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Subject: Iran: Information on recent activities of the Tudeh Party (also called Iranian Communist Party) both inside and outside Iran; whether there have been arrests in Iran of alleged Tudeh Party members/supporters (1996-1999)

Regional Office: 2

From: Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Keywords: political parties; detention; social position; immigration; freedom of association; protest; political activities in exile; print media; writers; travel; communism; political opposition; Europe; Australia; Japan; Italy; Portugal; Spain; Canada; United States; Pakistan; Turkey; Iraqi; Iran

Political Handbook of the World: 1998 does not mention whether the Tudeh Party is in Iran (1999 434).

Three specialists on Iran stated that the Tudeh Party is no longer active inside Iran (29 Apr. 1999; 29 Apr. 1999; 30 Apr. 1999). The specialists added that Dr. Nuredin Kianouri, one of the long time jailed leaders of the Tudeh, has recently been released mainly because the group no longer represents a threat to the régime and is inactive inside Iran (ibid.). The vast majority of members of the Tudeh Party left Iran for Europe after the party was formally banned in 1983 (ibid.).

Outside Iran, the Tudeh Party has been quiet except for participating in demonstrations or issuing the occasional communiqués (ibid.).

Questioned by Iran Press Service (IPS) on whether it was true that the party has branches in countries as far as Australia and Japan, Mansour Hekmat, the Secretary General of the Iranian Workers Communist Party of Iran, stated that

Right now, we have branches in all Western European countries except Italy, Portugal and Spain. We are present in the US and Canada as well as in Japan and Australia. In Turkey and in Iraqi Kurdistan and Pakistan (n.d.).

According to the Iranian newspaper *Keyhan*, a book written by "a Tudeh Party adherent" was "selected book of the 20 years of the Islamic revolution. The initiative of the nomination was taken by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance" (18 Feb. 1999). A poet, Zhaleh Esfahani, "a former member of the Tudeh Party" has also been selected among various contemporary poets for a similar award (ibid.). One of the specialists stated that the nomination of a "Tudeh Party adherent" for literary awards was another proof that the group has been dismantled and is no longer a threat to the régime (30 Apr. 1999). As the information regarding literary awards indicates, a number of former members of the Tudeh Party have published books in Iran about the history of the party in Farsi (ibid.).

The specialist also added that certain members of the Tudeh Party in Europe have moved back to Iran in recent years while others travel regularly to Iran to visit family members (ibid.). Conservatives elements in the régime often call moderates "Tudehi" to designate them as "leftists" (ibid.). However, this is a generic expression that does not necessarily mean that the person is a member of the Tudeh Party (ibid.). The expression is used mainly because the Tudeh Party

is the oldest and the most widely known leftist organization in Iran (ibid.).

According to Dr. Hasan Hamdan al-Alkim, the Chairman of the Department of Political Science at the United Arab Emirates University, in an interview with *Al-Wasat*,

There is no organized opposition since the government has succeeded in destroying opposition political parties, such as the ~~»communist«~~ Tudeh ~~»Party«~~ and the Feday-e Khalq Organization (26 May 1997).

The specialists on Iran are the Director of the Centre for Arab and Iranian Studies (CAIS) at the Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, who is also the former director of the Centre for Iranian Research and Analysis, and currently the editor of a newsletter dealing with Iran called *Al-Moujez* (Iran Briefs) (29 Apr. 1999), a specialist on Iranian opposition groups and human rights in Iran who is a researcher at the Écoles des hautes études en sciences sociales de Paris, France (29 Apr. 1999), and a sociologist at Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in Paris who is also a chargée de conférences at the Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris-III (30 Apr. 1999).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please below the list of additional sources consulted.

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Researcher, Écoles des hautes études en sciences sociales de Paris who is a specialist on Iranian opposition groups, France. 29 April 1999. Telephone interview.

Sociologist, Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Paris, France. 7 April 1999. Telephone interview. The sociologist is also a chargée de conférences at the Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris-III. The sociologist, who travels frequently to Iran for field research, spent the summer of 1998 in Iran, and has published on Iran in academic reviews such as the *Revue Française de Sciences Politiques*, the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* and *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*.

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