

Congress of Hope.

Congress of re-engagement with the Society

Interview with Koorosh Modaressi, the Leader of the Worker-communist Party of Iran – Hekmatist on the first congress of the Party. This interview was conducted by the Parto satellite TV programme on October 24, 2006. The interview was conducted in Farsi and the following is an excerpt from an English translation of that



Koorosh Modaressi

Parto: Let us begin by asking how did you approach the congress? What was your expectation? What did you try to achieve?

KM: The expectation of the Party's leadership and myself is documented in all the papers that we have published in this regard. We were keen and determined to present and discuss all the major issues and concerns facing the Iranian society. We wanted to show how people can be delivered from the present dire situation; from the constant threats lingering over their heads; from the threat of US attack, the threat of sectarian civil war and the menace of the Islamic Republic. We were resolute in our attempts to deal with the real concerns facing the society as well as focusing on the Party itself. We wanted to, in a calm and collected manner and without being complacent, re-appraise our strength and weaknesses and establish what changes and developments are needed to meet the challenges confronting the country.

These were our expectations and we planned to hold a congress to show how our Party- a political Party as opposed to an ideological sect- must function. We wanted all the delegates and those interested in our

Party attend the congress and express their views. We

wanted all the delegates to freely debate our policies and cast their votes. We wanted to create an atmosphere for all to join our debates and discussions and provide them with an opportunity to find their political allies to turn their preferred policies into official party policies. At the same time we were eager to make sure that all the delegates, as a united body, will endeavour to implement the adopted policies and resolutions. We wanted the Party to focus its energy and as a united body implement the agreed policies and depart from the traditional marginal and sectarian political parties prevalent in the politics of the radical left. We were preparing and taking the practical steps to build a mass political Party in Iran. As far as these stated aims are concerned our congress concluded successfully. All the delegates left the congress fully charged and rejuvenated.

Parto: Building a mass communist political Party was very much a hot topic of discuss in the congress, why is this so important for you? For an observer, for a worker who is following this congress from afar how do you explain the significance of the emphasis on building a mass political Party?

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KM: Firstly there are a number of ideological leftist organisations around us that operate like a religious sect. People can only join these organisations if they share the same beliefs or follow a certain character. Secondly the kind of activities that these organisations are engaged in is such that the ordinary people are unable to participate and carry them out. Thirdly the function and the political life of these parties are not in anyway affected by the events in the society. They are seemingly “Workers’ Parties” but changes and developments within the working class do not have any impacts on these Parties. Cuts in workers’ wages for instance do not concern them. Their growth is not translated into the strength and unity of the working class. This is the disease of the leftist and so called communist organisations.

Overcoming this situation requires more than just a wishful thinking. We must do something about it. We must become a Party that people can join and express their views. The slightest disagreement within the traditional leftist parties leads to the eruption of an ideological revolution. In contrast with such organisations we need to build a Party where no one is demonised. A Party in which those who join it are not necessarily angels and those who leave it are not evils. In such a Party people get together to discuss their views, make decisions and unite as a single political body to bring about something positive in the society. Such a Party is not for self-indulgence. This Party is the Party of the collective political decisions and collective determination to implement these decisions. This is the only way to reassure the membership that there is no hidden agenda and our policies are those that have been debated, discussed and voted on and adopted by the official organs of the Party. This is the only way for a political party to grow.

In my opinion the congress brought us a big step closer to this reality. All those who observed our congress saw for themselves how the delegates and the participants were seriously and passionately involved in real debates and discussions to convince others and find their own political allies. And we all saw the determination and the resolve of all the delegates to carry out adopted policies.

Parto: There was not anything new about the resolutions and motions passed at the congress. Threat of the US attack; the overthrow of the regime; the workers’ disputes and the rest were issues that have been dealt with in the past. What was the big commotion?

KM: The big commotion was the congress itself. Our focus was on the society. All the problems and issues that you mentioned are still there. The congress once again in a clear and comprehensible way raised these issues. The congress once again focused on the latest developments in Iran and analysed all the aspects of these changes. We dwelled on the fact that why is it that the entire society is full of hatred contempt towards the regime and at the same time they are playing a waiting game. The congress also elaborated on the dangers of the possible US attack against Iran. We have, on many occasions, discussed this issue and further to simply condemning such an attack we need to be thinking about practical ways to deal with such a scenario. We have always stated that we must not allow Iran to become yet another Iraq. A disunited and insecure people and a people that lack optimism and confidence will be petrified of instigating any changes. It is very clear that no one wants to live in a place where they will be the target of the US bombs and are caught up in the middle of reactionary sectarian wars. The unleashed Islamists are even a bigger danger. Under such conditions optimism evaporates. We have always reiterated that it is not enough to just explain and interpret these situations. The congress tried to draw the attention of the party’s leadership to come up with practical solutions to these challenges; solutions to enable people to forestall such tragedies from materialising.

In summary the congress dealt with the issues facing the society and the working class and the dangers that are lying ahead for the people of that region. Our main concern was to stay focused on our struggle against exploitation and suppression and against the Islamic Republic on the back of these conditions?

Parto: The congress was presented with a report on the activities of the Party during the previous period. There were delegates who content with the progress of the Party and those who were dissatisfied about the Party’s performance. What is your view on this?

KM: If we measure our performance during the past two years against other traditional leftist organisations we should certainly award ourselves the Gold medal. What we have achieved in the past two years could not have been achieved in 20 years by other leftist organisations. We have built a Party that according to friends and foes has a visible influence within the political

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environment in Iran. We have achieved a lot in the past two years. This has been achieved through ceaseless efforts of our cadres from Tehran, Sanandaj and Isfahan to London, Stockholm and Los Angeles.

But the congress was adamant not to assess itself against other currents. But if we measure our success against what we should have done then we have a lot more to say. The congress time and again pointed to a window of opportunity that has presented itself to us; an opportunity for the working class and people of Iran to rid themselves from the menace of the Islamic Republic around a communist flag. However this opportunity can only be taken advantage of by reliable and creditable political parties. The congress highlighted the great challenges that are facing our Party and the people. We want to look straight into these difficulties with open eyes and try to find a solution. The congress tried to do exactly this.

Parto: I just had a conversation with one of the delegates and he told if he wanted to describe this congress in one word he would use the word “hope”; he preferred to call it the congress of hope. Do you agree with this description?

KM: Absolutely! We have been through a tough time. We went through a bitter experience and had to part our path from a leftist pole. We built our own Party. Today this entity is bigger than the other one. I have said this on previous occasions, that during the split in the Worker-communist Party of Iran, we were faced with a sinking ship and just managed to launch a rescue boat. We wanted to build an anchor in this desperate time for people to hang on to. Lots of people were sceptical. Many of those who joined us were not very optimistic. These factors have now changed. In the wider society not many people remember the birth of this Party. We have restored our link with the history of the Worker-communism. Even our political rivals pin their hope on us to combat the ethno-centrists and nationalists. In short this congress opened up a new opportunity against the Islamic Re-

public and all the dangers that are threatening the country.

Parto: Would like to say a few words for those who could not attend the congress and those who are interested in your Party?

KM: Our key message was that this gathering was a congress about the Iranian society. It was about our Party as well. In another word it was about the Party and society. Our preoccupation is to establish a close and organic relationship between the Party and society. The success of the congress should be translated into a greater empowerment of people where they live and where they work. If we are present in a workplace this should be translated into stronger unity amongst the workers. The towns that we are active in should be immune from the nationalists. The university that we are active in should be freer. To use the Islamists as an example might help to explain what I am trying to say. Whenever the Islamists have the upper hand in an area one can feel their presence in the spread of veil on women and the sporting beard by men and other Islamic attires. The question we are pausing is what changes can we expect when the Hekmatist Party gains influence in a certain place.

The most important message of our congress was to refocus its attention on the society. We must be conscious about the impact of our activities on the lives of workers, children, women, and people in general. We must be aiming for improvements not only in the condition of the working class and better wages but in the real daily life. This is a parameter for becoming a political party. A party dedicated to social changes. A Party, that its growth is measured by the increase in respect for human values in the society. If our presence and activities in the society is not the catalyst for unity and hope then our existence or not would not be of concern. Again the main message of our congress was the return to the depth of the society, to become the leader of the society for a communist revolution.