



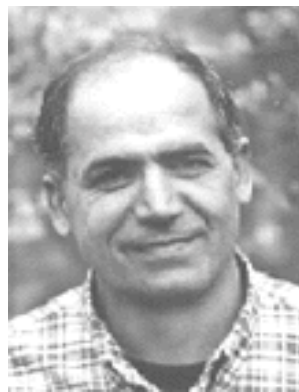
‘The basis of socialism is the human being... Socialism is the movement to restore human being’s conscious will.’

- Mansoor Hekmat

The great Marxist thinker and leader of the Worker-communist Party and worker-communist movement, 1951-2002

The masses of students have leaned to the Left

Asqar Karimi



The student protests in Iran during November this year have been some of the most extensive student protests during the lifetime of the Islamic

Republic of Iran. Nearly two weeks of continuous protests in several universities in Tehran and other cities were headline news. Aghajari’s death sentence was the pretext to ignite the protests, yet right from word go, the demands went beyond this and quickly radicalised and broadened. It petrified the leaders of the regime who had aimed to terrify the people via public executions. Freedom of expression, freedom for political prisoners, a condemnation of executions and hatred for the regime’s leaders became the banner of the students’ protests. This was a huge step forward. This advance was

the result of a political-ideological development within the student movement. The body of the student movement have leaned to the Left.

Since July 1999, a significant development has taken place both in the society and the student movement. Belief in the overthrow of the regime has taken on popular dimensions. The protest mood has received a boost. To a great extent, the 2nd Khordad [also known as the reformists] have lost their social base, particularly in the universities. Accordingly, the totality of the regime is in a more fragile position vis-à-vis the people.

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Join the Organisation for Women’s Liberation

Azar Majedi

20 November 2002



Women’s freedom is the measure of freedom in society. There is still a great deal left to accomplish in order to eliminate inequality between men and women, not only in Iran where misogyny brutally rules, but in the most advanced societies as well. The Organisation for Women’s Liberation (OWL) sees itself as part of the immense historical and international struggle for women’s liberation.

In Iran, we face an oppres-

sive and Islamic reaction against women. The ruling system in Iran is a system of total sexual apartheid. Compulsory veiling, the complete segregation of men and women in every aspect of society, and the treatment of women as disenfranchised and second class citizens are the official laws of the country. Misogyny is the defining characteristic and identity of the ruling order and the share of women from this life is nothing but humiliation, oppression and daily exclusion.

Reviving antiquated traditions such as stoning reveals the depth of the naked violence exerted against women.

The dominance of a patriarchal and backward order is not particular to the last two decades. Iranian society suffers from deep-seated patriarchy and misogyny. Efforts of freedom-loving women and organisations to do away with this degrading situation are a part of Iranian history.

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Since then, the regime-led Islamic groups in universities such as the 'Office of Consolidation of Unity' and 'Islamic Associations' have plunged into crisis and disarray. They have lost their power and position and have become insignificant. Their command on the students has become weaker and weaker. For some time now, they have been unable to organise anything significant. Over the past year, the main body of students have protested for various student related demands, barring their protest against the segregation of male and female students. In the past year, particularly with the beginning of the current academic year, hundreds of students' protests took place with student-related demands, independent of the 'Islamic Associations'. These protests acted as a training ground for the progressive segment of the students to find each other, draw confidence and power and were prologues to their active participation during the November protests.

On the one hand, Aghajari's death sentence was a perfect opportunity for the 2nd Khordad-ists (so-called reformists) in the universities to re-capture their lost positions in relation to the Right faction following a long period of isolation and marginalization so as to move to the centre. On the other hand, it was an opportunity for the vast mass of the Left-wing and non-religious students to use that legal cover to present their protest against Islamic rule and for other freedoms in a political format. The massive force of the Left and non-religious students, although shapeless, was the engine of the protests; right from the beginning, it took the upper hand. The leaders of the 'Office of Consolidation of Unity' not only failed to prevent the 'extremism' of the students but they were also, under the pressure of radicalism, forced to take 'Left wing' positions. There were no signs of Islamic demands; the demands of the masses of the students were anti-regime and for freedom. The Islamic Republic broadcasting agency broadcast the picture of the students of the Teacher

Training College, which showed male and female students, hand in hand, without adhering to Islamic segregation, marching and singing; they had written 'freedom and equality' on their foreheads. The students gave the journalist of the Islamic broadcasting agency a good lesson as well.

The permission for the demonstration and the microphone belonged to the 'Office of Consolidation of Unity' and the Islamic Associations, but the slogans did not belong to them but rather to the mass of the students.

Even representatives of the 'Office of the Consolidation of Unity' referred to violations of freedom of conscience, protested against violations of human rights and demanded assurances for the prevention of prosecution and trial for religious and political and ideological thought. This is a remarkable position, which differs from the position of that Office and the Islamic Associations of three years ago. Three years ago in July 1999, they were working with the oppressive forces and in 2000 were presenting the Islamic Pasdaran with flowers. They had called 1998 'the year of dialogue and general kindness', had said that they would forgive the government and presented the Islamic regime's

president with the students' special award. The crisis-ridden situation of the Islamic government, the growth of the movement for the overthrow in society, students leaning to the Left, the fragile position of the Islamic Associations all in all did not allow them to openly defend the regime. This round of students' movement was marked by Left wing students, which in turn consolidated their position.

What's next? This round of protests advanced the cause of progressive students for the regime's overthrow and also the progressive movement of the people of Iran. This thrust, however, must become the basis for a move towards more general and fundamental aims. The next step in the universities is for the communist, progressive and secular students to become the dominant force. The Islamic Associations, these government cronies must be completely isolated. Any remaining slogans related to the regime's factions must be brushed aside. The progressive and just demands of the people of Iran such as unconditional freedom of expression and thought, separation of religion from the state and education and the abolition of capital punishment and torture, freedom for political prisoners, equality of men and women, abolition of sexual apartheid and the overthrow of the Islamic Republic must be clearly written on the banners of the student protests. The segregation of

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males and females and the system of sexual apartheid must be completely smashed. In a sentence, the barricade that was captured by the cultural revolution of Bani-Sadr, Soroush and via the vast killings of communists must be taken back. This can only be achieved by gathering many more progressive students under the banner of socialism and worker-communism, publishing Mansoor Hekmat's works as the

important link in this path and at the same time organising Left and progressive students and radical and communist student's organisations, associations, societies and publications. The recent protests have prepared the atmosphere for such advances.

'In a religious capitalist tyranny, a misogynist, anti-life, anti-intellect and uncivilised regime, the university is a natural ground

for the growth of communism' (Mansoor Hekmat). The recent day and years have shown that the universities can become a significant bastion for political freedom, the movement for the regime's overthrow and worker-communism. The more lucid, clear and radical the slogans and demands of the progressive movement for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic, the more the masses of the workers, teachers, women and

progressive people will support these demands. The communist students must recognise these circumstances and be aware of its profound potential.

The November protests were a shining stage in the development of the progressive movement and the movement to oust the regime and will have rich lessons for the progressive and communist students.



*** In Commemoration of the 11 Anniversary of the Worker-communist Party of Iran**

London, 30 November 2002, 3:00pm, O'Neill's, 291-293 Muswell Hill Broadway, London N10. For more information, please contact wpi.international.office@ukonline.co.uk or Tel: +44 (0) 07719166731.

*** In Commemoration of Mansoor Hekmat, the Contemporary Marxist thinker and the founding member of the Marx Society**

London, 1 December 2002, 10:00am, Acland School, Dartmouth Park Hill, N19 (Tube: Tufnell Park). Three speeches regarding Mansoor Hekmat's contribution to the theory of Marxism (in Persian): Marxist Theory of Revolution, by Hamid Taghvaie; Marxism and the National Question, by Fateh Sheikh; The Lessons of the Russian Revolution, by Koorosh Modaresi. For more information please contact 0044 (0) 7730264611. Entrance fee £5.00. www.marxsociety.com.

Read Mansoor Hekmat's Works on
www.wpiran.org/english.

Join the Organisation for Women's Liberation, from page 1

Right from the Islamic Republic's early days of coming to power, women's endeavours to alter this situation were brutally suppressed. The Islamic Republic was faced with women's fierce protests right from the early days of its establishment. Despite all the suppression, the struggle of women in Iran to break out of this prison and against disenfranchisement and humiliation has not ceased for a moment. The existence of an immense movement for women's liberation is an undeniable fact of Iranian society. This movement must be vigorously advanced, armed with a clear platform

and focus its energies. By achieving liberation, it will not only do away with the patriarchy and misogyny in Iranian society, but will also have a significant and profound impact on the condition of women in the region and Islam-ridden societies. The Organisation of Women's Liberation is formed with this purpose.

The OWL's aim is the unconditional liberation of women and complete equality between women and men in Iran. The OWL, therefore, must fight for the following demands:

1. Complete equal rights for

women and men; abolition of discriminatory laws, particularly laws in relation to family, marriage, divorce, and parental responsibility for children;

2. Abolition of compulsory veiling and freedom of dress;

3. Complete abolition of segregation;

4. Access to equal resources in education, employment, sports and cultural activities;

5. Separation of religion from the state and education.

The unceasing struggle against all patriarchal and

misogynist values and perceptions is part of our urgent task. We strive to become the means to unite the broad masses of women and men in Iran to accomplish the above-mentioned demands and organise and lead the powerful movement to liberate women in Iran.

Women, girls, champions of women's liberation, groups and organisations defending women's rights in Iran: join the Organisation for Women's Liberation; together we will fight against women's disenfranchisement, unrestrained patriarchy and for the liberation of women.

Support WPI Campaign against Execution

Join the Worker-communist Party of Iran's international campaign against the new wave of executions and support the people of Iran against Islamic rule. We must defeat this new policy of the Islamic regime. With the defeat of this policy, the Islamic Republic will find itself in a much more vulnerable position in the face of the people's movement for its overthrow.

Send this sample protest letter to the Islamic Republic president Mohammad Khatami at: khatami@president.ir

I / We:

- Strongly condemn the Islamic Republic of Iran for its recent wave of executions, stonings, torture of political prisoners and public flogging of youth; I / we demand an immediate end to all forms of execution, torture and persecution.
- Call for the immediate release of all political prisoners, and unconditional freedom of expression and of political activity and opinion.

Please send a copy to: wpi.international.office@ukonline.co.uk

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