

Maziar Behrooz

TUDEH FACTIONALISM AND THE 1953 COUP IN IRAN

The 19 August 1953 toppling of Muhammad Musaddiq's government in Iran was an important historical event from various perspectives, many of which are being discussed by Middle East observers to this date. First, it was the first covert post-World War II operation by the U.S. government, in cooperation with Britain, to topple the constitutional government of a sovereign nation. Operation AJAX, as the coup d'état came to be called by the CIA, was implemented at the height of the Cold War, and as such was accompanied by many familiar justifications. The most important of these were the improbability of any resolution to the oil-nationalization crisis between Iran and Britain as long as Musaddiq remained in power and the communist threat posed by the Tudeh Party of Iran and its Soviet sponsor.¹ The long-term consequence of this intervention can partially explain the 1979 revolution in Iran and the ongoing crisis in Iran–U.S. relations.

Second, the coup overthrew Musaddiq's government at a time that the nation was in the midst of a historic struggle with Britain over the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian oil company in 1951. The coup not only arrested Iran's gradual development toward asserting its national independence under a nationalist leadership; it also put an end to constitutional processes in Iran as Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi (r. 1941–79) was put back on the throne and moved to consolidate power under his own autocratic rule with clear disregard for Iran's monarchical constitution.

Third, the coup signaled the beginning of a major rout of Iran's communist movement, probably the largest in the Middle East. The Tudeh Party of Iran (Iran's version of a pro-Soviet communist party) was a clear loser as a result of the coup. By 1958, the Tudeh network in Iran was decimated, and many of its cadres had been arrested, executed, or forced to flee the country. The perceived threat of the Tudeh and the possibility of Iran's going to the communist camp was part of the rationale behind the coup. Prior to the coup, some Western observers viewed Tudeh as the country's only real political organization.² The party's organization was strong, and it had a large number of mostly urban-based, disciplined members and supporters. It was popular among the working class and played a leading role in the country's biggest labor organization, the Central Council of the United Trade Unions of Iranian Workers and

Maziar Behrooz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, Mass. 02325, USA; e-mail: mb3759@hotmail.com.

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Toilers.³ According to a CIA estimate in 1952 the party had 20,000 hard-core members, 8,000 of whom were in Tehran, and its rank and file were predominantly proletarian.⁴ Although outlawed in the late 1940s, the party had managed to reorganize and once more function effectively by the time the oil-nationalization movement began. The party had a network of loyal supporters among the officer corps of the imperial armed forces and was well aware of the impending coup. The party used this information to warn Musaddiq, resulting in the defeat of the first coup attempt on 16 August 1953. The decimation of the Tudeh's Military Organization, in 1954, eliminated the party's offensive capability, and the discovery and decimation of its Intelligence Organization removed its defensive shield. All of this translated into a disaster of historic proportions for the Tudeh. In fewer than five years, in the midst of the Cold War, one of the largest communist movements in the Middle East was removed from the scene without much resistance.

The Tudeh never recovered from this ordeal, and the discussion over the whys and hows has been going on ever since. How is it that the Tudeh was so utterly outmaneuvered and uprooted by the perpetrators of the coup? Why was the party unable to react to the coup in an effective manner? Even if the Tudeh was unable to stage a counter-coup to save the nationalist government or to secure political power for itself, why was it unable to resist the coup and prolong its own existence? Answers to these questions have haunted Iran's political culture since 1953, mainly because the fate of the Tudeh, the defeat of the nationalist movement, and the success of the coup are closely linked. Hence, no real general conclusion on the 1953 coup seems possible until a definitive one can be drawn as to why the Tudeh remained inactive during this period. Time and again, various political activists (Marxists, nationalists, and Islamists) opposed to the imperial regime would revisit this period and attempt to provide a satisfactory answer.⁵

When asked why the Tudeh did not resist the coup when it had the ability to do so, Nur al-Din Kianuri, the party's former first secretary and an influential figure throughout the party's history, responded angrily: "Why did we have to resist? Where were these gentleman officers of the National Front? It was Musaddiq who had to defend his government."⁶ There is some truth to this assertion. After all, what would have happened if Musaddiq had dissociated himself from any Tudeh-led attempt at a counter-coup? And he had good reason to suspect the Tudeh. The party had spent a good part of Musaddiq's tenure attacking him as an agent of American imperialism. Musaddiq's immobility remains an enigma, and there are no serious studies as to why his government remained immobile. But there are other aspects to the problem of the Tudeh's role. As will be shown, the Tudeh was aware of the impending coup and claimed it would resist it. Even if the party's immobility during the coup can be explained away, its immobility after the coup and its subsequent rout with relative ease remain in question. This paper revisits the Tudeh on the eve of the coup and answers these questions based on new analysis of old information and newly available data. The study will show that, due to intense intra-party factionalism, the Tudeh had reached a state of paralysis on the eve of the coup and was unable to correct the situation during the following years. Violent state repression and the party's reliance on the Soviet Union—two often mentioned causes of the defeat—were clearly impor-

tant factors but seem to make sense only when the first factor is fully comprehended (since neither of the two factors seems to explain the party's passive reaction).

Four categories of sources are available on the performance of the Tudeh during and immediately after the 1953 coup. The first category consists of the imperial regime's official account of the necessity of the coup and the dismantling of the Tudeh and memoirs of active members of the coup, which mostly repeated the official account. The imperial regime's account is, of course, self-serving and must be viewed within the context of the time. For example, no mention is made of foreign involvement in directing the coup, while the Tudeh is depicted as an agent of international communism ready to deliver Iran to the Soviet camp.⁷ These accounts are very detailed when it comes to exposing the organization of the Tudeh, which can only mean that they were written with close cooperation from one or more Tudeh leaders.

The second category of sources consists of Tudeh accounts of the coup. These sources include both official resolutions of the party's ruling bodies (notably, its central-committee plenums) and official and unofficial books published to present the Tudeh's views of the events. These documents and books include limited self-criticism by the party as to why and how the coup was successful and the Tudeh was defeated. But for the most part, they represent a concerted attempt by the Tudeh to refute its critics and, in a self-serving manner, to suggest that the party's ability to resist the coup was limited and that the victory of the coup was inevitable. Much blame is put on Musaddiq's leadership and the inability of the National Front to coordinate its efforts with the Tudeh. The party's relationship with the Soviet Union, its violent attacks on Musaddiq in 1951–52, its loss of initiative in 1952–53, and the strength of its military organization are either ignored or played down.⁸

The third category of sources consists of works by academics trying to sort out the course of events and analyze the 1953 coup based on sources available at the time of publication.⁹ Sepehr Zabih's work is the earliest, and it is a well-researched book based on information available on the coup and the Tudeh in the 1950s and early 1960s. The author's conclusion as to why the Tudeh remained passive against the coup emphasizes the party's relationship with the Soviet Union. While acknowledging such elements as repression and a lack of resolution on the part of the party leadership, Zabih's assessment of the Tudeh's capabilities is that the party could have mounted resistance but did not because it misunderstood general Soviet guidelines.¹⁰

Ervand Abrahamian's work is based on the author's dissertation on the Tudeh and the information available to him by 1982. His answer to the question of the Tudeh's passive reaction to the coup emphasizes two factors: first, the divisions between the party and the National Front, which made coordinated reaction much harder, if not impossible; and second, the location and specialization of pro-Tudeh military officers.¹¹ Abrahamian sees the second factor as more significant; he suggests that expectations and assessments of the pro-Tudeh officers had been exaggerated and that they were in no position to stage a counter-coup. Significantly, he suggests that these Tudeh-affiliated officers could have distributed weapons to party members and influenced rank-and-file troops. Abrahamian also mentions different factions within the Tudeh and in reaction to the oil-nationalization movement but does not develop the theme and does not seem to view it as a major factor in this regard.¹²

Mark Gasiorowski's studies of the 1953 events emphasize the overall U.S. role in the coup and provide a detailed and technical account of CIA operations in Iran. The importance of Gasiorowski's studies lie in their exploration of the extent of CIA involvement in vilifying the Tudeh, the role the CIA played in staging fake pro-republican demonstrations during the crucial 16–19 August 1953 period (which pulled in Tudeh supporters and resulted in Musaddiq's sending in the army and asking the Tudeh to demobilize), and the extent of CIA penetration of the Tudeh.¹³ This last observation is significant in that, according to Gasiorowski, the CIA had penetrated the Tudeh at a very high level, which can partly explain the party's defeat.¹⁴

The fourth category of sources on this subject comprises memoirs published by Tudeh leaders in the 1970s and 1980s. These should be divided into three groups—namely, those written while the author was a free person; those written while the author was in captivity; and those published by the Islamic government of Iran based on Tudeh leaders' confessions after their arrest in 1982. More scrutiny and caution must be used when the second and the third groups are utilized.¹⁵

THE TUDEH ON THE EVE OF THE COUP

Established in 1941, the Tudeh grew into a popular political organization by the late 1940s. It had survived three major crises by the time the oil-nationalization movement began. First, the party had survived the 1945–46 Azerbaijan crisis in which its sister party, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, which had attempted to establish an autonomous government in northwestern Iran, was crushed by the central government. Second, in 1948 and as a result of the Azerbaijan crisis, the party was challenged by a large split led by Khalil Maliki, which later came to be called the Third Force. Third, following an unsuccessful attempt on the Shah's life in 1949, the party was declared illegal and had to go underground. Because many of its leaders were arrested and had little experience in underground activity, this crisis was the most serious challenge to the party and one that it might not have survived. But state repression at this point was not very severe and systematic (it was certainly less severe than it was during the 1953 coup), and the nation still enjoyed many constitutional rights. Therefore, the party's activities in this period became semi-legal, and it soon managed to reorganize by creating a number of front organizations and publications in order to fill the vacuum left by its inability to function openly. Furthermore, in December 1950, in a spectacular operation, the party's Military Organization arranged for the escape of key members of the party leadership who had been in jail since early 1949. By 1951, the nationwide Tudeh organization seemed to have adapted and was once more fully functional under the new semi-legal political atmosphere.

The third crisis may have had an overall direct negative influence on the party's performance during the 1953 coup some three years later and help partly to explain the leadership's failure to move decisively against the coup. As Bizhan Jazani puts it, in 1953 the party leadership believed that, as it did the 1949 crisis, the Tudeh could survive the coup.¹⁶ In retrospect, therefore, the party's survival of the relatively light repression of 1949 may have given its leadership delusionary confidence in its ability to survive under repression. Kianuri notes that the Tudeh leadership after 1949 became

self-assured and arrogant in regard to its ability to analyze and understand social problems.¹⁷

If the Tudeh was to put up a meaningful and organized resistance against the coup, its military organization had to play an important and leading role. Created in 1944, the Military Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran (*sazman-e nizami-yi hizb-i Tudeh-ye Iran*), sometimes called the Officers Organization (*sazman-i afsaran*), was a network of military officers who supported the party. The military personnel who came to create the Military Organization had established their cells in the defeated imperial Iranian armed forces a year after the Allied occupation of Iran in 1941.¹⁸ Prominent among these officers were Colonel Ezatallah Siyamak, one of the few communist officers who had not been exposed to the police during Reza Shah's rule; Colonel Muhammad Ali Azar; Major Ali Akbar Eskandani; and Captain Khusruw Ruzbih. During 1942–44, these officers operated without direct contact with the Tudeh. In 1944, through Siyamak's contacts with Abdul Samad Kambakhsh, an influential party leader, the cells were put in touch with the party, and the Military Organization was created, with Kambakhsh as its party-liaison officer. During 1944–46, the military organization was involved in two episodes that led to an attempt at its disbanding and the Tudeh's severing of ties. First, in August 1944, around twenty army personnel in the Khurasan division of the army rebelled and attempted to reach the Turcoman areas of western Khurasan and eastern Mazandaran in order to stage a war against the central government. The rebellion was led by Major Eskandani and Colonel Azar. Many of the personnel involved in this venture, including Eskandani, were killed before they reached their destination, and others, such as Azar, fled to the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Second, the Military Organization sent aid and officers to Azerbaijan while the province was rebelling against the central government. The defeat of the Azerbaijan movement caused the party's leadership to attempt to disband the organization and, at any rate, cut all contacts with it. The Military Organization was not disbanded, as the party desired, and officers such as Ruzbih resigned their party membership in order to keep the Military Organization alive.²⁰ The party asked the organization back into its ranks in 1948 as a result of active Soviet pressure, and the reunion was finalized the following year.²¹

The Military Organization has generally been considered the party's strongest card in the years preceding the coup. Estimates of the number of officers involved in the Military Organization vary from 700 to 466.²² All of the estimates of the number of the organization's personnel were provided by the coup organizers, as the party did not have clear estimates of its own.²³ The official Tudeh estimate of 466 members suggests that 429 people were arrested after the coup, and 37 managed to flee the country. On 19 August 1953, 243 officers were stationed in Tehran, and only three or four were serving in the Imperial Guard division, the principal military unit counted on to execute the coup. Most of these personnel were in non-combat positions. The Tudeh has used the low estimate to argue that the party could not have made any meaningful use of the Military Organization. But the Tudeh estimate is contradicted by the fact that 466 military personnel had been brought to trial by 1958, not counting those who had fled.²⁴

The leaders of the Military Organization had suggested to the party leaders that they would be ready to take immediate military action against the coup.²⁵ According

to Kianuri's estimates, had the party chosen to take action during or immediately after the coup, the Military Organization had some 6,000 party and Youth Organization members at its disposal in Tehran alone.²⁶ During 1952–53, the Military Organization, through its intelligence network in the armed forces, helped to uncover plots against the nationalist government. The organization was well aware of the coup plot and had given the party leaders a warning to this effect, which was subsequently passed on to Musaddiq.²⁷ Fireidun Azarnur, a high-ranking officer in the Military Organization, has described the important military posts the Tudeh officers occupied during the coup. He gives an estimate of 491 Tudeh military personnel and suggests that they had the capability to aid the party in defeating the coup.²⁸ According to Kianuri, an officer in charge of a battalion from Hamadan, which had been brought to Tehran to take part in the coup, and an officer in charge of a company in Chalus were party members and were able to distribute weapons to the party.²⁹ The bulk of the Military Organization was decimated in the summer of 1954; its remnants came under Khusruw Ruzbih, who headed the Tudeh's intelligence branch. Ruzbih attempted to revive the party, but his arrest and execution in 1958 put an end to organized Tudeh activity.

The fact that the Military Organization could not have pulled off a coup and the Tudeh assertion that the Military Organization's abilities were limited still do not answer the questions of why the party did not take any action at all and why it simply waited for the coup perpetrators to dismantle its organization. Why did the party not take action, even with the limited resources available? It could have taken action and been defeated in the field rather than being dismantled without resistance. It seems that the answer to these questions is rooted in the state of paralysis that had taken over the Tudeh leadership. Under the new, repressive circumstances, the Military Organization would not have made a move without the consent of the party leadership, and the party was simply unable to make a move. Future Marxists would blame the party for inaction by pointing to the Military Organization as an example. They would point out that even if the Military Organization and the party had been defeated in action while resisting the coup, this would still have been preferable to its destruction through inaction. The Military Organization was a major element that sought to protect the party—something that it managed to do during the year after the coup. But the government's uncovering and decimation of the organization in 1954 cleared the path to the uprooting of the Tudeh.³⁰

The party's assessment of Iran's situation from the summer of 1952 was that a coup attempt was probable. As early as March 1953, through information received by its intelligence network, the Tudeh clearly suspected that preparations were being made for a coup.³¹ This suspicion became an undeniable fact eight days before the first coup attempt on 16 August. Therefore, the party's reaction to the coup should be divided into four time periods: summer 1952 to March 1953, when it deemed a coup probable; March to August 1953, when it suspected a coup; 16–19 August, when the coup was pending; 19 August 1953 to August 1954, when the process of discovery of the Military Organization began. After the dismantling of the Military Organization, the Tudeh was more or less doomed.

As early as winter 1953, the Tudeh leadership ordered the creation of vanguard cells made up of experienced party members working closely with the Military Orga-

nization. According to an officer's memoirs, the Military Organization had identified key military installations, army depots, and command and control centers in the capital.³² The vanguard cells, equipped with the intelligence provided by the Military Organization, were to react violently to any coup attempt. The cells were dismissed by the leadership before the coup, however, and the Military Organization remained passive as the coup consumed the nationalist government.

It is clear that the Tudeh passed its intelligence on the pending coup to the prime minister on 15 August 1953.³³ The period of 16–19 August 1953 was a short and crucial one and needed a quick, focused, and determined reaction by the Tudeh leadership if the situation was to be turned around. Instead, chaos and lack of determination prevailed. Although one Tudeh officer, Lieutenant Ali Ashraf Shoja'ïyan, acting on his own initiative, helped Musaddiq's guards arrest Colonel Ne'matollah Nasiri, the courier of the royal decree dismissing Musaddiq, the rest of the Military Organization did not take any action.³⁴ On 17 August, the party began to call for abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. Tudeh members were instructed to join demonstrations for the new cause. At the same time, CIA operatives in Tehran were organizing their paid street agents to demonstrate against the monarchy for a democratic republic and demonstrators were beginning to pull down the Shah's statues around the city.³⁵ This fake Tudeh crowd was joined by Tudeh supporters and added to the panic of the nationalist government, which did not really intend to create such radical reaction. The government therefore ordered the military into the streets, resulting in the arrest of many Tudeh activists, the withdrawal of pro-government supporters, and a hostile military in control of streets. The Tudeh leadership does not seem to have been aware of the fake Tudeh activities and was not able to react to them.³⁶

It was only after Musaddiq's overthrow that the Tudeh leadership began to take steps to prepare the party for armed resistance. These included the creation, in September 1953, of a center for resisting the coup. Three members of the party's executive committee and three members of the Military Organization were assigned to command the center.³⁷ The idea was for the Military Organization to train and arm some 2,000 party members and for contacts to be made with the Qashqa'ï tribe's leadership so that, in coordination with them, guerrilla warfare could be waged in the north and the center of the country. None of this resulted in any concrete action. The Qashqa'ï chiefs ultimately refused to cooperate, and the Military Organization was unable to gain access to adequate arms due to the repressive atmosphere of the post-coup period.

The official Tudeh reaction to the issue of the causes of the party's failure came during the party's historic fourth plenum, held in Moscow in July 1957.³⁸ The plenum criticized the party for its policy toward the National Front and for not recognizing the progressive nature of the oil-nationalization movement.³⁹ Calling the Tudeh's policies toward the nationalist government sectarian and leftist, the plenum also suggested that the policy on 16–19 August 1953 was incorrect when party demonstrators pulled the Shah's statues down and asked for a people's democratic republic.⁴⁰ The party admitted to its state of paralysis, blaming the leadership inside Iran while suggesting that the leadership abroad had failed to provide help and guidelines. The party blamed the lack of internal democracy in the party, the lack of close bonds between the

leadership and the party members, the low level of theoretical knowledge of the leadership, and the existence of deep differences among party leaders for the leaders' weakness.

THE TUDEH AND FACTIONALISM

Factional infighting had been a part of the Tudeh's existence from its inception and continued to play an important role in the party's paralysis in face of the coup. According to one of the party's former leaders, "The existence of two factions in the leadership of the Tudeh Party of Iran can be seen like a red line in the 38-year history of the Tudeh Party in Iran and in exile."⁴¹ Different names can be used to identify the two factions. Sources published by the coup leaders call them the old guard and corrupted faction versus the critical and compromising faction. This characterization—and the entire analysis of factionalism in the Tudeh by the imperial regime—is utterly inadequate and only served the regime's counter-propaganda goals. The imperial regime's analysis of factionalism in the Tudeh also attempts to oversimplify the issue and to present it as purely a problem among leaders who had no real political differences and were more interested in competing for key party positions.⁴² Better characterizations of the factions might be moderate versus hard-liner or right versus left. Both factions admired the Soviet Union, adhered to the Soviet version of Marxism-Leninism, and were united against the 1948 splinter group led by Khalil Maliki (which in the 1950s came to be called the Third Force). The party's 1948 second congress gave more definite shape to the factions. The oil-nationalization movement took the two factions farther into conflict.

The hard-line faction's principal members were young activists such as Nur al-Din Kianuri, Ehsanallah Tabari (a party theorist), Amanallah Quraishi, Ahmad Qasimi, Maryam Firouz, and Gholam Husain Furutan, as well as older members such as Ardishir (Ardashis) Avannisian and Abdul Samad Kambakhsh.

The hard-line faction presented a more dogmatic perception of Marxism than did the moderates, was more insistent on leading the working class and on following party rules, and was generally against the nationalist government of Musaddiq. The Tudeh's policy of confronting the Musaddiq cabinet, which lasted until July 1952, was largely a result of this faction's gaining the upper hand. The hard-line faction considered Musaddiq and the National Front part of the Iranian bourgeoisie who enjoyed close ties with the Americans, in contradiction to the imperial court and the landowning class, who maintained close ties with the British. Because of this two-sided understanding of international and domestic alliances, the hard-line faction viewed the dispute between the National Front and the British as being, in reality, one between British and U.S. policy in Iran. When the party proposed a united-front policy, the hard-line faction insisted that any such front with non-communist forces should come under party leadership. This faction considered the Tudeh to be the working-class party, and this perception became a major point of dispute with the moderate faction. The hard-line faction used its considerable organizational might within the party to win many converts to its cause. Leftist and extremist policies against the nationalist government were mostly, but not all, the result of this faction's policies, which changed only after the tide began to turn against the hard-liners after the July 1952

uprising, when Musaddiq resigned in a dispute with the Shah and was reinstated after a bloody uprising in his support.

The moderate faction's principal members were Murtiza Yazdi and Iraj Eskandari (both veterans of pre-1941 communist activities), Riza Radmanish, Fireidun Kishwarz, Husain Judat, and Nadir Sharmini, the head of the party's Youth Organization. This faction, although initially against Musaddiq, gradually came to accept his leadership. The moderates de-emphasized the leadership role of the working class and the party and believed that a united front with non-communist forces did not necessitate party leadership. They had a more populist view of Marxism than the hard-liners and considered the Tudeh not the party of the working class but a toiler's party that included other deprived classes. The policy of supporting the nationalists to the point of making the Tudeh simply a follower of nationalist policies after July 1952 was the result of this faction's gaining the upper hand.⁴³

The gradual control of party leadership by the moderate faction from July 1952 onward may partly explain the party's unprepared reaction to the coup. While much attention has been paid to the Tudeh's hostile reaction to Musaddiq until July 1952, not much has been said about the consequences of the gradual shift in Tudeh's policy, under the moderate faction, in support of Musaddiq.⁴⁴ Under the moderate faction, particularly after March 1953, the Tudeh in effect delegated all initiative to the Musaddiq government, to a point at which it was left with none of its own. When asked why the party had stored no weapons before the coup, Kianuri suggested that the party did not want to be seen as attempting to overthrow Musaddiq.⁴⁵ Recently published correspondence between the party's executive committee inside Iran and party leadership abroad sheds more light on this subject.⁴⁶ According to these documents, on the morning of 19 August, suggestions to hold demonstrations and a national strike to resist the coup were postponed until Musaddiq's approval could be secured. By that afternoon, of course, Musaddiq's government was no more.

Among those party members mentioned earlier, the case of Sharmini and Kianuri has baffled some scholars. Sharmini, whose power base was the Youth Organization and who was its head until 1952 but maintained his influence through the coup, proposed the most radical slogans while, at the same time, siding with the moderate faction on most issues. Sharmini personified radicalism with his sidearm (making a point of showing it off at mass meetings), fiery oratory, and command of Russian (his mother was born in Russia, and he pronounced Russian names with impeccable Russian accent, which must have added to his prestige). Under him the Youth Organization became a vehicle for undermining the authority of key personalities of the hard-line faction and their appointees as this faction was attacked as being soft and Menshivik. As the Youth Organization attacked principal leaders of the hard-line faction for being too moderate, it presented an even more radical alternative at party gatherings while Sharmini worked closely with the moderate faction on strategic party policies.⁴⁷ Hence, Sharmini, who was maverick of a sort, played a crucial role for the moderate faction in disarming the hard-line faction by undermining its radical posture.

Throughout his memoirs, Kianuri claims he was a proponent of Musaddiq after the July 1952 uprising, although he does admit that he, along with the other members of the leadership, opposed the oil-nationalization movement before July 1952. Indeed, he suggests that, through his wife's connection with Musaddiq's family, he was the

one who warned the prime minister of the pending coup. Kianuri's claim is only partially true. Among the key personalities of the hard-line faction, he was number three, after Kambakhsh and Qasimi. Kambakhsh was not a theorist but a party functionary with strong personal connections to the Soviets. Qasimi was a staunch Stalinist and a dogmatic theorist who was the main force behind the party's anti-Musaddiq policies during 1951–52. Both of these men had to leave the country by mid-1952. Hence, in the year before the coup, Kianuri was the only member of the hard-line faction left in the party's five-man executive committee. The key to understanding Kianuri's role lies in recognizing his theoretical difference with Qasimi. Kianuri believed in the hegemony of the proletariat in any coalition with non-proletariat forces, while Qasimi did not envision any coalition with a bourgeoisie, which he deemed as having betrayed the anti-imperialist movement. Qasimi's view was closer to Stalin's while Kianuri's was more moderate and closer to Mao Zedong's, but both were at odds with the moderate advocates who proposed closer cooperation with Musaddiq after July 1952 with or without party leadership.⁴⁸

To the political differences between the two factions must be added personal differences that helped fuel factionalism within the Tudeh. Jealousy of individual leadership figures was among the most significant of these factors. Indeed, some former Tudeh leaders, similar to the imperial regime sources, have claimed that the factions were more personal and organizational than ideological in nature.⁴⁹ Although hard to pinpoint and support with empirical data, it seems that in general personal animosity played a role in Iranian politics of this period and continues to do so to this day. Personal differences among key historical actors is an understudied subject, but based on available data it is possible to conclude that it played a major role in the case of the Tudeh party.

Documents related to the party's tenth plenum mention the factions and personal differences among individual party leaders. On differences within the central committee, the plenum identified two factions—one dominant and centered on Eskandari and Radmanish, and the other in opposition and centered on Kianuri and Qasimi—but suggested that the differences were mostly personal and due to character flaws. Nevertheless, the plenum put the general responsibility for the party's failure collectively on the executive committee of the time. After an attempt on the Shah's life in February 1949, many Tudeh leaders had to flee the country in order to avoid arrest, and many others were arrested. This development split the Tudeh leadership (i.e., its central committee) into two groups—namely, those who were abroad and those who resided inside the country. There was no strong and systematic contact between the two groups until after the Tudeh moved abroad after the coup. After the jailbreak of Tudeh leaders in December 1950, an executive committee was created in order to run the party's day-to-day affairs and to coordinate operations with the leadership abroad. Between 1950 and 1952, the eight-member executive committee showed a clear hegemony of the hard-line faction, with Nur al-Din Kianuri, Ahmad Qasimi, Ghulam Husain Furutan, and Mahmud Buqrati in one united block against Husain Judat, Muhammad Bahrami (the party's first secretary), and Murtiza Yazdi. Ali Oluwi, the last member of the executive committee, seems to have had his own independent line and often wavered between the two. In 1952, Qasimi, Buqrati, and Furutan were sent abroad to represent the Tudeh's leadership inside Iran at the Soviet Communist Party's 19th

party congress. This development changed the balance in the executive committee in favor of the moderate faction. The party's misjudging of the oil-nationalization movement and the events of the summer of 1952 may have helped in removing the hard-line members of the executive committee. At any rate, as the 1953 events approached, the hard-line position within the executive committee was weakened considerably, with Kianuri as the faction's only representative.

The two factions had control of various party organs, which added to disorganization and waste as factional competition grew more intense. Although in the minority on the executive committee, Kianuri and supporters had a controlling presence in the Tehran Provincial Committee, the nerve center of the party network led by Amanallah Quraishi, and in many of the neighborhood committees, and they had the ear of the Military Organization's leadership, which meant effective control.⁵⁰ Kianuri was the overall person in charge of party organization, but the party liaison with the Military Organization was Judat, a member of the moderate faction. Abdul Samad Kambakhsh and Ahmad Qasimi were the previous party liaisons, respectively, which suggests that the hard-line faction had control up to 1952. Nevertheless, it seems that the Military Organization kept its ties with Kianuri and bypassed Judat, as he was criticized by Kianuri, and later by the 10th plenum, for his incompetence in this regard.⁵¹

It is clear that the moderate faction's control of the executive committee did not translate into overall control of the party. Nevertheless, the moderates did determine the party's general policy (e.g., its policy toward Musaddiq). It seems that much of the factional conflict in the 1951–53 period focused on which faction presented the more radical and leftist view. It did not really matter what the real policy was as long as a leftist posture could be maintained to satisfy many young party cadres. The hard-line faction systematically attacked the moderates as being too soft, rightist, and willing to compromise with the enemies of the party and the working class. In this context, the moderate faction's control of the party's Youth Organization was important and came in handy. Headed by Nadir Sharmini until 1952—and still under his influence even after his dismissal—the Youth Organization played a pivotal role in balancing the hard-line attack on the moderates. The 10th plenum made a point of criticizing the Youth Organization and Sharmini.

Perhaps the most revealing document to date on the issue of factionalism and its role in hampering party activity during and immediately after the coup is the correspondence between the party leadership abroad and the executive committee inside Iran mentioned earlier. These letters—four in all and undated—were written after the coup; they depict the internal situation of the party in 1953–54 and the relationship among the executive committee members, and represented a request for mediation by the leadership abroad. They show the extent of factional infighting and clearly manifest the state of paralysis of the party. The first letter, signed jointly by Bahrami, Yazdi, and Judat, blamed Kianuri and his faction for the party's failures. It suggests that current factional problems in the party were a continuation of problems that had existed before the departure of some party leaders; that the eight-member executive committee, chosen in 1951, was an odd mix; and that from the start, Furutan and Quraishi were intent on removing Bahrami as first secretary of the party. The letter accuses Kianuri and Qasimi of wanting to turn party organization into their own *tuyul* (Turkish term for a medieval land grant, also known by the Arabic term *iqta'*). The

use of this term is very interesting in that it suggests a type of total control of the party organization based on Islamic medieval language. The letter points to the executive committee's approval of Sharmini's removal from the leadership of the Youth Organization (as noted, the organization was a power base of the moderate faction, and Sharmini's removal did not really alter the situation) but adds that the same corrective step could not be taken for the Women's Organization, another important party affiliated organization, because of Kianuri's disapproval. The Women's Organization was led by Maryam Firouz, Kianuri's wife. This letter, therefore, makes the point that while the moderate faction was willing to compromise by removing Sharmini, the hard-line faction was not willing to match the good will in kind. With the departure of Qasimi, Furutan, and Buqrati, according to the letter, and with Kianuri in a minority, more tension was added to an already tense situation. It accuses Kianuri of sectarian, bureaucratic, and opportunistic acts and suggests that the nationwide party organization was in a sorry state.

The letter then turns to personal aspects of the leadership's relationship. It suggested that the executive committee had observed morally corrupt (*fasad-i akhlaq*) behavior on the part of Maryam Firouz; Quraishi; and Hisam Lankarani, a party activist, and had given written evidence of this to Kianuri, but to no avail. The term "morally corrupt behavior" used in this context has strong sexual connotation and suggests infidelity on the part of Firouz and two of Kianuri's lieutenants. Iranian political culture is not known for its openness in sexual and marital issues, and for such issues to find their way into underground correspondence of a communist political party points to the degree of deterioration of personal relationships among individual leadership members. The letter points to executive committee meetings and calls them intolerable due to Kianuri's behavior. He is accused of openly calling his comrades by such names as "dishonorable thief and spy of imperialism." Kianuri is said to have referred to Yazdi by saying, "If you are not a spy, then your brother is"; to Judat by saying, "Your wife is a spy"; and to Sharmini by saying, "Your mother is a spy."

The second letter, written by Ali Oluwi, who generally sympathized with the moderate faction but who on some issues maintained his own independent analysis, suggests that the party was in fact paralyzed by internal factionalism. He views factional differences as having some ultimate political causes but primarily caused by personal vanity, the intent of some to secure power for themselves, and the autonomous functioning of some party institutions. He makes a point of criticizing both Sharmini and Kianuri.

The third letter, written by Kianuri, who at this point was the only hard-line faction member on the executive committee, confirms the scope of differences and suggests that the party cannot continue as it has done and that serious changes must be implemented. He suggests that the nature of differences are not simply personal and that the other group is trying to hide its own mistakes by attacking him and calling him an agent of imperialism. He also suggests that ordinary party cadres knew about the differences in the executive committee and that the only way out was for some leadership members abroad to return to Iran. Kianuri makes an important observation by suggesting that between summer 1952 and summer 1953, while the party had unprecedented opportunities for expanding the movement, "without exaggeration 90% of the executive committee's time was spent on petty personal matters, on avenging acts, on

scoring points, and on creating a situation whereby one group could be ousted and another group could take its positions." According to Kianuri, the party had the strength to withstand the coup, while the other faction tried to show that the course of events were inevitable.

The last letter was written jointly by all five members of the executive committee. It points to steps taken to remedy the situation in the executive committee, saying that the party had acquired some 10,000 grenades and other firearms, and requests guidance as to future actions.

The content of these letters, when put next to other available information, shows the sorry state of the Tudeh's leadership and the extent of the state of paralysis. In view of this information, it is surprising the party lasted as long as it did. One episode regarding the Military Organization and the impact of factionalism is very telling. The names and identities of the organization were kept in two special booklets and arranged in trigonometric codes devised by Colonel Muhammad Ali Mubashiri, one of the three men in charge of the Military Organization (the other two were Colonel Ezatallah Siyamak and former Captain Khusruw Ruzbih). The sequence of events that led to the uncovering of the Military Organization goes as follows: on 12 August 1954, former Captain Abul Hasan Abbasi, a prominent member of the Military Organization, was arrested while carrying a suitcase full of documents. Abbasi was one of the older members of the Military Organization and, as such, had much knowledge about its operations and key personnel. This should have worried—and, indeed, did worry—the leadership of the organization and the party. Interestingly, Ruzbih's insistence that Abbasi would not break under torture seems to have been instrumental in the organization's making the fatal decision not to take any decisive action in order to prevent Abbasi's knowledge of the organization from being revealed.⁵² Abbasi resisted savage torture until 24 August, while the party and the organization were aware of his deteriorating situation. After breaking, he gave away names and addresses of key Military Organization leaders, after which Colonel Mubashiri was arrested, and the booklets were confiscated. Mubashiri eventually gave the military governor of Tehran, the command center of the coup, the key to decode the booklets, and decimation of the Military Organization followed. After Abbasi's arrest, Judat, the party liaison, took delivery of the coded booklets on behalf of the executive committee. But the booklets were returned to the Military Organization just before arrests began. According to Lieutenant Amu'i, this was due to factionalism within the executive committee. He suggests that holding the booklets and other information regarding the Military Organization added to the prestige and position of the faction that possessed them. Hence, the booklets were returned so that no one faction would hold too much power.⁵³ Both the acceptance of Ruzbih's fatal recommendation—that is, not taking steps to protect the party and the organization after Abbasi's arrest—and the return of the booklets to the Military Organization suggests that factionalism in the party had translated into lack of resolute leadership at a time that such leadership was a determining factor.

TUDEH FACTIONS AND THE SOVIETS

The relationship between the Tudeh and the Soviet Union finds a new meaning when put in the factional context. The relationship between the two has always been a major

point of controversy in the history of the Iranian communist movement and a part of any evaluation of the Tudeh throughout its existence, particularly during the 1953 coup.

The Soviets exerted considerable influence in Iran while occupying the country during the World War II, and they had some influence on the Tudeh at its inception. During the 1940s, Rustam Aliev, a Soviet diplomat, had many contacts with the party and influenced its development. Aliev was a close ally of Ja'far Baqirov, the chief of the Soviet Azerbaijan communist party, who in turn was close to Lavrenti P. Beria, the head of Narodnyi Komitet Vnutrenyi Del (NKVD; People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) under Stalin.⁵⁴ Baqirov played an important role during the Iranian–Azerbaijan crisis of 1945–46; he met his demise after Beria's arrest following Stalin's death.

In terms of factionalism in the Tudeh, it is clear that both the hard-line and the moderate factions had great admiration for the October revolution and the Soviet Union as the citadel of victorious proletarian revolution. Members of both factions submitted to Soviet policy throughout the 1940s. Both factions believed that the party had to observe and respect its internationalist duties by coordinating the party's policies with those of the Soviet Union. It should also be noted that as long as Stalin was alive, the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) demanded discipline and obedience from fraternal parties around the world.⁵⁵

Within the context of general support for Soviet policies in Iran and around the world, the two Tudeh factions had different perceptions of and relations with the Soviets. Members of the moderate faction accused the hard-line faction, especially Kambakhsh and Kianuri, of being outright KGB associates or operatives. Kishawarz accused the Soviets of misusing the trust and admiration the Tudeh had for the October revolution and the Soviet Union. According to him, "By misusing the belief we and the majority of party members honestly had in internationalism, the CPSU forced its operatives and spies on its 'fraternal party.'" Kishawarz suggested that through Soviet support these operatives rose in party ranks "until they reached high party posts and gradually changed the Tudeh party of Iran into a tool of the Soviet Union's policy in Iran."⁵⁶ Here Kishawarz was criticizing the Soviets' conduct in promoting Kambakhsh and Kianuri in the Tudeh. He suggested that both men, heads of the hard-line faction, had ties to the NKVD and were closely supported by Beria and Baqirov as long as Stalin was alive.⁵⁷

Another aspect of the Soviets' influence on the Tudeh came in the policy-making sphere. As mentioned, Zabih noted how the party leadership had misread the CPSU's general guidelines on the international situation and viewed this as one of the contributing elements in the party's demise. Although it was not exactly the same as Soviet policy toward Musaddiq, the party's anti-Musaddiq policy in 1951–52, which was promoted mainly by the hard-line faction but was also initially supported by some moderates, was partially based on misinterpretation of a CPSU policy. This policy, which eventually manifested itself in the resolutions of the 19th Congress of the CPSU, held in October 1952, suggested that the bourgeoisie had let down the cause of democracy on the international scale and that it was now the duty of the international proletariat to pick up the banner of democracy.⁵⁸ The hard-line faction took this observation too literally and attacked Iranian nationalists as the manifestation of the Iranian national bourgeoisie.

Furthermore, the 1953 coup occurred as the Soviet Union was going through profound internal change. The Tudeh's relationship with the Soviet Union during this crucial period may help to explain the state of paralysis the party leadership reached in confronting the 1953 coup. Joseph Stalin died in March 1953, about five months before the coup in Iran. This began the "de-Stalinization" of the CPSU. During this period, the CPSU was engaged in a struggle for consolidation of power between two groups, one around Beria and the other around Georgy M. Malenkov and Nikita S. Khrushchev. Beria was arrested in June and executed in December 1953. Khrushchev became the first secretary of the CPSU in September 1953, signaling his dominant role vis-à-vis Malenkov and the beginning of the second round of a party-leadership struggle that was to last until 1958. This struggle forced the Soviet leadership to spend more time and energy on its domestic affairs and less on international issues. Such an opening provided an excellent opportunity for the proponents of the coup in Iran, both Iranian and foreign, and allowed them to take advantage of the Soviet Union's temporary preoccupation. But the same event may have been disadvantageous to the Tudeh, which depended on and expected Soviet leadership and support at this historical point. It seems that lack of Soviet influence and support, more than anything else, defines the Tudeh's relationship with the Soviet Union in the critical period of 1953–54.

CONCLUSION

The 1953 coup in Iran succeeded in overthrowing Musaddiq's nationalist government with minimum expenditure and allocation of manpower and material. Recent information on the coup shows that it succeeded with the narrowest margin possible, that the perpetrators of the coup were about to leave Iran after the initial failure of 16 August 1953.⁵⁹ One of the rationales behind the coup was the communist threat, itself a product of the Cold War mentality prevalent at the time. The Tudeh and its capabilities were counted on, or feared by, both the proponents and opponents of the coup. Although there is nothing to suggest that the party had any plan for immediate takeover of political power, or that there was any Soviet plan involving a Tudeh takeover with Soviet support, it is clear that the party suspected an attempt to overthrow the nationalist government as early as summer 1952, and that it became aware of foreign involvement in an attempt to topple the Musaddiq government in August 1953. The Tudeh had said repeatedly that it would react to any coup attempt. The main question is not whether the Tudeh would have been successful if it had taken action against the coup when it came, but why it did not take any action.

One overall explanation is that, at some point, the five members of the Tudeh's executive committee may have come to the conclusion that the party could survive the storm, as it had in 1949. Some twenty years later, Jazani made the following important observation: "the leadership of the party thought that the 1953 [coup] was only a defeat for the nationalist movement . . . and that the party, and its underground organizations, could continue underground activities."⁶⁰ This, however, only partially answers the problem of lack of resolve and coherent policy among the party leadership. Factionalism and the state of paralysis complete the picture.

The party leadership collectively was suspicious of Musaddiq, but, as noted, a group of these leaders began to change policy after the summer of 1952. The hege-

mony of the moderate faction contributed to the party's loss of initiative vis-à-vis the nationalist government, particularly after March 1953. As if wanting to compensate for its attacks upon Musaddiq during 1951–52, the party leadership refused to prepare for the coming showdown and left all initiatives to the nationalists. Although the moderate faction's control over the party was not absolute, this faction could and did initiate general policy. Thus, while the Military Organization was ready to take steps to prepare the party and the Youth Organization in the months preceding the coup, the order came in to stop activities so that the Musaddiq government would not be alienated. Another example of the loss of initiative is the party's conduct during the crucial days of 16–19 August 1953. Here the need to take action only after Musaddiq's approval was secured doomed any plausible hope of success. The moderate faction's policy did not mean that, had the radical faction been in charge, the situation would have been much different. The radical faction was responsible for the party's hostile posture toward Musaddiq in 1951–52.

Factional bickering compounded the problem by wasting time and energy on petty issues, particularly in the period between the coup in 1953 and the beginning of decimation of the party one year later. The party clearly had the manpower and the necessary intelligence to make a difference, but only if the state of paralysis did not exist. As noted, a state existed whereby, beside factional fighting within the executive committee, the overall organizational network, the Tehran Provincial Committee, and the Women's Organization sided with Kianuri against the rest of the executive committee. This occurred while the Military Organization maintained its own liaison with Kianuri over the head of its official party liaison official, Judat, and it is not clear who controlled the Youth Organization in 1952–54—thus, the fiasco of Captain Abbasi's arrest and the fate of the Military Organization's secret booklets.

Between August 1953 and August 1954, the Tudeh was left without the Musaddiq factor to consider and should have been able to organize resistance on its own—or, at least, protect itself. But the intense factional infighting, a state of paralysis, and unpreparedness of the previous year led to a clear lack of resolution and indecisive decision-making by the party leadership. It seems that although the party had the ability to mobilize and interfere in the coup, this could have happened only if the party leadership had shown resolution and determination. Only a focused and concerted effort by the party leadership could have made a difference, and this is what a Tudeh leadership in a state of paralysis could not provide.

NOTES

Author's note: I thank professors Ervand Abrahamian and Mark Gasiorowski for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

¹Indeed, recent documents on the coup, referred to as the Wilber Report and its related appendixes, presented on the Internet by the *New York Times* suggest that both the British and the U.S. governments viewed the oil issue as secondary and communist threat as the prime concern (app. A, 2; app. B, 5–6). A geo-political view of Iran's condition under Musaddiq and the perceived Tudeh threat is the main justification for Project AJAX. It is argued that with deterioration of Iran's economy under the nationalist government, chaos and collapse were probable, and the Soviets, through the Tudeh, would be in a position to take Iran into the Soviet camp. The full text of new material is available from: www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/041600iran-cia-index.html and www.cryptome.org/cia-iran-all.htm.

³For example, the daily *Kayhan* quoted the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1950 suggesting that the Tudeh was "the only organization which can be called a political party": see *Guzashtih chiragh rah-i ayandih* (The Past Is the Light to the Future Path) (n.p.: Jami, n.d.), 522.

⁴Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 535; Habib Ladjevardi, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 50–76.

⁵As quoted in Abrahamian, *Iran*, 320.

⁶As late as the summer of 2000 at a lively international conference, a first held in Tehran, the very role of the Tudeh vis-à-vis the nationalists and the coup perpetrators was a heated point of debate: "Iran and the Great Powers," Center for Documents and Diplomatic History, Tehran (7–8 June 2000).

⁷Nur al-Din Kianuri, *Khatirat-i Nur al-Din Kianuri* (Memoirs of Nur al-Din Kianuri) (Tehran: Didgah Institute, 1992), 286.

⁸See *Kitab-i siyah* (The Black Book) (Tehran: Matbu'at Publications, 1955); *Siyar-i Kumunizm dar Iran* (Development of Communism in Iran) (Tehran: Kayhan Publications, 1957); Mohsin Mubassir, *Pazhuhish* (Research) (London: n.p., 1996); Ali Ziba'i *Kumunizm dar Iran* (Communism in Iran) (n.p.: n.p., 1964).

⁹*Asnad va didgahha* (Documents and Perspectives) (Tehran: Tudeh Publications, 1979); F. M. Javanshir [Farajollah Mizani], *Tajrubih-yi 28 Mordad* (The Experience of the 28th of Mordad) (Tehran: Tudeh Party Publications, 1980); Abdul Samad Kambakhsh, *Nazari bih junbish-i kargari dar Iran* (A Look at the Working-Class Movement in Iran) (n.p.: Gulbarg Publications, n.d.); Rasul Mihraban, *Gushihha'i az tarikh-i mu'asir-i Iran* (Aspects of Iran's Contemporary History) (n.p.: Atarud Publications, 1982); Khusruw Shakiri, comp., *Asnad-i Tarikhi-yi junbish-i kargari, sosial dimokrasi va kumunisti-yi Iran* (Historical Documents: The Workers', Social-Democratic and Communist Movement of Iran), vol. 1 (Florence: Mazdak, 1974). Shakiri's work contains an unofficial version of the proceedings of the party's Tenth Plenum.

¹⁰Abrahamian, *Iran*; Moyara De Moraes Ruehsen, "Operation 'Ajax' Revisited: Iran, 1953," *Middle Eastern Studies* 29 (1993): 467–86; Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'état in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 261–86.; idem, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building of a Client State in Iran* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); Ghulam Riza Nijati, *Tarikh-i bist va panj saleh-yi Iran* (The Twenty-Five Year History of Iran), 2 vols. (Tehran: Rasa Cultural Institute, 1992); Sepehr Zabih, *The Communist Movement in Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

¹¹Zabih, *Communist Movement*, 203–206.

¹²Abrahamian, *Iran*, 338.

¹³*Ibid.*, 322.

¹⁴Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'état," n. 76; idem, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, 69–70, 78–79.

¹⁵Gasiorowski suggested to me that his sources, based on interviews with British operatives in Iran, pointed to the Lankarani brothers as possible agents, but that it was not for certain. The Lankaranis were Shaykh Husain, Ahmad, Murtiza, Mustafa, and Hisam. The last four were members of the Tudeh. In correspondence with one CIA operative of the time, CIA penetration was confirmed, but no new detail was provided: see personal correspondence with Ernest R. Oney, 2 September 1993. An interesting by-product of this interview was Oney's suggestion that "in the early days," members of the Third Force (an offshoot of the Tudeh, strong supporters of the National Front, led by Khalil Maliki) were cooperating with the CIA against the Tudeh, although "no earth-breaking information" was gained. This revelation must be followed up and, if true, puts the contention that the Third Force represented an independent-minded leftist movement in Iran in doubt.

¹⁶For the first group, see Babak Amir-Khusrawi, *Nazar az darun bih naqsh-i hizb-i Tudih-yi Iran* (A Look from Within at the Role of the Tudeh Party of Iran) (Tehran: Didgah Institute, 1996); Muhammad Ali Amu'i, *Durd-i zamanih* (The Drag of Age) (Tehran: Anzan Publishers, 1998); Iraj Eskandari, *Khatirat-i siyasi* (Political Memoirs), eds. B. Amir-Khusrawi and F. Azamur, 3 vols. (Saint Cloud Cedex, France: Democratic People's Party of Iran Publications, n.d.); Fireidun Kishawar, *Man mutaham mikunam* (I Condemn) (Tehran: Rawaq Publications, n.d.); Anwar Khamih'i, *Az inshi'ab ta kunun* (From Split till Now) (Saarbrücken: Navid Publications, n.d.); idem, *Fursat-i buzurg-i az dast raftih* (The Grand Lost Opportunity) (Saarbrücken: Navid Publications, n.d.). For the second group, see Maryam Firouz, *Khatirat-i Maryam Firouz* (*Farman Farmaian*) (The Memoirs of Maryam Firouz Farman Farmaian) (Tehran: Didgah Institute, 1994); Kianuri, *Memoirs*; Ehsanallah Tabari, *Kazh rahih* (The Diverted Path) (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1987). For the third group, see *E'tirafat-e saran-i hizb-i Tudih-yi Iran* (Confessions of the Leaders

of the Tudeh Party of Iran) (Tehran: Nigarih Publishers, 1996); *Siyasat va sazman-i hizb-i Tudih az aqaz ta furupashi* (The Politics and Organization of the Tudeh Party from the Beginning to Its Destruction), vol. 1 (Tehran: Institute for Political Study and Research, 1991).

¹⁶Bizhan Jazani, *Tarh-i jami'ih shinasi va mabani-yi estiratizhi-yi junbish-i enqilabi-yi khalq-i Iran* (The Sociological Plan and the Strategic Foundation of Iranian People's Revolutionary Movement) (Tehran: Maziar Publications, 1979), 45.

¹⁷Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 281–82.

¹⁸Ruhallah Abbasi, *Khatirat-i yik afsar-i Tudih'i 1330–1335* (The Memoirs of a Tudeh Officer 1951–1956) (Montreal: Farhang Publications, 1989), 8. For the imperial regime's version of the organization's activities, see *The Black Book*; for a history of the Military Organization, see Muhammad Husain Khusruw-panah, *Sazman-i afsaran-i hizb-i Tudih-yi Iran 1323–1333* (The Officers' Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran 1944–1954) (Tehran: Shirazih Publishers, 1999); idem, "Tarikhchih-yi Zuhur va Suqut-i Sazman-i afsaran-i hizb-i Tudih-yi Iran" ("A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of the Officers' Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran"), *Nigah-i Nu* 33 (1997).

¹⁹Zaba'i, *Communism in Iran*, 628–29. For more on this, see Muhammad Husain Khusruw-panah, "Baznigari-yi yik vaq'ih: Qiyam-i afsaran-i Khurasan" ("Revisiting an Incident: The Rebellion of Khurasan Officers"), *Nigah-i Nu* 32 (1997); Abul Hasan Tafrihsian, *Qiyam-i afsaran-i Khurasan* (The Rebellion of Khurasan Officers) (Tehran: Atlas, 1988).

²⁰See Ruzbih's confessions in Zaba'i, *Communism in Iran*, 624–27.

²¹"Interview with Fireidun Azarnur," *Rah-i Azadi* 24 (1992), 24. Azarnur was an active member of the Military Organization.

²²Jazani gives the highest number while Kianuri gives the lowest number in an article in 1980. Tabari put the number at 600: see Jazani, *The Sociological Plan*, 71; Tabari, *Diverted Path*, 171; Nur al-Din Kianuri, "The Tudeh Party and Dr. Musaddiq," *Namih Mardum* (4 April 1980). Azarnur, after considering all accounts and numbers, gives the most realistic estimate of 491 total members of the Military Organization: "Interview with Fireidun Azarnur," 24.

²³"Interview with Fireidun Azarnur," 15.

²⁴Abrahamian, *Iran*, 338.

²⁵Jazani, *The Sociological Plan*, 71.

²⁶Kianuri, 288.

²⁷It seems that the Military Organization had a number of well-placed informants among the coup's perpetrators. It was through these sources that the coup was exposed and the information was passed on to Musaddiq through the Tudeh on 16 August 1953: see Khusruw-panah, *The Officers' Organization*, 164–69.

²⁸"Interview with Fireidun Azarnur," 13–17.

²⁹Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 297.

³⁰The trials, executions, and sentencing of the Tudeh officers created heroes out of the men. Unlike the Tudeh leaders, the officers showed courage when faced with torture and death. On some occasions, this heroism resulted in myths. One such myth, which has led to controversy, was created around a poem written by a National Front supporter. The poet, Dr. Haydar Riqabi (using the pen name Halih), wrote *Mara Bibus* (Kiss Me) in 1954. This coincided with the sentencing of the first group of Tudeh officers. The belief soon became popular that the poem had been written by a Tudeh officer as his last farewell to his daughter. In the following years, the poem was made into a song, which has remained popular to this day. The subsequent efforts of the poet to clear up this mistake remained unsuccessful to the day he died in 1987: see Haydar Riqabi, *Sha'ir-e shahr-i ma* (Our Town's Poet) (Berkeley, Calif.: n.p., 1969), 20.

³¹At this point the Tudeh was not aware of Project AJAX, as it had not gone into effect yet. The Tudeh and the Musaddiq government were aware of activities by some military personnel to topple the government. Notable among these was General Zahidi, whose activities would be linked with Project AJAX later.

³²Amu'i, *The Drag of Age*, 69–70.

³³Kianuri has always claimed this, and Musaddiq mentions it: see Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 264–65 and Muhammad Musaddiq, *Khaterat va ta'amolat* (Memoirs and Reflections) (Tehran: Elmi Publications, 1987), 379–80. For an analysis of the Tudeh telephone calls to Musaddiq, see Amir-Khusrawi, *A Look from Within*, 675–78.

³⁴Khusruw-panah, "A Brief History," 57.

³⁵Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78.

³⁶Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 267–270. Kianuri does not accept the information on this subject that became avail-

able in 1992. My interview with a high-ranking Tudeh leader confirms that the party was not aware of the fake demonstrations. This Tudeh member, who insists on remaining anonymous, was interviewed in Tehran in the summer of 2000 and was a high-ranking member of the party's Tehran Provincial Committee but not of the five-man executive committee that acted as the party's highest decision-making body. The Tehran Provincial Committee acted as the nerve center of the Tudeh network and, as such, should have been aware of the fake demonstrations. According to this source, the Tudeh was completely unaware of such activities. This person even refused to accept such possibility in light of new information.

³⁷Ziba'i, *Communism in Iran*, 70; *The Black Book*, 93; Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 295.

³⁸For the plenum's official proceedings, see Shakiri, *Historical Documents*, 1:361–401; *Asnad va did-gahha* (Documents and Perspectives) (Tehran: Tudeh Publications, 1979), 361–83. The complete text of the Fourth Plenum was never published. The former document was published by an independent researcher while the latter was published by the party after the 1979 revolution. There is a major discrepancy between the two in that the one published by the Tudeh contains a number of paragraphs that support Kianuri's position on his role during the 1953 coup and exonerate him of any major wrongdoing. According to Babak Amir-Khusrawi, a Tudeh central-committee member who was a leading party member until 1983, the paragraphs were added by Kianuri, under whose supervision the proceedings of the Fourth Plenum were published in 1979: see *Adin* 83 (1993), 19.

³⁹Shakiri, *Historical Documents*, 1:364.

⁴⁰According to Gasiorowski, some of these radical demonstrations, which helped alienate the nationalist government from the Tudeh, were in fact promoted by CIA operatives: see Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78.

⁴¹Kishawarz, *I Condemn*, 42.

⁴²*Development of Communism*, 417–34.

⁴³Tabari's account of the members of the two factions is in contrast to all other sources. According to Tabari, the Kianuri–Kambakhsh–Avanissian faction was moderate, and the Yazdi–Radmanish–Eskandari faction was radical. His assessment is unacceptable in view of the facts: see Tabari, *Diverted Path*, 170.

⁴⁴The party plenum makes no mention of the shortcomings of the moderate faction's policies, but Kianuri, who belonged to the opposing faction, suggests that "in my opinion our principal mistake was that we became followers of Musaddiq and National Front policies and as a result we sank with them": Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 303.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 278.

⁴⁶The correspondence was first published in Europe and republished in Kianuri's memoirs: see *ibid.*, 307–35; *Rah-i Azadi*, nos. 22, 23 (1992).

⁴⁷*Development of Communism*, 425–30.

⁴⁸For more on this, see Amir-Khusrawi, *A Look from Within* 251–69.

⁴⁹Interview with an anonymous Tudeh member of the Tehran Provincial Committee, London, 20 June 1992.

⁵⁰*Development of Communism*, 422–23.

⁵¹Kianuri, *Memoirs*, 262, Shakiri, *Historical Documents*, 1:367.

⁵²The Tudeh should and could have taken a number of steps to protect the Military Organization and the party. These included changing the safe houses and the party and organization centers of activity that Abbasi could compromise and immediately safeguarding party and organization documents. Finally, the party had the ability to kill Abbasi, as some of the people present while he was being tortured, including Captain Muhammad Puladdezh, had access to him and were reporting his deteriorating condition to the party leadership: Khusruw-panah, *The Officers' Organization*, 208–19. Many years later, and after his arrest and confessions, Ruzbih blamed the party leadership for not giving direction as to what to do after Abbasi's arrest, which again points to the state of paralysis of the party leadership: see Ruzbih's confessions in *Communism in Iran*, 634.

⁵³Amu'i, *Drag of Age*, 84–85.

⁵⁴According to a source published by the Islamic government, Rustam Aliev is in fact Haydar Ali Rizauglu Aliev, the current president of the Republic of Azerbaijan who was a Soviet Communist Party Politburo member from 1982 to 1987. But according to official data, Haydar Aliev was born to an Iranian émigré family in Nakhjivan on 10 May 1923. This would make Aliev only eighteen years old at the time of his alleged involvement in Iran in 1941. Even if he is slightly older, this assertion seems highly unlikely: see *Politics and Organization of the Tudeh Party*, 1:99–100.

⁵⁵For a discussion of the CPSU's relations with fraternal parties at the height of Stalin's power, see

Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform*, vol. 2 (London and New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

⁵⁶Kishawarz, *I Condemn*, 79–80.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁸*Tarikh-i hizb-i kumunist-i shurawi* (The History of the Soviet Communist Party) (n.p.: Tudeh Party Publications, 1979), 686–94.

⁵⁹Wilben Report, app. D: *Overthrow of Premier Musaddiq in Iran November 1952–August 1953*, 50–52.

⁶⁰Jazani, *The Sociological Plan*, 66.