations are in charge of reporting on the current happenings in detail.

The working class, however, believes that the destruction and casualties on the front of truth and the front of deception are not comparable. As a result, it is impossible to use a single met-



Israel's legitimate defense against the Islamic Republic's war and its role in preventing a second Holocaust.

ric for both fronts.

Israel's legitimate defense against the Islamic Republic's war and its role in preventing a second Holocaust.

Large portions of the I.R.I.'s uranium enrichment and missile facilities were destroyed during the 12-day war as a necessary part of Israel's defense of its existence in the conflict with the Islamic Republic since October 7, when Tehran intensified its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Previous issues of the Kargar journal have detailed and examined the role that imperialism and its supporters have played in maintaining the false front since October-7.

Following World War II, Jews who had been exiled from Western Europe and not allowed in North America and who had survived the Nazi camps moved to the ancestral country where

the Jewish faith had its beginnings. In 1948, they created their state alongside other Jews who were already living in the historic territory. Following Israel's establishment, the Jewish state was subjected to decades of hostile siege by Middle Eastern nations that detested Jews and used anti-Zionism as a tool to stop their own peoples from acting independently. Following this pattern, after the 1979 revolution, the Shia-Bazaar ruling elite in Iran began preparing for a nuclear war against Israel and used hypersonic missiles to target the Jewish people. They did this for the same well-known reasons of repressing the rights of the people, including those of women, religious and ethnic minorities, workers and farmers, artists and intellectuals, etc.

The destruction of human and civilizational forces targeted by Iran's indiscriminate missile attacks is the main topic of the Kargar publica-

tion. A little more than 10% of the I.R.I.'s explosive missiles managed to get past Israel's defenses, killing dozens and destroying thousands of homes and some of the biggest hospitals in the process. These destructions are enormous.

However, as none of those missiles had nuclear warheads, the Jews prevailed. The Islamic Republic's nuclear program has, for the time being, been delayed because of Israel's defense.

The narrative is inverted and attempts to make the false side appear to be the victim if we examine the publications of the Islamic Republic. For instance, a parent standing next to Evin who was killed by shrapnel striking him in the neck, or a pregnant mother who died. Before all else, such tragic fatalities beg the question: why do common people not have access to bomb shelters like the I.R.I. officials do? Iranian workers question if the war waged by the Islamic Republic is required. Is it possible for nuclear weapons to settle the conflict between the equivalent rights of the Iranian people and Jews, which are inextricably tied; in other words, is it possible to disregard the long-standing call for Independence and Freedom?

The government that started a war to destroy Israel and commit a second Holocaust out of a desire for regional domination is to blame for the fatalities in Iran. This holds true for both nuclear and military leadership. Even his family is not aware of this regressive government policy, so why should a nuclear physicist be working on creating a nuclear bomb? Official propaganda said that the scientist's wife and kids had been informed that he served tea for the Revolutionary Guard. Why should commanders committed to the murder of Jews be

part of Iran's military forces?

In historical truth, Israeli and Iranian workers are united in their opposition to the war of Jew-killing. Consequently, the Kargar newspaper encourages the togetherness and camaraderie of Israeli and Iranian workers. On the other hand, the entire Shia-Bazaar ruling class, which is made up of political groups from Iran's middle class, bourgeoisie, and human rights movement, has consistently looked for methods to criticize Israel and justify their war against it.

Beyond Iran's current circumstances, dear reader, you can independently research historical facts that we will only touch on in passing here. For instance, in the eight-year conflict between Iraq and Iran, justice sided with Iran. We won't talk about how the Shia-Bazaar leadership's repression of political independence in Iran converted that noble quest into a minefield bloodbath for young Iranians for the time being. Groups (such as Rafsanjani, Chamran, etc.) controlled the war effort in Iran and actually held not Iraq but Iran accountable for the conflict.

In order to place the blame and responsibility for the war on Iran, the political factions of the liberal bourgeoisie and populist guerrilla organizations often denounced both sides equally throughout the Iraq-Iran war, ignoring the battle between revolution and counterrevolution to place the blame on Iran.

The Legacy of the Revolutionary Movement: A Different Yardstick for Truth and Falsehood

Today's misleading propaganda about the slaughter in Gaza is reminiscent of how lying was portrayed as victimhood throughout the 20th century. Financial capitalism's primary propaganda technique has historically been this approach. The events leading up to and following the October Revolution of 1917, which has characterized the revolutionary age since then, provide the younger generation with trustworthy benchmarks for making decisions.

The young workers' state was engulfed in a catastrophic civil war following the October Revolution. Red Soviet Russia faced out against the imperialist-backed White Russians during the 1918-21 civil war, who were counterrevolutionary. The first workers' government in human history was depicted by Karl Kautsky in his book *Terrorism and Communism* as a symbol of terrorism rather than communism, in reference to the human and civilizational losses of the Russian civil war. The attempt by Russian workers to lead the society to setup their own government was seen as a factor that undermined the balance in capitalist system. In the years preceding World War I, Kautsky was considered a leader of German Social Democracy.

By unanimously endorsing the "war credits" under Kautsky leadership, the German Social Democratic Party effectively betrayed the German and international working classes by supporting the German bourgeoisie and Kaiser Wilhelm II's government (August 4, 1914). Continuing this pattern, Social Democracy appeared as the imperialist war's managerial arm

of capitalism, a function it still plays in politics today. (Readers can see an example of a Social Democratic candidate who is in line with Kautsky's legacy and is contesting in the New York City elections to manage capitalism; this candidate is backed by the upper echelons of the middle class rather than the working class.)

Kautsky continued to serve capitalism after 1914 instead of the independent workers' movement. He also opposed the October 1917 Revolution and called the Soviet Union's civil war defense terrorism. He was reminded by the leaders of the October Revolution that there is not a single yardstick that can be used to apply to Right and Reaction when evaluating the impact of historical events like revolutions and war and the opposition by the counterrevolution; the latter aiming to wipe out humanity pretending it is using the standards of "progress."

In the age of financial capitalism, the national liberation and working class movements which serve as the cornerstone of historical advancement, has its own evaluation yardstick. Since the October Revolution of 1917 revolutionaries have been able to use such criteria. Applying accurate truth evaluation in the modern era is guided by revolutionary and democratic political understanding. Reaction causes the inflicted destructions that leave their mark on history. These destructions can include the deployment of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by imperialism against humankind, as well as tens of millions of dead from WW I and II. When the solidarity of British and German workers could not carry the day and respective imperial bourgeoisie declared and directed their wars as portrayed by Hollywood movies. In truth, Hamas's reactionary policies and the

backing of worldwide supporters are to blame for the destructions that are occurring in Gaza.

Following World War I, financial capitalism and its media infrastructure adopted Kautsky's viewpoint as a template for disinformation. To put it another way, imperialism rejects truth-based appraisal and concentrates its propaganda strategy on erroneous assessments because it adopts a single standard of measurement and considers that truth and untruth are equal. Under financial capitalism, this type of erroneous viewpoint is taught in all educational institutions, and history is presented through this prism.

These evident facts of a class-based society are also commonly disregarded by middle-class intellectuals and theorists. However, the lived experience of imperialist wars, capitalist exploitation, and their innate desire for peace teach workers everywhere the way to unity with workers in other nations.

Financial capitalism's propaganda apparatuses immediately focused on the harm done to Palestine in the Jew-killing war of Hamas, which was backed by the Islamic Republic and the "Axis of Resistance" against Israel on October 7, 2023, and revealed the largest mass murder of Jews since World War II. They still do so today. However, all of Hamas's plans to cause physical and material harm were aimed not only at Israeli Jews but also at Gazan citizens.

Hamas's reactionary policies caused the destruction in Gaza, and misleading anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda has prevented Palestinian support for the existence of truth in Israel.

Similarly, a brief letter detailing what happened on October 7 was not translated into English using artificial intelligence (AI/ChatGPT). Financial capitalism's overall intellect, both human and artificial, is firmly anti-Jewish and supports Hamas. The defense of "Palestine" and the mobilization of public opinion are the "truth" that imperialism (as well as the United Nations and prestigious American institutions) maintains about the events of October 7.

The Kargar journal's decision to refrain from participating in this shameful propaganda is obvious. The autonomous position of the working class is acknowledged and supported by Kargar. It openly opposes such propaganda and speaks the truth, refusing to follow the usual political currents of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who race to avoid being left behind.

Hamas and its international backers are to blame for the deaths and devastation in Gaza. The Kargar journal never gives in to the capitalist media's anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda, which is detrimental to the independent workers' movement.

The benchmark for evaluating justice in earlier conflicts across history

Prior to the 20th century, justice was served by American patriots, not the British monarchy, in the late 18th-century War of Independence that resulted in the creation of the United States. Or the American Civil War in the middle of the 19th century, when the South's slaveholding government imposed the conflict and justice sided with the North.

It is also necessary to assess what is true and what is not in order to comprehend the big wars of the twentieth century. Political currents hostile to the working class are responsible for spreading many of the false teachings regarding World Wars I and II, which are frequently based on Hollywood productions. So much so that ignorant people, professing historical expertise, consider Israel's defense during the 12-day conflict as being on par with Britain's bombardment of Berlin during World War II conflict.

The workers of Japan and the United States, as well as Germany and Britain, were objectively on an equal footing throughout World Wars I and II. Workers in these capitalist adversary nations, such as those in Germany, Japan, France, and the United States, faced the challenge of standing up to their own national bourgeoisie and to remain united with one another. Under the motto "Land, Bread, and Peace," Russian workers defeated their own bourgeoisie during the October Revolution of 1917. They rejected the bourgeois and Tsarist call to "defend the Russian homeland" against the German enemy and instead moved toward proletarian internationalism—unity with German workers.

The main purpose of the Allied bombing of Berlin during World War II was to slaughter German working people. According to reports, Churchill was informed by his aide that "not even cats and dogs will survive with this much napalm dropped on Berlin." "I love the smell of napalm—keep going," Churchill said. Stalin, on the other hand, abandoned proletarian internationalism and focused on recreating the history and culture of ancient Russian kings like Ivan and Catherine in order to wage war against Germany under the slogan "Kill the Germans."

Similarly, Hollywood propaganda frequently depicts Japanese or German workers/fighters as savage adversaries on screen.

The proper criterion for assessing imperialist wars for the redistribution of world markets is the unification of workers from the enemy states—and in opposition to all the bourgeoisies involved in those battles. Washington punished and imprisoned socialist leaders like Eugene Debs and James P. Cannon for the human and civilizational tragedies of World Wars I and II because they adopted the proper internationalist stance of peace during both war periods.

Whether the Islamic Republic advances or regresses toward monarchist and capitalist responses will depend on the debate surrounding its wars, which are driven by anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish sentiment as well as the defense of nuclear enrichment by the Shi'a-Bazaar regime and middle-class theorists.

The core of Iranian and regional strategy is the problem of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist animosity, as well as the enrichment program that the Shi'a-Bazaar dictatorship is using to produce nuclear weapons. In this environment, the Shia-Bazaar government and international financial capitalism are promoting anti-Israel propaganda under a variety of names, which is paving the path for a third world war.

Pouya Rahgozar

Tir 1404 / July 2025

[Back to the first page](#)

The Historic Capitalist Tasks



Which historical era does capitalist historic tasks belong to, and what are these tasks? Why hasn't the Islamic Republic government performed the traditional tasks of capitalism if it is, as it is, a capitalist system? Or why doesn't it execute them? Does the Kargar Journal's call for the completion of these historical duties deviate from the working class's primary objective, which is to form its own government?

Pouya Rahgozar responds:

The historical democratic tasks, also known as the historical tasks of capitalism, are a set of responsibilities brought up during the heyday of the capitalist revolution against feudalism. With the help of the masses of peasants and urban workers during the 18th-century revolutions in North America and Western Europe, the

capitalist class completed these tasks during the period when the capitalist system was on the rise. Due to its intermediary role for foreign imperialist companies and its internal base—the monarchy—the nascent bourgeois class in colonial or semi-colonial countries became entangled with historically reactionary elements like monarchy when the capitalist system emerged in these countries at the beginning of the 20th century. As a result, the native bourgeoisie proved incapable of carrying out the historical tasks of capitalism and eliminating the monarchy. With the help of the peasants, the working class took over the execution of capitalism's historical tasks.

The following are these tasks:

1. Ending the autocratic or Asiatic monarchy;
2. Reforming the land system to allow poor and landless people to acquire their own land;
3. granting women the same rights as males and access to all societal advantages;
4. The establishment of civil and political liberties, democracy, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the separation of state and mosque;
5. Religious freedom; acknowledging the equal legitimacy of religious minority' rights;
6. The recognition and respect of national minorities' or ethnic groups' national cultures, the right to teach and learn in their mother tongues such as those of Iran, which were severely suppressed during and after Reza Khan's rule;
7. Migrant workers' rights;
8. The establishment of workers' rights to organize into independent councils, associations, unions, and organizations in order to defend their standard of living as well as the rights of both urban and rural populations, the right to national self-determination and the realization of historical tasks of capitalism;
9. The right to Independence and Freedom, or the right to self-determination of nation or nations.

These rights were established in Western Europe during the 18th century as a result of several bourgeois uprisings against feudalism. These rights were best represented by the Bill of Rights, the set of rights declared in North America during the fight for independence and the establishment of the bourgeois democracy of the United States of America, which followed the end of British colonialism.

Rich nations' bourgeois democracies, however, continued to pursue colonial policies abroad even as they fought for bourgeois democracy within their own borders. As colonized societies, the European bourgeoisies split the rest of the world, which was still in a pre-capitalist stage both economically and socially. The path of bourgeois democracy, which has mostly persisted to this day, was thus described as a feature of Western European and North American society, specifically the democracies of extremely wealthy nations. The development of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain, , which rejected bourgeois democracy and substituted it with fascist dictatorship, were the exceptions.

Thus, the global democratic battle that started in the eighteenth century occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, two centuries later. Similar claims to those of the 18th-century bourgeois revolutions were made by the upheavals in the East and other regions of the world. Examples include the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, Sun Yat-sen's fight for Chinese unification, and comparable movements in other Global South nations.

Our mention of these objectives serves to highlight the fact that, despite the fact that the capitalist system defeated feudalism by supporting them, it has now strayed from completing them. The issue of Black Americans' civil rights, which is one of capitalism's or democracy's historical obligations and only became a reality in the United States in the middle of the 1960s, is a noteworthy illustration of this fact.

This is due to the twentieth-century degeneration of the capitalist system, which has not only failed to accomplish these goals in semi-colonial nations but also, in the 1930s, fascism in Germany and other places denied even the democracies of wealthy capitalist nations.

The semi-colonial nations that awoke in the 20th century provide a stunning illustration of this phenomena. The newly formed bourgeoisie in these countries avoids the historical democratic tasks of capitalism because of its affiliation with pre-capitalist structures such as monarchy and its submission to imperialism. Independent forces now assume responsibility for these historical responsibilities, that depend on the co-operation of the working class and peasantry.

It is important to remember that Marx claimed that the working class, which unites with other oppressed segments of urban and rural society is the key component of achievement of democracy, is what gives the bourgeoisie the courage to carry out the aforementioned historical obligations even at the beginning of capitalism, before socialism emerged. Marx, Lenin, and others all identified as revolutionary democrats. The majority of so-called lefties have either never understood this basic idea or have misconstrued it.

The political independence of the working class from the Shia-Bazaar and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government are necessary to realize these historical tasks.

[Back to the first page](#)

The Lie of the Islamic Republic, Imperialism, and the Shia-Bazaar Professors about the Services of Pahlavi Despotism

The Services of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco to Italy, Germany, and Spain



The Services of Reza and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to Iran

Do you often come across articles and speeches by experts in Europe and the United States praising the services of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco to the countries of Italy, Germany, and Spain? Anything comparable to the bombardment of propaganda about the services of Reza and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to Iran by all

Persian-language imperialist networks abroad and by government-affiliated intellectuals and university professors inside and outside of Iran since the victory of the 1979 Revolution to this day?

In capitalist propaganda about the future of the three mentioned European countries, it is rare to find references to the leaders of fascism. Nor are there correspondences with their descendants from intellectuals or university professors offering advice, guidance, or expressions of gratitude for the services of their fascist forefathers.

In Iran, however, the brutal Pahlavi monarchy—i.e., the historical agent of hostility toward Mellat, the people, the equivalent of the European fascist regimes, the drawn sword against the working people of Iran wielded by imperialism for nearly half a century through the father-and-son monarchy—is still spoken of in terms of its supposed past services. Their remnants are presented today as a solution, under various pretexts, by the Persian-language media of global financial capitalism and by academic circles inside and outside the country aligned with them. Why?

Understanding Fascism. According to the assessments of revolutionary scholars in the twentieth century, fascism is a phenomenon within the capitalist system that overthrows formal democracy in advanced capitalist countries and hands the naked sword over to capital against the working people. In other words, "the democratic regime cannot withstand the high voltage of class struggle, and the fuse of democracy blows."

For example, in Italy: just as post-Tsarist Russia faced the task of moving beyond capitalism and establishing a workers' and farmers' government through the October Revolution of 1917, Italian society also faced a similar task after the First World War—likewise in Germa-

ny and Spain thereafter. However, due to the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, very small and pitiful fascist minorities in these countries defeated tens of millions of workers, plunged humanity into the Second World War, as Stalinism was able to paralyze the struggles of the working class and clear the way for the victory of fascism.

During the Second World War, Hitler occupied rival European countries such as France and positioned himself as a candidate to lead global colonialism, determined to uproot the remnants of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union. Jews, who constituted a significant part of the revolutionary workers' movement in Europe, became the target of fascist anti-Semitic extermination, and fascism sought to cleanse Europe of their presence. Six million Jews perished in the crematoria.

Before the Second World War, revolutionary scholars had already predicted that despite Germany's immense military power, turning back the wheel of history to destroy the Soviet Union—even with the presence of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist regime in Moscow—would not be possible.

Germany, which led the Axis powers during the Second World War, demanded the primary share of global colonies, which were largely held by Britain, and to some extent by France and other European powers. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the growth of capitalism in Germany followed that of Britain, but Germany lacked any colonies. The First World War was Germany's and its allies' attempt to revise the outcomes of capitalist development in earlier centuries. The Second World War followed in the same trajec-

tory—an attempt to re-divide global resources among imperialist powers.

The Growth of Economy and Technology in Capitalism under Fascism. The victory of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain did not mean these three countries regressed economically to pickaxes, shovels, and ox-drawn plows in city and village. Capitalist economic growth, technology, and industry not only did not decline but actually increased. So why don't the intellectuals and professors of the capitalist system in those countries seek out opportunities to express gratitude to the fascist leaders? Whereas in Iran, state-affiliated intellectuals—both during the reign of the brutal monarchy and under the Islamic Republic—exaggerate minor industrial growth and glorify the first and second Pahlavi monarchs.

In the case of the aforementioned European countries, imperialist theorists know well that any praise of the economic aspects of these three countries or their fascist leaders could lead to unintended consequences. In other words, such praise could damage the official and Hollywood-style narrative of fascism and the reasons for the Second World War. The official academic and Hollywood history in Western Europe and North America (and the rest of the world including Iran, echoed by university professors trained in Western misinformation) portrays the Second World War as a battle between democracy and fascism—not as a war for the redivision of the world among imperialist powers.

They are well aware that any investigation into the economic and political regime of fascism would expose the historical falsehoods propagated by financial capitalism. And in such a case, the internationalist position of the working class—the unity of workers worldwide against financial capitalism—could find its way into people's minds. And that is a truth that must be kept away from public consciousness at all costs.

The Rule of Democracy in Western Europe and Its Rejection by Fascism.

Democracy in the wealthy nations of the advanced industrial world is considered the historical norm of these societies. However, the rejection of democracy in these very rich countries by fascism—due to the need to break free from the capitalist order and the failure to do so despite the objective conditions being ripe for working-class success—is presented as an exception of the twentieth century in Western Europe. This is because democracy, as a natural law within the capitalist system, is presented as the primary norm, and any inquiry into exceptions disrupts belief in the “natural” order of capitalism.

The truth is that the working class, due to its failure to carry out its historical mission (a failure imposed by Stalinism and Social Democracy), faced the punishment of fascist domination and the ensuing world war. And this is a fate that can repeat if the working class again fails—manifested in the form of fascism's denial of democracy. In other words, as a universal law of history, the survival of democracy rests in the hands of the working class—whether in an advanced industrial country or a semi-colonial

one.

In the United States, American fascism advanced after the Second World War in the form of McCarthyism, leading to the purging of unions in industry and Hollywood from any influence of the American Communist Party. It collapsed with the victory of the Cuban Revolution and the civil rights movement of Black Americans.

Today, although Democratic Party propaganda accuses the Trump administration of reviving fascism, the general public recognizes the emptiness of this rhetoric. The dangerous infringement on civil rights, to the level of a "lawfare" (legal war) pursued by the Democratic Party in trying to prosecute and even imprison Trump, has been rejected by society at large. It is mostly European regimes and 'Third World' governments that repeat this hollow propaganda of the U.S. Democratic Party, while simultaneously participating in the global mobilization of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist sentiment against Israel—like the Islamic Republic of Iran, which takes pride in its anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist stance.

In semi-colonial countries like Iran, theorists of the imperial apparatus forget that the global issue in the Second World War was framed as democracy versus fascism—and that tens of millions of people were killed for those aims during the war. But when it comes to Iran, the struggle of democracy against fascism or monarchical despotism is replaced by praise for the regimes of Reza and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In both advanced and semi-colonial countries, the analyses and statements of the imperial system are a series of sophistries.

The Rule of Suppressing Democracy in Semi-Colonial Countries.

In a semi-colonial country like Iran, the historical rule is the establishment of despotic regimes such as those of the first and second Pahlavi. Imperialism's hostility toward the Mellat, nation, is institutionalized in semi-colonial countries. The chance for democracy to emerge depends on the decline and crisis of the imperial-controlled order.

Simply put, the twentieth century belongs to Mellat, the people—a force that did not exist in previous millennia of history and is born out of the clash between the old Asiatic society and the international capitalist system. It is the only social force, relying on the working class, that can achieve democracy in Iran and bring an end to the era of poverty, exploitation, and repression.

Unfortunately, in the twentieth century, the anti-national governments of the first and second Pahlavi gained the upper hand and blocked Iran's vast potential for progress and a leap toward labor productivity, the unity of city and countryside, industrialization, and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy.

Thus, the flourishing of democracy remains limited: The period of the Constitutional Revolution, or the social uprisings after the fall of Reza Khan's 20-year dictatorship (September 1941) until the CIA-backed coup of August 1953, and then after the historic victory of freeing Iran from imperialist-Pahlavi domination in 1979, lasted for less than four years. After the 1979 Revolution, with the banning of the socialist weekly Kargar (late 1981) and the subse-

quent arrest of socialist leaders in the winter of 1983, access by the working and toiling people to their independent ideas was declared prohibited by both imperialism and the Islamic Republic. The public media in the Islamic Republic became instruments of anti-Americanism and anti-Jewish/Zionist rhetoric, and press freedom was granted only to factions of the ruling elite to spew nonsense. This situation cannot be extended indefinitely.

With Israel's success in a defensive war to destroy the nuclear bomb program in Iran, the crisis of the Shia-Bazaar-led regime appears as incurable. Its lies, used to prevent the fulfillment of the historical tasks of capitalism, are exposed. The ideological glue of the ruling elite loses its grip. Women's rights, the right of ethnic groups to national governments, the rights of workers and peasants to independent organization and control over production in industries—along with the right to civil and political freedoms, and the right to national independence—rise up.

For the same reasons academia avoids probing the rise of fascism in Western Europe during the 1920s and 1930s—because it could challenge the official myth of global democracy versus fascism in World War II—academic institutions and research centers under the command of financial capitalism open the doors wide for inquiry and praise regarding the rise of the Reza Khans. Under no circumstances can the independent agency of Mellat, the nation, be assumed, proven, or examined. Capitalism in semi-colonial countries, compared to the financial capitalist nations of North America and Western Europe, is deeply rooted in weakness. Independent popular mobilization can quick-

ly awaken people to pursue their demands and win against all odds.

Reza Khan is the negation of the emergence of the historical phenomenon of Mellat, the nation, within the Qajar country by the agent of financial capitalism. Praising him can immediately expect rewards from capitalism. Financial capitalism automatically seeks to prevent awareness of the nation's independent role—in other words, the role of the popular urban and rural classes—in fulfilling capitalism's historical tasks. All intellectuals trained in this “academic” current and supporting the incorrect views with prejudice, automatically tune their research instruments in accordance with the realities required by financial capitalism in semi-colonial countries.

Young workers have nearly found the answer to the question: why do capitalist propagandists—whether Washington loyalists or professors within the Shia-Bazaar regime—praise the Pahlavi dynasty? They have realized that political repression by capitalism in semi-colonial countries is a historical rule. A cadre of university professors has been trained to promote this rule in domestic and foreign universities, to normalize the absence of democracy for public opinion.

Thus, every day and every week, praising the domination of the Pahlavi naked sword is served as sweets by the Persian-language media outlets abroad and some university professors inside and outside Iran, under various titles. One says, “He built the railway.” Another says, “He created nuclear enrichment centers.” Or “He bought billions of dollars’ worth of Phantoms and tanks.” “With a passport issued

by the Pahlavi, one could travel to many countries.” As the current president says, “The dollar was nearly seven toman.”[currently nearly 100,000 toman]. The remnants of the Pahlavi monarchy are addressed with royal titles by imperialist circles and some Shia-Bazaar professors. For example: “I myself wrote a letter to the prince to show more interest in democracy.” Or: “During a trip to Egypt, I personally visited the tomb of the late Shah on behalf of my father.” Where does this royal nostalgia come from? Undoubtedly, from clinging to the rule of imperialist supremacy. That everything possible must be done to destroy the memory of the 1979 Revolution—that is, the independent role of workers and toilers in history.

All such research must aim to convey the idea that the popular urban and rural classes, the independent role of Mellat, the nation, are incapable of achieving Independence and Freedom.

The rule of Israel-bashing, nuclear enrichment, missile production, and war against the Jewish state.

Reliance on financial capitalism means reverting national policy to principles propagated by imperialism and the first and second Pahlavi regimes. It means that, following Israel’s success in destroying significant parts of Iran’s uranium enrichment program, we take the darkest years of the country’s twentieth-century history under the Pahlavi as a model for resolving today’s crisis. It means mobilizing the entire effort of the Shia-Bazaar and Washington to prevent Iranian workers and toilers from turning toward independent action and shaping a future needed by the people of the entire region.

Regarding Israel, the false proposition is that we adopt the bittersweet policy of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as a model. We act outwardly opposed to war with Israel while at the same time raising the banner of anti-Jewish/Zionist rhetoric under the guise of friendship with Palestine. We accept nuclear enrichment as a foundational policy of the regime and pledge to continue it. We continually recite the supposed positive role of the Pahlavi monarchy in Iranian history: “Your father and grandfather did many services for Iran.” We frame opposition to monarchical rule as mere tactical disagreement—such as saying “monarchists aren’t serious about democracy”—as if the Pahlavi-SAVAK regime, the murderers of the Mellat, could be dismissed as unserious democrats.

Israel’s fear of Iran’s nuclear bomb is said to be baseless because we have “repeatedly stated” that our nuclear program is peaceful. “No country can decide about our missile capability.” “The cost of the 12-day war was higher for Israel than for Gaza.” Defending Gaza and declaring a “ceasefire” is necessary, because “Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.”

This inversion of reality—framed as support for nuclear enrichment, denial of the Islamic Republic and the ‘Axis of Resistance’ war against Israel, and praise for the reactionary war waged by Hamas and the Islamic Republic—is presented under the banner of ceasefire and preventing genocide in Gaza. This entails condemning Israel’s legitimate self-defense.

Constant hollow propaganda imagines a Washington war akin to the Iraq invasion is on the horizon, just like the occupation of Iraq under Saddam. But Washington's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not repeatable. Iraq's 8-year war against Iran is not repeatable. What is in decline are the Islamic Republic's wars for regional dominance and the destruction of Israel.

The conquest of freedom demands political independence from the Shia-Bazaar—that is, the establishment of a workers and farmers government. The working class strives to attract all professors, scholars, artists, and intellectuals to the independent national horizon.

Majid Dehghan

Shia-Bazaar propaganda, under fictitious pretexts, avoids condemning nuclear enrichment and the Islamic Republic's anti-Jewish/Zionist policy, which is based on the anti-Jewish positions of international financial capitalism and its effort to block independent national mobilization. They also proclaim, "If there is war, I will volunteer." (Most of these quotes come from Sadegh Zibakalam, ISNA News Agency, July 25, 2025.)

Tir 1404 / July 2025

The entire effort of the Shia-Bazaar bloc to close off Iran's future—whose only path lies in the unity of women, workers, and peasants, and in the establishment of governments by ethnic groups/nations—will be in vain. No matter how sweetly it is phrased, a return to the cursed Pahlavi monarchy is impossible. With an independent stance, the nation can transform democracy in Iran from an exception into a historical rule.

To overcome a third of the population living under the poverty line, unemployment and inflation, persistent shortages of electricity/gas and water, the severe economic crisis, and to succeed against Washington's economic sanctions and achieve double-digit economic growth, the independent organization of workers and all toiling sectors is required.

[Back to the first page](#)



Culture and socialism¹

Leon Trotsky

February 3, 1926



1. TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

Let us recall first of all that culture meant originally a ploughed, cultivated field, as distinct from virgin forest and Virgin soil. Culture was contrasted with nature, that is, what was acquired by

¹ From Krasnaya Nov (6), 1926. Published in the Autumn 1962 Labour Review,) Man English translation by Brian Pearce.

man's efforts was contrasted with what was given by nature. This antithesis fundamentally retains its value today.

Culture is everything that has been created, built, learned, conquered by man in the course of his entire history, in distinction from what nature has given, including the natural history of man himself as a species of animal. The science that studies man as a product of animal evolution is called anthropology. But from the moment that man separated himself from the animal kingdom—and this happened approximately when he first grasped primitive tools of stone and wood and armed the organs of his body with them—from that time there began the creation and accumulation of culture, that is, all kinds of knowledge and skill in the struggle with nature and subjugation of nature.

When we speak of the culture accumulated by past generations, we think first and foremost of material achievements in the form of tools, machinery, buildings, monuments, and so on. Is this culture? Undoubtedly it is culture, the material forms in which culture is deposited: material culture. It creates, on the basis provided by nature, the fundamental setting of our lives, our everyday way of living, our creative work. But the most precious part of culture is its deposit in the consciousness of man himself—those methods, habits, skills, acquired abilities of ours which have developed out of the whole of pre-existing material culture and which, while drawing on this pre-existing material culture, also improve upon it. We will then consider it as firmly established that culture has grown out of man's struggle with nature for existence, for the improvement of his conditions of life, for the enlargement of his power. But out of this same basis classes also have grown. In the process of adapting itself to nature, in conflict with the hostile forces of nature, human society has taken shape as a complex organization of classes. The class structure of society has determined to a decisive degree the content and form of human history, that is, its material relations and their ideological reflections. This means that historical culture has possessed a class character.

Slave-owning society, feudal serf-owning society, bourgeois society—each engendered a corresponding culture, different at different stages and with a multitude of transitional forms. Historical society has been an organization for the exploitation of man by man. Culture has served the class organization of society exploiters' society has given rise to an exploiters' culture. But does this mean that we are against all the culture of the past?

There exists, in fact, a profound contradiction here. Everything that has been conquered, created, and built by man's efforts and that serves to enhance man's power is culture. But since it is not a matter of individual man but of social man, and since culture is a social-historical phenomenon in its very essence, and since historical society has been and continues to be class society, culture is found to be the basic instrument of class _ oppression. Marx said: "The ruling ideas of an epoch are essentially the ideas of the ruling class of that epoch." This also applies to culture as a whole.

And yet we say to the working class: master all the culture of the past, otherwise you will not build socialism. How is this to be understood?

Over this contradiction many people have stumbled, and they stumble so frequently because they approach the understanding of class society superficially, half-idealistically, forgetting that fundamentally it is the organization of production. Every class society has been formed on the basis of definite modes of struggle with nature, and these modes have changed in accordance with "the development of technology. What is the basis of bases—the class organization of society or its productive forces? Without doubt the productive forces. It is precisely upon them, at a certain level of their development, that classes are formed and re-formed. In the productive forces is expressed the materialized economic skill of mankind, our historical ability to ensure our existence. On this dynamic foundation there arise classes, which by their interrelations determine the character of culture.

And here, first and foremost, we have to ask ourselves, regarding technology: is it only an instrument of class oppression? It is enough to put such a question for it to be answered at once: no, technology is the fundamental conquest of mankind, although it has also served, up to the present, as an instrument of exploitation; yet it is at the same time the fundamental condition for the emanation of the exploited. The machine strangles the wage-slave in grip. But he can free himself only through the machine. Therein is the root of the entire question.

If we do not let ourselves forget that the driving force of the the historical process is the growth of the productive forces, liberating, man from the domination of nature, then we shall find that the proletariat needs to master the sum total of the knowledge and skill worked out by humanity in the course of its history, in order to raise itself up and rebuild life on principles of solidarity.

“Does culture advance technology or does technology advance culture?” asks one of the written questions lying before me. It is wrong to put the question that way. Technology cannot be counterposed to culture for it is its mainspring. Without technology, there is no culture. The growth of technology advances culture. But the science and general culture that have arisen on the basis of technology constitute a powerful aid to further growth of technology. Here we have a dialectical interaction.

Comrades, if you want a simple but expressive example of the contradiction contained in technology itself, you will not find a better one than railways. If you take a look at Western European passenger trains you will see that they have carriages of different “classes.” These classes remind us of the classes of capitalist society. The first-class carriages are for the privileged upper circles, the second-class for the middle bourgeoisie, the third for the petty-bourgeoisie, and the fourth for the proletariat, which was formerly called, with good reason, the Fourth Estate. In themselves railways constitute a colossal cultural-technical conquest by mankind which has very greatly

transformed the face of the earth in the course of a single century. But the class structure society also influences the structure of the means of communication. And our Soviet railways are still a long way from equality—not only because they make use of carriages inherited from the past, but also because the NEP merely prepares the way for equality; it does not accomplish it.

Before the railway age, civilization was hemmed in by shores of the seas and the banks of the great rivers. The railways opened up whole continents to capitalist culture. One of the fundamental causes, if not the most fundamental cause the backwardness and desolation of our Russian countryside is lack of railways, concrete roads, and access roads, In this respect the majority of our villages exist in precapitalist conditions. We must overcome our great ally which is at the same time our greatest adversary— our great spaces.

Socialist economy is planned economy, Planning presupposes communication first and foremost. The most important means of communication are roads and railways. Every new railway line is a path to culture, and in our conditions also a path to socialism. Besides, with improvement in the technique of communication and in the country's prosperity, the social profile of our railway trains will change: the separation into "classes" will disappear; everybody will travel in "soft" carriages . . . that is, if when that time comes people are still traveling by rail and don't prefer to use airplanes, which will be available to one and all.

Let us take another example, the instruments of militarism, the means of extermination. In this sphere, the class nature of Society is expressed in an especially vivid and repulsive way. But there is no destructive (explosive or poisonous) substance the discovery of which would not in itself be a valuable scientific and technical achievement. Explosive and poisonous substances are used also for creative and not only for destructive purposes, and open up new possibilities in the field of discovery and invention.

The proletariat can take power only by breaking up the old machinery of the class state. We have carried out this task as decisively as anybody ever has. However, in building the new machinery of state we have found that we have to utilize, to a certain fairly considerable extent, elements of the old. The further socialist revolution of the state machine is inseparable linked with our political economic, and cultural work in general.

We must not destroy technology. The proletariat has taken over the factories equipped by the bourgeoisie in that state in which the revolution found them. The old equipment is still serving us to this day. This fact most graphically and directly shows us that we do not renounce the "heritage." How could it be otherwise? After all, the revolution was undertaken, first and foremost, in order to get possession of that heritage.

However, the old technology, in the form in which we took it over, is quite unsuitable for socialism. It constitutes a crystallization of the anarchy of capitalist economy. Competition between different enterprises, chasing after profits, unevenness of development between different branches of the economy, backwardness of certain areas, parcelization of agriculture, plundering of human forces: all this finds in technology its expression in iron and brass. But while the machinery of class oppression can be smashed by a revolutionary blow, the productive machinery that existed under capitalist anarchy can be reconstructed only gradually. The completion of the restoration period, on the basis of the old equipment, has only brought us to the threshold of this tremendous task. We must carry it through at all costs.

2. THE HERITAGE OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Spiritual culture is as contradictory as material culture. And just as we take from the arsenals and storehouses of material culture and put into circulation not bows and arrows, not stone tools or the tools of the Bronze Age, but the most improved tools available, of the most up-to-date technology, in this way also must we approach spiritual culture as well.

The fundamental element in the culture of the old society was religion. It possessed paramount importance as a form of human knowledge and human unity; but this form first of all reflected man's weakness in the face of nature and his helplessness within society. We utterly reject religion, along with all substitutes for it.

It is different with philosophy. We have to take from the philosophy created by class society two invaluable elements—materialism and dialectics. It was in fact from the organic combination of materialism and dialectics that Marx's method was born and that his system arose. This method lies at the base of Leninism.

If we pass on to science in the strict sense of the word, here we find it quite obvious that we are confronted with a huge reservoir of knowledge and skill accumulated by mankind during our long life. True, one can show that in science, the aim of which is the cognition of reality, there are many tendentious class adulterations. That is quite true. The railways give expression to the privileged position of some and the poverty of others; but this applies even more to science, the material of which is a great deal more flexible than the metal and wood out of which they make railway carriages.

But we have to reckon with the fact that scientific work is basically nourished by the need to obtain knowledge of nature. Although class interests have introduced and are still introducing false tendencies even into natural science, nevertheless this falsification process is restricted by the limits beyond which it begins directly to prevent the progress of technology. If you examine natural science from the bottom upward, from the field of accumulation of elementary facts up

to the highest and most complex generalizations, you will see that the more empirical a piece of scientific research is, the closer it is to its material, to facts, the more indubitable are the results that it produces. The wider the field of generalization, the nearer natural science approaches to questions of philosophy, the more it is subjected to the influence of class inspiration.

Matters are more complicated and worse in the case of the social sciences and what are called the “humanities.” In this sphere too, of course, what is fundamental is the striving to know that which exists. Thanks to this fact we have, incidentally, the brilliant school of classical bourgeois economists. But class interest, which speaks very much more directly and imperatively in the social sciences than in natural science, soon called a halt to the development of economic thought of bourgeois society.

In this field, however, we communists are equipped better than in any other. Socialist theoreticians, awakened by the class Struggle of the proletariat, basing themselves on bourgeois science and also criticizing it, finally created in the teachings of Marx and Engels the powerful method of historical materialism and the peerless application of this method in *Capital*. This does not mean, of course, that we are insured against the influence of bourgeois ideas in the field of economics and sociology generally. No, the most vulgar professorial socialist and petty-bourgeois-Narodnik tendencies burst out at every step into currency among us, from the old “treasure chests” of knowledge, finding a nutrient medium for themselves in the unformed and contradictory relations of the transitional epoch. But in this sphere we have the indispensable criteria of Marxism, verified and enriched in the works of Lenin. And we will give an even more triumphant rebuff to the vulgar economists and sociologists the less we shut ourselves up in the experience of the passing day, the more widely we embrace world development as a whole, distinguishing its fundamental trends beneath mere conjunctural changes.

In questions of law, morality, and ideology in general, the situation of bourgeois science is even more lamentable than in the field of economics. A pearl of genuine knowledge can be found in these spheres only after digging through dozens of professional dunghills.

Dialectics and materialism are the basic elements in the Marxist cognition of the world. But this does not mean at all that they can be applied to any sphere of knowledge, like an ever-ready master key. Dialectics cannot be imposed upon facts; it has to be deduced from facts, from their nature and development. Only painstaking work on a vast amount of material enabled Marx to advance the dialectical system of economics to the conception of value as social labor. Marx’s historical works were constructed in the same way, and even his newspaper articles likewise. Dialectical materialism can be applied to new spheres of knowledge only by mastering them from within. The purging of bourgeois science presupposes a mastery of bourgeois science. You will get nowhere with sweeping criticism or bald commands. Learning and application here go hand in hand with critical reworking. We have the method, but there is enough work for generations to do.

Marxist criticism in science must be not only vigilant but also prudent, otherwise it can degenerate into mere sycophancy, into Famusovism. Take psychology, even. Pavlov's reflexology proceeds entirely along the paths of dialectical materialism. It conclusively breaks down the wall between physiology and psychology. The simplest reflex is physiological, but a system of reflexes gives us "consciousness." The accumulation of physiological quantity gives a new "psychological" quality. The method of Pavlov's school is experimental and painstaking. Generalizations are won step by step: from the saliva of dogs to poetry, that is, to the mental mechanics of poetry, not its social content—though the paths that bring us to poetry have as yet not been revealed.

The school of the Viennese psychoanalyst Freud proceeds in a different way. It assumes in advance that the driving force of ~ the most complex and delicate of psychic processes is a physiological need. In this general sense it is materialistic, if you leave aside the question whether it does not assign too big a place to the sexual factor at the expense of others, for this is already a dispute within the frontiers of materialism. But the psychoanalyst does not approach problems of consciousness experimentally, going from the lowest phenomena to the highest, from the simple reflex to the complex reflex; instead, he attempts to take all these intermediate stages in one jump, from above downwards, from the religious myth, the lyrical poem, or the dream, straight to the physiological basis of the psyche.

The idealists tell us that the psyche is an independent entity, that the "soul" is a bottomless well. Both Pavlov and Freud think that the bottom of the "soul" is physiology. But Pavlov, like a diver, descends to the bottom and laboriously investigates the Well from there upwards, while Freud stands over the well and with a penetrating gaze tries to pierce its ever-shifting and troubled Waters and to make out or guess the shape of things down below. Pavlov's method is experiment; Freud's is conjecture, sometimes fantastic conjecture. The attempt to declare psychoanalysis "incompatible" with Marxism and simply turn one's back on Freudianism is too simple, or, more accurately, too simplistic. But we are in any case not obliged to adopt Freudianism. It is a working hypothesis that can produce and undoubtedly does produce deductions and conjectures that proceed along the lines of materialist psychology. The experimental procedure in due course will provide the tests for these conjectures. But we have no grounds and no right to put a ban on the other procedure, which, even though it may be less reliable, yet tries to anticipate the conclusions to which the experimental procedure is advancing only very slowly.²

By means of these examples I wished to show, if only partially, both the heterogeneity of our scientific heritage and the complexity of the paths by way of which the proletariat can advance to mastery of it. If it is true that in economic construction problems are not solved by decree and we have to "learn to trade," so also in science the mere issuing of bald commands can achieve nothing but harm and disgrace. In this sphere we have to "learn to learn."

² This question has, of course, nothing in common with the cultivation of @ sham Freudianism as an erotic indulgence or place of "naughtiness." Such clap-trap has nothing to do with science and merely expresses decadent moods; the center of gravity is shifted from the cortex to the spinal cord. — L.T.

Art is one of the ways in which man finds his bearings in the world; in this sense the heritage of art is not distinguished from the heritage of science and technology—and it is no less contradictory than they. Unlike science, however, art is a form of cognition of the world, not as a system of laws but as a group of images, and at the same time it is a way of inspiring certain feelings and moods. The art of past centuries has made man more complex and flexible, has raised his mentality to a higher level, has enriched him in an all-around way. This enrichment is a precious achievement of culture. Mastery of the art of the past is, therefore, a necessary precondition not only for the creation of new art, but also for the building of the new society, for communism needs people with highly developed minds. However, can the art of the past enrich us with an artistic knowledge of the world? It can, precisely because it is able to give nourishment to our feelings and to educate them. If we were groundlessly to repudiate the art of the past, we should at once become poorer spiritually.

One notices nowadays a tendency here and there to put forward the idea that art has as its purpose only the inspiration of certain moods, and not at all the cognition of reality. The conclusion drawn from this is: with what sort of sentiments can the art of the nobility or of the bourgeoisie infect us?

This is radically false. The significance of art as a means of cognition—including for the mass of people, and in particular for them—is not at all less than its “sentimental” significance. The ancient epic, the fable, the song, the traditional saying, the folk-rhyme provide knowledge in graphic form; they throw light on the past, they generalize experience, they widen the horizon, and only in connection with them and thanks to this connection is it possible to “tune in.” This applies to all literature generally, not only to epic poetry but to lyric poetry as well. It applies to painting and to sculpture. The only exception, to a certain degree, is music, the effect of which is powerful but one-sided! Music too, of course, relies upon a particular knowledge of nature, its sounds and rhythms. But here the knowledge is so deeply hidden, the results of the inspiration of nature are to such an extent refracted through a person’s nerves, that music acts as a self-sufficient “revelation.” Attempts to approximate all forms of art to music, as to the art of “infection,” have often been made and have always signified a depreciation in art of the role of the intelligence in favor of formless feeling, and in this sense they were and are reactionary. ... Worst of all, of course, are those works of “art” which offer neither graphic knowledge nor artistic “infection” but instead advance exorbitant pretensions. In our country no few such works are printed, and, unfortunately, not in the students’ books at art schools, but in many thousands of copies. . . .

Culture is a social phenomenon. Just because of this, language, as the vehicle of intercourse between men, is its most important instrument. The culture of language itself is the most important condition for the growth of all branches of culture, especially science and art. Just as technology is not satisfied with the old measuring apparatus but is creating new ones, micrometers, voltameters, and so on, striving for and attaining ever greater accuracy, so in the matter of language, of skill in choosing the appropriate words and combining them in the appropriate ways, constant,

systematic, painstaking work is necessary in order to achieve the highest degree of accuracy, clarity, and vividness. The foundation for this work must be the fight against illiteracy, semiliteracy, and near-illiteracy. The next stage of this work is the mastering of Russian classical literature. Yes, culture was the main instrument of class oppression. But it also, and only it, can become the instrument of socialist emancipation.

3. THE CONTRADICTIONS IN OUR CULTURE

Town and country

What is special about our position is that we—at the point where the capitalist West and the colonial-peasant East meet—have been the first to make a socialist revolution. The regime of proletarian dictatorship has been established first in a country with a monstrous inheritance of backwardness and barbarism, so that among our people whole centuries of history separate a Siberian nomad from a Moscow or Leningrad worker. Our social forms are transitional to socialism and consequently are incomparably higher than capitalist forms. In this sense we rightly consider ourselves the most advanced country in the world. But technology, which lies at the basis of material and every other kind of culture, is extremely backward in our country in comparison with the advanced capitalist countries. This constitutes the fundamental contradiction of our present reality.

The historical task that follows from this is to raise our technology to the height of our social formation. If we do not succeed in doing this, our social order will inevitably decline to the level of our technological backwardness. Yes, in order for us to appreciate the entire significance of technological progress it is necessary to tell ourselves frankly: if we do not succeed in filling the Soviet forms of our social order with the appropriate productive technology, we shall shut off the possibility of our “transition to socialism and we shall be turned back to capitalism—and to what sort of capitalism? Semiserf, semicolonial capitalism. The struggle for technology is for us the struggle for socialism, with which the whole future of our culture is bound up.

Here is a fresh and very expressive example of our cultural contradictions. There recently appeared in the papers a report that our Leningrad Public Library holds first place for the number of books: it now possesses 4,250,000 books! Our first feeling is a legitimate feeling of Soviet pride: our library is the first in the world! To what are we indebted for this achievement? To the fact that we have expropriated private libraries. Through nationalizing private property we have created a richer cultural institution, accessible to everyone. The great advantages of the Soviet order are indisputably shown in this simple fact.

But at the same time our cultural backwardness is expressed in the fact that in our country the percentage of illiterates is greater than in any other European country. The library is the biggest in the world, but as yet only a minority of the population reads books. And that is how things

are in almost every respect. Nationalized industry, with gigantic and far from fantastic schemes for Dnieprostroi, the Volga-Don canal and so and the peasants do their threshing with chains and rollers. Our marriage laws are permeated with the spirit of socialism—and physical violence still plays no small part in our family life. These and similar contradictions result from the entire structure of our culture, at the meeting point of West and East.

The basis of our backwardness is the monstrous predominance of the country over the town, of agriculture over industry, while in the country itself, moreover, the most backward implements and modes of production predominate. When we speak of historical serfdom we above all have in mind estate relations, the bondage of the peasant to the landlord, and the czarist official. But, Comrades, serfdom has a deeper foundation under it: the bondage of man to the soil, the dependence of the peasant on the elements.

Have you read Gleb Uspensky? I fear that the younger generation does not read him. His works should be republished, or at least his best ones, and there are some splendid things among them. Uspensky was a Narodnik. His political program was utopian through and through. But Uspensky, a writer about the morals and manners of country life, was not only a splendid artist but also a remarkable realist. He was able to appreciate the peasant's way of life and his mentality as derived phenomena, which had developed on an economic basis and were wholly determined by it. He was able to appreciate that the economic basis of the countryside was the bondage of the peasant in his labor-process to the soil and in general to the forces of nature. You should certainly read at least his *Power of the Land*. With Uspensky, an artist's intuition takes the place of Marxist method, and in its results in many respects it rivals the latter. For this reason, Uspensky the artist was constantly engaged in mortal conflict with Uspensky the Narodnik. From the artist we must still learn, even now, if we want to understand the many survivals of serfdom in peasant life, especially in family life, which often slop over into urban life as well; it is enough to listen to certain notes which are being sounded in the current discussion about problems of the marriage laws!

Capitalism throughout the world has brought to an extreme tension the contradiction between industry and agriculture, town and country. In Russia, owing to the lag in our historical development, this contradiction is quite monstrous in character. After all, our industry had already begun to strive to imitate Western European and American models, while our countryside remained in the depths of the seventeenth century and even more remote times. Even in America, capitalism has proved obviously unable to raise agriculture to the level of industry. This is a task which has entirely passed to socialism's responsibility. In our conditions, with the colossal predominance of country over town, the industrialization of agriculture is the most important sector of socialist construction.

By the industrialization of agriculture we mean two processes, which only in combination can, in the last analysis, finally wipe out the frontier between town and country. Let us dwell a little

longer on this question which is so important for us.

The industrialization of agriculture consists, on the one hand, ‘in the separation from the rural household economy of a whole series of branches of the preliminary processing of industrial raw material and foodstuffs. All industry in general has emerged from the countryside, through the handicrafts and the work of the village craftsman, through the detachment of particular branch from the closed-in system of domestic economy, through specialization, the creation of the appropriate apprenticeship and technology and later also machine production. Our Soviet industrialization must, to a considerable extent, proceed along this path, the path of the socialization of a whole series of production processes that lie between agriculture in the strict sense of the word and industry. The example of the United States shows that here immeasurable possibilities are open to us.

But the question is not exhausted by that. The overcoming of the contradiction between agriculture and industry presupposes the industrialization of arable and pastoral farming, horticulture, and so on. It means that these branches of production, too, must be placed on a basis of scientific technology: the use of machines on a large scale and in the right combination, tractorization and electrification, proper rotation of crops, laboratory testing of methods and results, correct organization of the whole production process with the most expedient use of labor power, and so on. Of course, even highly organized cultivation will differ from engineering. But for that matter there are profound differences within industry itself, between different branches. If today we have the right to counterpose agriculture to industry as a whole, this is because agriculture is carried on in scattered units by primitive methods, with servile dependence of the producer on natural conditions, and in circumstances of an extremely uncivilized way of living for the peasants. It is not enough to socialize, that is, to transfer to factories, particular branches of present-day agriculture, such as butter-making, cheese-making, the production of starch and molasses, and so on. It is necessary to socialize agriculture itself, that is, to wrest it from its present parcelization and in place of the present wretched pecking of the soil to set up scientifically organized wheat and rye “factories,” cattle and sheep “factories,” and so on. That this is possible is shown in part by the capitalist experience already available, in particular the agricultural experience of Denmark, where even the chickens are subjected to planning and standardization, laying eggs to order in huge quantities, of uniform size and color.

The industrialization of agriculture means the elimination of the present fundamental contradiction between town and country and so between peasant and worker: as regards their role in the country’s economy, their living conditions, their cultural level, they must come closer together in proportion as the frontier between them disappears. A society in which mechanized cultivation forms an equal part of the planned economy, in which the town has absorbed into itself the advantages of the country (spaciousness, greenery) while the country has been enriched with the advantages of the town (paved roads, electric light, piped water supply, drains), that is to say,

where the antithesis of town and country has itself disappeared, where the peasant and the worker have been transformed into participants of equal worth and equal rights in a single production process—such a society will also be a genuine socialist society.

The road to this society is long and hard. The most important landmarks along this road are mighty electric power stations. They will bring to the country light and transportation power: against the power of the land, the power of electricity!

Not long ago we opened the Shatura power station, one of our best constructions, erected on a peat bog. From Moscow to Shatura is only about a hundred kilometers. You might say the two places could shake hands. And yet what a difference in conditions! Moscow is the capital of the Communist International. But you go a few dozen kilometers and you are in the *es* woods, with snow-laden fir trees, frozen marshes, and wild beasts. Dark hamlets of log huts are dozing in the snow. From the carriage window you can sometimes see the tracks of wolves. Where the Shatura station stands today, a few years ago, when they began construction work there, elks had their homes. Today the distance between Moscow and Shatura is covered by an elegant series of metal masts, which carry cables with a current of 115,000 volts. And under these masts vixens and he-wolves will this spring bring forth their cubs. That is what our entire culture is like—made up of extreme contradictions, of the highest achievements of technology and generalizing thought, on the one hand, and on the other, of the primeval conditions of the taiga.

Shatura lives on peat as though on pasture. Truly, all the wonders created by the childish imaginings of religion and even the creative fantasy of poets pale before this simple fact: machines that occupy very little space are eating up an age-old bog, transforming it into invisible power and returning it along lightweight cables to that very industry which created and set up these machines.

Shatura is a thing of beauty. Gifted and devoted builders made it. Its beauty is not put on, is not an affair of tinsel decoration, but grows from the inherent properties and needs of technology itself. The highest and the only criterion of technology is fitness for purpose. The test of functional fitness to economic efficiency. And this presupposes the most complete correspondence between part and whole, means and end. Economic and technological criteria fully coincide with aesthetic ones. One may say, and it will not be a paradox, that Shatura is a thing of beauty because a kilowatt-hour of its power is cheaper than a kilowatt-hour of power from other stations situated in similar conditions.

Shatura stands on a bog. We have many bogs in the Soviet Union, very many more than we have power stations. We have also many other kinds of fuel which await transformation into motive power. In the south, the Dnieper flows through a very rich industrial area, spending the mighty force of its head of water to no purpose, bounding over age-old rapids, and waiting for us to bridle its flow with a dam and compel it to give light, motion, wealth to towns, factories, and fields. Let

us compel it!

In the United States of America they generate 500 kilowatt-hours of power per head of population every year, while here we generate only 20 kilowatt-hours, that is, one twenty-fifth as much. Mechanical motive power in general is only one-fiftieth as much per person here as in the United States. The Soviet system shod with American technology will be socialism. Our social order offers a different, incomparably more expedient application for American technique. But American technology for its part will transform our order, liberating it from the heritage of backwardness, primitiveness, and barbarism. From the combination of the Soviet order with American technology there will be born a new technology and a new culture—technology and culture for all, without favorite sons or stepsons.

The ‘conveyor’ principle of socialist economy

The principle of socialist economy is harmony, that is, continuity based on inner concord, What is the conveyor? An endless moving belt that brings to the worker or takes from him everything required by the course of his work. It is now well known how Ford uses a combination of conveyors as a means of internal transport: transmission and supply. But the conveyor is something bigger than that: it constitutes a method of regulating the production process itself, in that the worker is obliged to harmonize his movements with the movement of the endless belt. Capitalism uses this circumstance for higher and more perfected exploitation of the worker. But this use of the conveyor belt is connected with capitalism, not with the conveyor belt itself.

In which direction is the development of methods of regulating labor in fact proceeding, in the direction of piecework or in the direction of the conveyor method? Everything points to the conveyor. Piecework, like every other individual control over work, is characteristic of capitalism in the first periods of its development. This procedure ensures the maximum physiological loading of each individual worker. Both of those tasks are accomplished automatically by the conveyor belt. A socialist organization economy must endeavor to bring about a reduction in the physiological load on each individual worker, in accordance with the growth in technical power, while safeguarding at the same time the coordination of the efforts of different workers. This will be the significance of the socialist conveyor as distinct from the capitalist one. Speaking more concretely, the whole problem here consists in regulating the movement of the belt in accordance with a given number of working hours, or, conversely, in regulating working time in accordance with a given speed of the belt.

Under the capitalist system, the conveyor is used within the confines of an individual enterprise as a method of internal transport. But the principle of the conveyor is in itself very much broader. Each separate enterprise receives from outside raw material, fuel, auxiliary materials, supplementary labor-power. The relations between the separate enterprises, however gigantic they may

be, are regulated by the laws of the market—limited, to be sure, in many instances, by all sorts of long-term agreements. But every factory taken separately, and still more society as a whole, is interested in raw material being supplied in good time, not accumulating wastefully in the stores, but also not causing stoppages in production; that is, in other words, it is interested in this material being supplied on the conveyor principle, in complete accord with the rhythm of production. For this there is no need to imagine a conveyor necessarily in the form of an endless moving belt. The forms of the conveyor can be endlessly varied. A railway, if it is working to plan, that is, without cross-hauls, without seasonal piling up of loads, in short, without elements of capitalist anarchy—and under socialism that is just how it will work—is like a mighty conveyor, ensuring the service of factories in good time with raw material, fuel, materials, and personnel. The same applies to steamships, trucks, etc. All kinds of means of communication form elements of transport within the production system from the point of view of the planned economy as a whole. An oil pipeline is a form of conveyor for liquids. The wider the network of oil pipelines the less need there is for reservoirs, the less oil is transformed into dead capital.

The conveyor system does not at all presuppose that enterprises are located very close together. On the contrary, modern technology makes it possible to scatter them—not, of course, in chaotic and casual fashion, but strictly taking into account the most advantageous location for each separate factory. The possibility of a wide scattering of industrial enterprises, without which the town cannot be dissolved in the country or the country in the town, is ensured to a very great degree by the use of electricity as motive power. A metal cable is the most perfect conveyor of power, making it possible to divide motive power into the smallest of units, setting it to work and switching it off by merely turning a knob. It is precisely by these characteristics that the power “conveyor” clashes most sharply with the partitions erected by private property. Electricity at its present level of development is the most “socialist” sector of technology; and no wonder, for it is the most advanced sector.

Gigantic land-improvement systems, for the in-draught or drainage of water, constitute, from this standpoint, the water conveyors of agriculture. The more completely chemistry, engineering, and electrification liberate cultivation from the effects of the elements, giving it the highest degree of planned regularity, the more completely will present-day agriculture be included within the system of the socialist conveyor which regulates and coordinates the whole of production, beginning with the subsoil (extraction of ore and coal) and the soil (plowing and sowing).

Old man Ford tries to build a sort of social philosophy upon his experience with the conveyor. In this attempt of his we see an extremely curious combination of experience on an exceptionally large scale in the field of production management with the insufferable narrowness of a smug philosopher who has become a multimillionaire while remaining merely a petty-bourgeois with a lot of money. Ford says, “If you want wealth for yourself and well-being for your fellow citizens, act like me.” Kant demanded that everyone should act in such a way that his conduct could serve

as the norm for others. In the philosophical sense Ford is a Kantian. But in practice the “norm” for Ford’s 200,000 workers is not Ford’s conduct but the gliding past of his automatic conveyor: it determines the rhythm of their lives, the movement of their hands, feet, and thoughts. For “the well-being of your fellow citizens” it is necessary to separate Fordism from Ford and to socialize and purge it. This is what socialism does.

“But what about the monotony of labor, depersonalized and despiritualized by the conveyor?” Tam asked in one of the written questions sent up. This is not a serious fear. If you think and discuss it through to the end, it is directed against the division of labor and against machinery in general. This is a reactionary path. Socialism and hostility to machinery have never had and will never have anything in common.

The fundamental, main, and most important task is to abolish poverty. It is necessary that human labor shall produce the maximum possible quantity of goods. Grain, shoes, clothing, newspapers, everything that is necessary must be made available in such quantities that no one may fear that there will not be enough. Poverty must be abolished, and with it, greed. Prosperity and leisure must be won, and with them the joy of living, for everyone. A high productivity of labor cannot be achieved without mechanization and automation, the finished expression of which is the conveyor. The monotony of labor is compensated for by its reduced duration and its increased easiness. There will always be branches of industry in society that demand personal creativity, and those who find their calling in production will make their way to them. What we are concerned with here is the basic type of production in its most important branches, until at least a fresh chemical and power revolution in technology sweeps aside mechanization as we know it today. But it is for the future to worry about that. A voyage in a boat propelled by oars demands great personal creativity. A voyage in a steamboat is more “monotonous” but more comfortable and more certain. Moreover, you can’t cross the ocean in a rowboat. And we have to cross an ocean of human need.

Everyone knows that physical requirements are very much more limited than spiritual ones. An excessive gratification of physical requirements quickly leads to satiety. Spiritual requirements, however, know no frontiers. But in order that spiritual requirements may flourish it is necessary that physical requirements be fully satisfied. Of course, we cannot and we do not put off the struggle to raise the spiritual level of the masses until we are rid of unemployment, the problems of waifs and strays, and poverty. Everything that can be done must be done. But it would be a miserable and contemptible daydream to imagine that we can create a truly new culture before we have ensured prosperity, plenty, and leisure for the masses. We must and will test our progress by its reflection in the everyday life of the workers and peasants.

The cultural revolution

It is now, I think, clear to everybody that the creation of a new culture is not an independent task to be carried out separately from our economic work and our social and cultural construction as a whole. Does trade belong to the sphere of proletarian culture"? From the abstract standpoint one would have to answer this question in the negative. But the abstract standpoint is valueless. In the transitional epoch, and especially in the initial stage we are in now, products assume, and will continue for a long time yet to assume, the social form of commodities. And we have to know how to deal properly with commodities, that is, how to buy them and sell them. Unless we do, we shall not advance from the initial stage to the next stage. Lenin told us to learn to trade, and recommended that we learn from the examples provided by Western European culture. Trading culture forms, as we now realize very well, a most important part of the culture of the transitional period. Whether we should call the trading culture of the workers' state and the cooperatives "proletarian culture" I don't know, but that is to step towards socialist culture is beyond dispute.

When Lenin spoke of the cultural revolution, he saw its fundamental content as raising the cultural level of the masses. The metric system is a product of bourgeois science. But teaching this simple system of measurement to a hundred million peasants means carrying out a big revolutionary-cultural task. It is almost certain that we shall not achieve it without the aid of tractors and electric power. At the foundation of culture lies technology. The decisive instrument in the cultural revolution.

In relation to capitalism, we say that the development of the productive forces is pressing against the social forms of the bourgeois state and bourgeois property. Having accomplished the proletarian revolution we say: the development of the social forms is pressing against the development of the productive forces, that is, technology. The big link to carrying through the cultural revolution is the link of industrialization, and not literature or philosophy at all. I hope that these words will not be understood in the sense of an unfriendly or disrespectful attitude to philosophy and poetry. Without generalizing thought, and without art, man's life would be bare and beggarly. But that is just what the lives of millions of people are to an enormous extent at the present time. The cultural revolution must consist in opening up to them the possibility of real access to culture and not only to its wretched fag-ends. But this is impossible without creating great material preconditions. That is why a machine that automatically manufactures bottles is at the present time a first-rate factor in the cultural revolution, while a heroic poem is only a tenth-rate factor.

Marx once said about philosophers that they had interpreted the world sufficiently; the task was to turn it upside down. There was no lack of esteem for philosophy in those words of his. Marx was himself one of the greatest philosophers of all time. These words meant only that the further development of philosophy, as of all culture in general, both material and spiritual, requires a revolution in social relations. And so Marx appealed from philosophy to the proletarian revolu-

tion, not against philosophy but on its behalf. In this same sense we can now say: it is good when poets sing of the revolution and the proletariat, but a powerful turbine sings even better. We have plenty of songs of middling quality, which have remained the property of small circles, but we have terribly few turbines. I don't wish to imply by this that mediocre verses hinder the appearance of turbines. No, that cannot be said at all. But a correct orientation of public opinion, that is, an understanding of the real relationship between phenomena, the how and why of things, is absolutely necessary,

The cultural revolution must not be understood in a superficially idealistic way or as something which is an affair for small study groups. It is a question of changing the conditions of life, the methods of work, and the everyday habits of a great nation, of a whole family of nations, Only a mighty tractor system which for the first time in history will enable the peasant to straighten his back; only a glass-blowing machine that produces hundreds of bottles and liberates the lungs of the old-time glass-blower; only a turbine of dozens and hundreds of thousands of horsepower; only an airplane available to everyone—only these things together will ensure the cultural revolution, not for a minority but for all. And only such a cultural revolution will deserve the name. Only on that basis will a new philosophy and a new art come to flower.

Marx said: “The ruling ideas of an epoch are essentially the ideas of the ruling class of that epoch.” This is true also in relation to the proletariat, but it means something quite different from what it means in relation to other classes. The bourgeoisie, when it had seized power, tried to perpetuate this power. All its culture was adapted to this purpose. The proletariat, having taken power, must unquestionably try to shorten as much as possible the duration of its rule, to bring nearer the classless socialist society.

The culture of morals

To trade in a cultured way means, in particular, not to deceive, that is, to break with our national tradition in trading matters: “If you don't deceive you won't sell.”

Lying, deceit—this is not merely an individual sin but a function of the social order. Lying is a method of struggle, and consequently is derived from the contradiction between interests. The fundamental contradictions result from relations between classes. True, one can say that deceit is older than class society. Animals already show cunning and deceive others in the Struggle for existence. A considerable part was played by deceit—military cunning—in the life of primitive tribes. This sort of deceit resulted more or less directly from the zoological struggle for existence. But from the time when “civilized,” that is, class society appeared, lying became frightfully complicated; it became a social function, was refracted along class lines, and also entered into the body of human “culture.” That, however, is a part of culture which socialism will not take over. Relations in socialist society, that is, the higher development of socialist society, will be

thoroughly transparent and will not require such auxiliary methods as deceit, lies, falsification, forgery, treachery, and perfidy.

However, we are still a long way from that. In our relationships and morals there are still very many lies of both serf-owning and bourgeois origin. The highest expression of serf-owning ideology is religion. The internal relations of feudal-monarchical society were based on blind tradition and were elevated into the form of religious myths, Myths are imagined, false interpretations of natural phenomena and social institutions and the connections between them. However, not only the deceived, that is, the oppressed masses, but also those in whose name the deception was carried out, the rulers, mostly believed in the myths, and were honestly guided by them. An objectively false ideology, woven out of superstitions, does not in itself necessarily mean subjective mendacity. Only in proportion as social relations become more complicated—that is, as the bourgeois order develops and religious mythology comes into ever-greater contradiction with it—does religion become a source of greater and greater trickery and deliberate deception.

Developed bourgeois ideology is rationalistic and directed against mythology. The radical bourgeoisie tried to get on without religion and to build a state upon reason, not tradition. This was expressed in democracy with its principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Capitalist economy, however, created a monstrous contradiction between everyday reality and democratic principles. In order to make up for these contradictions, higher-grade lying was needed. Nowhere is there such political lying as in bourgeois democracies. This is now not the objective “lying” of mythology, but consciously organized deception of the people by means of a combination of methods of exceptional complexity. The technique of lying is cultivated no less than the technology of electricity. The most lying press is found in the most “developed” democracies, in France and the United States.

But at the same time, and this must be frankly admitted, in France they trade more honestly than here, and at all events with incomparably more attention to the customer's requirements. Having attained a certain level of prosperity, the bourgeoisie renounces swindling methods of primary accumulation, not from any abstract moral notions but for material reasons: petty deceit, counterfeiting, grabbing, do harm to the reputation of an enterprise and undermine its future prospects. The principles of “honest” trade, derived from the interests of trade itself at a certain level of its development, enter into morals, become “moral” rules, and are watched over by public opinion. True, the imperialist war brought colossal changes in this sphere too, throwing Western Europe a long way back. But the post-war “stabilization” efforts of capitalism have overcome the more malignant manifestations of the reversion to savagery in trade. In any case, if you take our Soviet trade in its total scope, that is, from the factory to the consumer in the remote village, then a you will have to recognize that we still trade in an incomparably less cultured way than the advanced capitalist countries. "This results from our poverty, from the insufficient supply of goods, from our economic and cultural backwardness.

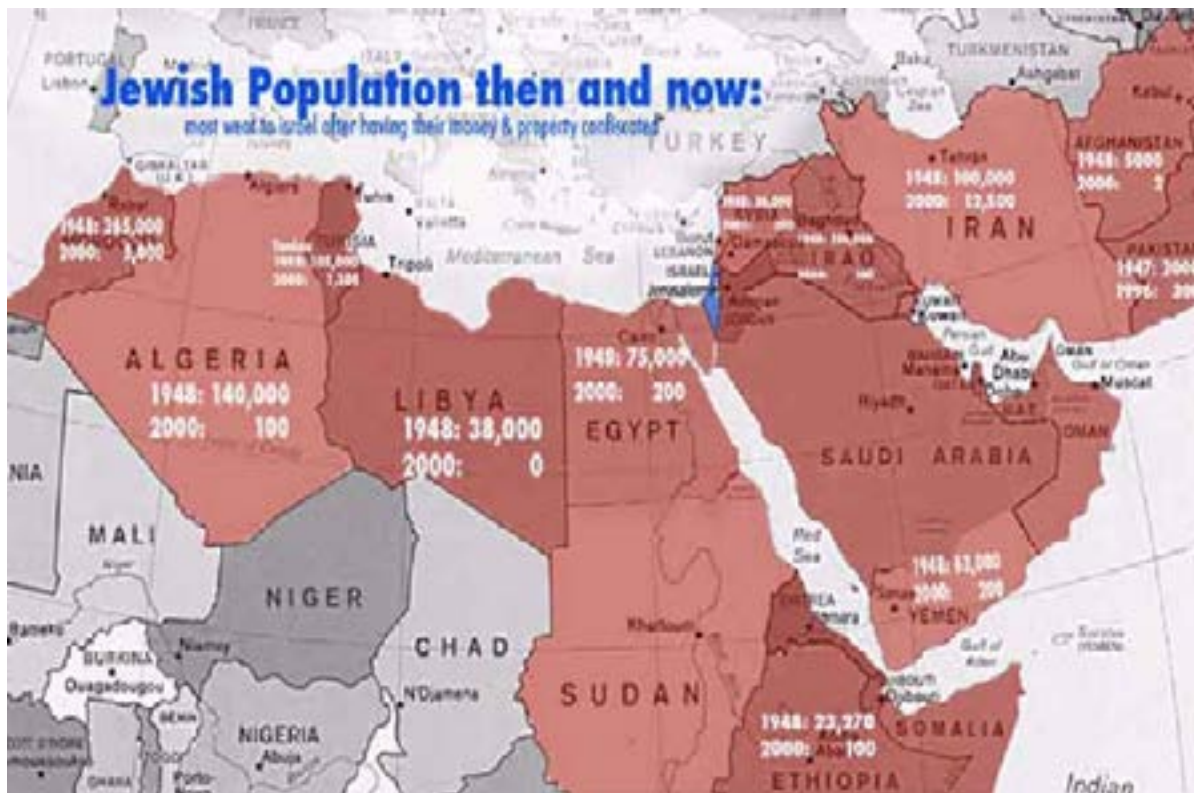
The regime of the proletarian dictatorship is irreconcilably hostile both to the objectively false mythology of the Middle Ages and to the conscious falsity of capitalist democracy. The revolutionary regime is vitally interested in laying bare social relations, not in covering them up. This means that it is interested in political truthfulness, in saying what is. But one must not forget that the regime of revolutionary dictatorship is a transitional regime and therefore a contradictory one. The existence of powerful enemies obliges us to resort to military cunning, and cunning is inseparable from falsehood. It is only necessary that the cunning used in the struggle against foes not be employed for the deluding of one's own people, that is, of the working masses and their party. This is a fundamental requirement of revolutionary policy, which runs like a red thread through all of Lenin's work.

But while our new state and social forms create the possibility and necessity of a higher degree of truthfulness than has hitherto been attained in relations between rulers and ruled, this cannot at all be said as yet about our relationships in everyday life, on which our economic and cultural backwardness, and in general the entire heritage of the past, continue to weigh very heavily. We live much better than we did in 1920. But the lack of the necessary good things of life still sets its mark heavily on our life and on our morals, and will continue to do so for a number of years. From this will result contradictions big and small, big and small disproportions, struggle connected with these contradictions, and—connected with this struggle—cunning, lies, deceit. There is only one way out: raising the level of technology in both production and trade. A correct orientation in this direction must already in itself help to improve "morals." The interaction of improved technology and morals will advance us along the road to a social order of civilized cooperators, that is, to socialist culture.

[Back to the first page](#)

The Jewish Question¹

Abram Leon



Chapter Two

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

A. Before the Roman conquest

From a very remote time Syria and Palestine were the highways for the exchange of goods between the two oldest centers of culture of the ancient Mediterranean world: Egypt and Assyria.² The essentially commercial character of the Phoenicians and Canaanites³ was a product of the geographical and historical situation of the countries which they inhabited. The Phoenicians be-

¹ The plan to drive Jews out of Middle Eastern countries in the 20th century

The number of Jews in the Middle East between 1948 and 2000: In Iran, from 100,000 to 12,000; In Iraq, from 100,000 to 100; In Egypt, from 75,000 to 200; In Libya, from 38,000 to zero; In Algeria, from 140,000 to 100; In Ethiopia, from over 33,000 to 100; In Yemen, from over 23,000 to 100; In Afghanistan, from 5,000 to 2,000; In Morocco, from over 260,000 to 3,000. The number of Jews in these countries today is far lower than in 2000. For information on the expulsion of Jews in Europe and their massacres, as well as the «Jewish Question,» read the article «Historical Truths of the Jews» in this issue. «In the common language of European science, ancient life is that which mainly developed around the Mediterranean basin.» — J.E. Toutain, *The Economic Life of the Ancient World* (New York, 1930), p. 1.

² «In the ordinary language of European science, ancient life is that which developed chiefly round the Mediterranean basin.» J.E. Toutain, *The Economic Life of the Ancient World* (New York 1930), p. 1.

³ It was probably the commercial prosperity of Palestine which made it appear to the Israelites as a land of «milk and honey.» It is also probable that the Israelite invasion dealt a serious blow to Palestinian commerce. But with time the Israelites in their turn renewed the profitable relations with the countries of the Nile and the Euphrates.

came the first great commercial people of antiquity because they [were] located [between] the first two great centers of civilization. It was Assyrian and Egyptian goods which at first constituted the main object of Phoenician trade. The same was certainly true for the Palestinian merchants.⁴ According to Herodotus, Assyrian goods were the most ancient and most important articles of Phoenician commerce. No less ancient, however, was the connection of the Phoenicians with Egypt. The legends of biblical Canaan, as well as Phoenician myths, reveal continuous relations by land and by sea, between the inhabitants of these countries and the Egyptians. Herodotus also speaks of Egyptian goods which the Phoenicians had been bringing to Greece from very remote times.⁵

But if the geographical situation of Palestine was as favorable as that of Phoenicia for mercantile trade between Egypt and Assyria⁶, the facilities for navigation at the disposal of Syria were completely lacking in Palestine. Phoenicia was abundantly provided with everything necessary for sea travel; the cedar and cypress of Lebanon furnished it with timber; copper and iron were also plentiful in the mountains of Lebanon and in the outskirts. On the Phoenician coast, many natural ports were available for navigation.⁷ It is therefore not surprising that at a very early date Phoenician ships, heavily laden with Egyptian and Assyrian products, should have begun to ply the navigable routes of the ancient world. "The political and mercantile relations of Phoenicia with the great states of the Nile and the Euphrates, relations established more than two thousand years before Christ, permitted the expansion of Phoenician trade to the coastal countries of the Indian Ocean."⁸ The Phoenicians brought the most diversified peoples and civilizations of antiquity closer together.⁹

For many centuries the Phoenicians maintained a monopoly of trade between the relatively developed countries of the East and the less civilized countries of the West. In the era of the commercial hegemony of the Phoenicians, the islands in the western Mediterranean and the countries bordering it were economically still very backward. "This does not mean that trade was unknown to the society of the day [Homeric Society], but for the Greeks it consisted essentially of importations In payment for these purchases [for the raw or precious materials, the manufactured goods, which the foreign navigators came to offer them], the Greeks seem to have given chiefly cattle."¹⁰ This situation, so highly disadvantageous for the natives, was not long maintained. Phoenician commerce itself became one of the principal stimulants for the economic development of Greece. The rise of Greece was also favored by Hellenic colonization, which expanded greatly between the ninth and seventh century before Christ. The Greek colonists spread in all directions over the

4 Thus, from the very beginning, it was a specific geographic and historic situation which determined the commercial character of the Phoenicians and the Jews. It is obvious that only the proximity to centers of civilization equipped with a relatively important industry, only the closeness to countries already producing in part for exchange, could permit the development of such specifically commercial peoples as the Phoenicians and the Jews. It was alongside the first great centers of civilization that the first great commercial peoples developed.

5 F.K. Movers, *Die Phönizier* (Berlin 1856), vol. 2, p. 18.

6 "Even before the advent of the Israelites in Canaan, commerce was highly developed there. In the Tell-el-Amarna letters (fifteenth century B.C.) reference is made to caravans crossing the country under protective escort." F. Bühl, *Die Sozialen Verhältnisse der Israeliten* (Berlin 1899), p. 76.

7 Movers, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 19-20.

8 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 18.

9 "By their indefatigable commercial enthusiasm and their entrepreneur spirit, the Phoenicians acquired a name as a commercial people far exceeding that of any other people of antiquity. It was only later, during the Middle Ages, that this name, with all the invidious connotations attached to it, passed to their neighbors and commercial heirs, the Jews of the Diaspora." *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 26.

10 Toutain, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

Mediterranean. Greek cities multiplied. Thucydides and Plato attribute the Greek emigration to the shortage of land.

The development of Greek colonization was accompanied by a tremendous rise, at least for that era, in Hellenic industry and commerce. This economic development of Greece inevitably brought about the commercial decline of Phoenicia. "In the past, the Phoenicians had landed their goods at the Greek anchorages and had exchanged them against native products—usually, it seems, cattle. Henceforward, the Greek mariners¹¹ would themselves go to Egypt, to Syria, to Asia Minor, and among the peoples of Europe, the civilized Etruscans, and the barbaric Scythians, Gauls, Ligurians, and Iberians, taking with them manufactured goods and works of art, tissues, weapons, jewelry and painted vases, which had a great reputation and were eagerly bought by all the barbarians."¹² The period extending from the sixth to the fourth century appears to have been the era of the economic apogee of Greece. "The characteristic of this new period was that the professions had become more numerous, organized and specialized. The division of labor had been greatly developed."¹³ At the time of the Peloponnesian War, Hipponikos employed six hundred slaves and Nikias one thousand in the mines.

This important economic development of Greece has stimulated most bourgeois scholars to speak about a "Greek capitalism." They go so far as to compare Hellenic industry and trade with the vast economic movement of the modern industrial era.

In reality, agriculture continued to be the economic foundation of Greece and its colonies. "The Greek colony was not a trading colony: it was practically invariably military and agricultural."¹⁴ Thus, Strabo relates apropos of Cumes, a Greek colony in Italy, that it was not until three hundred years after settling there that the inhabitants noticed that their city was located near the sea. The essentially agricultural character of the economic life of the Hellenic world is incontestable. Nor can there be any question of an industry comparable to modern industry. "The methods of production and of organization remained on the artisan level."¹⁵ Only the mines seem to have presented, at least insofar as labor power is concerned, a picture similar to that which we see at the present time.

The fact that despite their great expansion, industry and commerce remained for the most part in the hands of metics, of foreigners, proves best their relatively subordinate role in Greek economy. "In the immense trade of which Athens is the center, as well as in its industry the metics play a preponderant role."¹⁶ At Delos, the great commercial center, the inscriptions show that almost all

11 These "Greek mariners" appear to have been mainly "metics," foreigners who had established themselves in Greece. The commercial role of the Phoenicians had been tied up with the development of Egyptian and Assyrian civilizations; the rise of Hellenic civilization brought as a consequence the commercial prosperity of the metics.

12 Toutain, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

14 Johannes Hasebroek, *Staat und Handel im Alten Griechenland* (Tübingen 1928), p. 112.

15 Hasebroek, *op. cit.*, p. 78. The production of use values remains the foundation of the economy. All that can be conceded is that production for exchange took on in Greece the maximum dimensions possible for the ancient mode of production.

16 Pierre Roussel, *La Grèce et l'Orient* (Paris 1928), p. 301. See also Michel Clerc, *La Métèques Athéniens* (Paris 1893), p. 397: "Maritime commerce was in effect largely in the hands of metics"; and Henri Francotte, *L'industrie dans la Grèce Ancienne* (Brussels 1900–1901), vol. I, p. 192: "This commerce [at Athens] appears to have been

the traders were foreigners.¹⁷

The Greek citizen despised trade and industry; he was primarily the landed proprietor. Aristotle, like Plato, was opposed to granting citizenship to merchants.¹⁸

It is therefore necessary to guard against exaggerating the importance of the industrial and commercial development of Greece. In fact, Greek expansion was primarily agricultural and military. It did, however, go hand in hand with an industrial and commercial development of considerable importance for its time.¹⁹

The Greeks never became a commercial people like the Phoenicians and the Jews; but we do find a very important commercial and industrial development in the Greek colonies and later in the Hellenic kingdoms. And, of course, the Greek states, while not really mercantile, supported commerce and industry with all their might as financial sources of the utmost importance.

It is not solely to the economic development of Greece and its colonies that we must attribute the decline of Phoenician commerce; there was still another important cause: the growing antagonism between Persia and Greece. Paralleling the extension of Hellenic civilization was the victorious march of the Persians across Asia. The Persian empire reached its apogee in the fifth century B.C. It extended over a part of Asia and over Egypt.

The parallel development of Greek and Persian civilization necessarily dealt a mortal blow to Phoenician commerce. Trade between Asia and Europe was certainly rendered very difficult by the division of the Mediterranean world between two mutually hostile societies. The Persian and Greek worlds each created its own commercial trade.

With the decline of Phoenicia and the development of Asiatic trade after the period of the Persian conquests, we can assume that Palestine, previously completely supplanted by Phoenicia again began to play an important commercial role. The passageway between Egypt and Babylonia recovered all its value. Whereas Phoenician trade lost more and more of its ancient importance up to the point where, in the time of Lucian, salted products were the main cargo, the Jews played a leading role in the Persian empire.²⁰

Certain historians attribute an important role to the Babylonian exile in the transformation of the Jews into a commercial people. In Babylonia, "the Jews became transformed into a commercial people, such as we know them in the economic history of the world. They found highly developed economic relations among the Babylonians. Recently uncovered cuneiform texts show that

mainly in the hands of foreigners."

17 Hasebroek, *op. cit.*, p. 27. In the period of its prosperity; Athens contained 400,000 slaves; 20,000 citizens; and 30,000 metics.

18 "It is no more permissible to speak of the commercialization of the world than of its industrialization. The agrarian character of economy is predominant even in the fourth century B.C." Hasebroek, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

19 "Any analogy between the ports of ancient Greece and modern Genoa or Marseilles will provoke only skepticism or a smile. Nevertheless, the spectacle afforded by all this exchange, shipping, and coming and going of goods was then a new thing in the Mediterranean. It was quite different in intensity and in nature from that previously afforded by Phoenician trade, which had been mere sea-peddling rather than real business." Toutain, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

20 Charles Autran, *Les Phéniciens* (Paris 1920), p. 51.

the exiled Jews participated actively in commercial life. They were involved in credit business, highly developed among the Babylonians; they were also big traders.”²¹

But the dispersion of the Jews is certainly prior to the Babylonian exile. “There are serious reasons for conceding the existence of a pre-exile Diaspora.”²² The scope of the Jewish exile under Nebuchadnezzar is very greatly exaggerated. Only a part of the ruling classes was hit by the measures of the Babylonian king. The majority of the Jews established in Palestine continued to live there. Consequently, if during the Persian epoch the Jews were to be found spread over all parts of that enormous empire (and the Book of Esther is very eloquent on this subject), it would be childish to view this fact as a consequence of the Babylonian exile, an exile which lasted altogether some fifty years. It is equally puerile to believe that the Jewish people returned to Palestine in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah. Their work was primarily of a religious character. It was a matter of rebuilding the temple and of reconstructing a religious metropolis for dispersed Judaism. “Most historians have considerably exaggerated the role of Palestinian Judaism in the Persian epoch. They reason as if Jerusalem, once restored, all the history of Israel became concentrated around the holy mountain; as if all the people had really returned from exile and had lived on a land measuring some few hundred square kilometers in Tekoa, Mitspa, and Jericho. In reality, in this epoch, the Jews of Judea represented only a part, and the smallest, of Judaism. And undoubtedly it was the least vital part.”²³

The Edict of Cyrus is addressed to the Jews of the Diaspora in the following words: “And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help [those who are going to Palestine] with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem” (Book of Ezra 1: 4). “And all they that were round about them,” continues the Book of Ezra (1: 6), “strengthened their hands [the 42,000 Jews who were returning to Palestine] with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts.” It is obvious that we are not dealing here with a mass return of the Jews to Palestine but primarily with the reconstruction of the temple.

During the Persian epoch the principal colonies of the Diaspora were situated in Mesopotamia, in Chaldea, and in Egypt. The documents which have been found at Elephantine in Egypt, dating from the fifth century before Christ, throw an interesting light on the condition of the Jewish colonies of the Diaspora in this epoch.

According to the archives belonging to a Jewish family, it appears that the “Jews engaged in trade, bought and sold houses and land, loaned money, acted as depositories, and were well versed in matters of law.” It is very interesting to note that even the songs and chronicles are in Aramaic, which shows that as early as the fifth century B.C. Hebrew was no longer a customary language

21 Lujo Brentano, *Das Wirtschaftsleben der Antiken Welt* (Jena 1929), p. 80.

22 Antonin Causse, *Les Dispersés d'Israël* (Paris 1929), p. 7.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

for the Jews.²⁴ Aramaic was the great Asiatic language of the period, the commercial language.

The religion of the Jews of Elephantine was not as developed as the official religion codified during the Ezra-Nehemiah era. In a petition to the Persian governor, they asked for authorization to rebuild their temple. But the reform of Ezra-Nehemiah was aimed precisely at concentrating all the Jews of the Diaspora around the single temple of Jerusalem. And it was in fact to Jerusalem that the gifts of the Jews dispersed throughout the world continued to flow up to the year 70.

It was this wealth of the temple of Jerusalem that was probably the principal reason for the offensive of Antiochus against the Jews. "Simon advised him that the public treasury at Jerusalem was full of large sums and that there were enormous public riches." (Second Book of the Maccabees, 111: 6). Later, on the little island of Cos, Mithridates confiscated eight hundred talents that were destined for the temple of Jerusalem. In the Roman era, Cicero complained in his speeches of the immense sums which were flowing into Jerusalem.

The Hellenistic period constitutes the epoch of the economic apogee of antiquity. The conquests of Alexander destroyed the barriers between the Hellenic world and Asia and Egypt. Cities sprang up like mushrooms in all parts of the Hellenic empire. The "greatest founders of cities, not alone of this epoch but even in all history, were Seleucos I and his son Antiochus I."²⁵ The Hellenistic kings created new urban centers destined to supplant the old Phoenician and Persian cities. "On the coast of Syria, the port of Antioch causes the old cities of Tyre and Sidon to be forgotten."²⁶ Seleucos creates Seleucia on the banks of the Tigris in order to rob Babylonia of its central role in world commerce.²⁷ This goal was completely attained.

Whereas Babylonia fell into decline, Hellenic Seleucia probably became the greatest city of this epoch. According to Pliny, it had six hundred thousand inhabitants. Alongside of Seleucia, Alexandria and Antioch became the centers of the Hellenistic world. All of these cities experienced an unchallenged prosperity during the Hellenistic period.

The situation of the Jews appears to have been further strengthened after the conquests of Alexander. "It appears that they were able to secure special privileges equally well, both from the Seleucidae and from the Lagidae. At Alexandria, to which they had been attracted by Ptolemy I and where they abounded, they formed a separate community which governed itself and was not subject to the jurisdiction of the Greek courts."²⁸ "The Jews enjoyed a certain autonomy and a privileged position in Antioch, the capital of Syria. This was also true at Cyrene."²⁹ The privileged position and the specific economic roles of the Jews had already become the source of serious conflicts with the population of the cities which they inhabited. Struggles broke out continuously

24 Jüdisches Lexicon (Berlin 1927–30), vol. 2. Article on Elephantine, pp. 345–46.

25 Eduard Meyer, *Blüte und Niedergang des Hellenismus in Asien* (Berlin 1925), p. 20.

26 Roussel, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

27 Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

28 Roussel, *op. cit.*, pp. 480–81.

29 Brentano, *Das Wirtschaftsleben der Antiken Welt*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

in Alexandria, Seleucia, Cyrene, and Cyprus, as well as in the Palestinian cities.³⁰ These conflicts had nothing in common with present-day national antagonisms. On the contrary the Hellenistic empires witnessed a tremendous assimilation of their component peoples. The name Greek ceased after a while to be applied to the members of a particular nation but was assigned to the ruling and cultured sections of the population. Alexander ordered everybody, an ancient writer tells us, to consider the world as his fatherland, the well-to-do as his kin, and evildoers as foreigners.

The increased importance of Judaism in the commercial life of the Hellenistic world must also be attributed to the displacement of economic life toward the East. The prosperity of Alexandria, Antioch, and Seleucia offers a striking contrast to the poverty and decay into which Greece has fallen in the same period. Polybius repeatedly stresses the decline of Greek cities. Somewhat later, in the second century, “visitors could hardly believe that this city, where water was scarce, the streets badly laid out, the houses uncomfortable, was the famous Athens.”³¹ Athens was shorn of its role as center of the civilized world. What contributed to the ruin of Greece, together with her economic decline, was the ceaseless class struggles³², which by virtue of the backward mode of production, could bring about no important changes. The victory of the plebeian was ephemeral, the redistribution of wealth could only wind up in new social inequalities, breeding centers of new social conflicts. Thus the triumph of Greece, after the conquests of Alexander, proved illusory. The displacement of the economic center of the world toward the East, which followed the conquests, brought about the rapid decline of Greece.³³ The propertied and aristocratic classes, powerless before the plebeian revolts, had to seek support from Rome³⁴, but the latter could only answer by dealing the final blow to Greece as well as to Hellenism. The Romans threw themselves on the Hellenistic world as on a convenient prey to be pillaged and conquered. “Between 211 and 208, according to the assuredly very incomplete information which has come down to us, five ‘old cities of the Hellenes’ ... were sacked.”³⁵ Corinth, the rich commercial city was destroyed. “I was there,” recounts Polybius. “I saw pictures trampled under foot, and soldiers sitting on them while throwing dice.” Rome also dealt very harsh blows to Hellenism in Asia.³⁶ Under the combined blows of the Romans and the Parthians, the magnificent structure of Greece was destroyed.

B. Roman imperialism and its decline.

Will continue in next issue...

30 Meyer, op. cit., p. 61.

31 André Piganiol, *La Conquête Romaine* (Paris 1927), p. 205.

32 These class struggles were limited strictly to the free population of the Greek cities. “Some degree of equality in the possession of property appeared necessary to the maintenance of this political democracy. Therein lies the source of the bloody wars between the rich and the poor, the end-product of Hellenic demagoguery. But the slaves, serfs, and metics took no part in these struggles” Claude Jannet, *Les Grandes Époques de l'Histoire Économique* (Paris 1896), p. 8.

33 “The Greek peninsula [in the Hellenistic period] thus increasingly lost its leading position and the economic center of the world was displaced toward the East.” K.J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (Berlin 1914–27), vol. 1, pp. 279–80.

34 See N.D. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (Boston 1874), p. 498.

35 Maurice Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les Monarchies Hellénistiques* (Paris 1921), p. 231.

36 Piganiol, op. cit., p. 232.