

## One year on

Koorosh Modarresi

*The following is the translated transcript of an interview conducted by Mostafa Asadpour, the host of the WPI-Hekmatist satellite TV programme, Parto, with Koorosh Modarresi, the leader of the WPI-Hekmatist on the first anniversary of the formation of the WPI-Hekmatist. One year after the split within the WPI, this interview provides a sober assessment of the events that led to split and sheds some lights on the seemingly spontaneous crisis. The interview also examines the performance and the achievements of the Hekmatist Party in the past twelve months. The interview was broadcast on September 9, 2005. [KOMONIST}*

**Mostafa Asadpour:** One year has past since the split within the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI) and the formation of the Worker-communist Party of Iran-Hekmatist (WPI-Hekmatist). We talk to Koorosh Modarresi the leader of the WPI-Hekmatist and try to find out how they have performed, and scrutinise the Party to establish what sort of agenda it has set for itself.

**Iran, in the past year, was the scene of a number of political events and changes. A number of political currents and parties came to forth. Where did the Hekmatist Party stand amongst these political currents and Parties and how did you fare?**

**Koorosh Modarresi:** I will skip the background to the split and the developments within the WPI. I have dealt with this, in details, elsewhere. I will restrict myself to the political dimension of the split which your question refers to. Our Party was founded under a particular political condition. The political situation in Iran was very fluid and required direct, clear and revolutionary intervention and a Communist Party had to lead the people's struggle, unite the people and bring down the Islamic Republic. This was one fact. The other fact was that regardless of the nature of the differences within the WPI, we were faced with a new, politically and socially irresponsible phenomenon, uninterested in the unity of the Party, its activities and interventions. Any possibility of joint working was very callously rebuffed. This new phenomenon disregarded the Central Committee's terms of reference and trampled on all the Party's rules and procedures and declared an ideological jihad against us. We, in an attempt to rescue Mansoor Hekmat's line and our movement, were forced to part our path from this politically and socially objectionable development and form a new Party.

From the very beginning our Party was faced with enormous difficulties. Financially we were, and still are, under pressure. We left all the resources of the Party behind and had to build everything from scratch. Furthermore we were left with settling a large proportion of the WPI's debts which was accrued by us as personal loans. From the very beginning of our work we bore the cost of running two Parties.

Anyway, our Party was formed to address very fundamental political issues that had presented themselves to the communists. Now that I look back at the past year I think we should be proud of this Party, its achievements and the efforts of its cadres. Politically our Party managed, amidst the emergence of a wave of perplexity arising from the WPI problems, to uphold the radical banner of communism. Our Party is representing the interests of the communist revolution, the interests of humanity and did not trade the victory of the human emancipation in

the emerging revolution in our society with the short term and petty interests of its own organisation.

Today our Party is a distinct current and a credible political, social and organisational entity, capable of facing the major challenges before us. We have overcome a difficult period and I believe the time has come for concerted and extensive political, practical and organisational advances.

**Mostafa Asadpour: You pointed to an unwanted split; are you claiming to be continuing with the Worker-communism movement or are you following something different?**

**Koorosh Modarresi:** I do not wish to dwell on the theoretical and conceptual aspects of our differences within the time constraint of this interview. The Worker-communist Party was always an amalgamation of two distinct tendencies. If one cares to trace the history of the WPI, from its inception to its demise, two distinct trends are apparent. One line was that of Mansoor Hekmat, and the other was the one that is represented by the traditional leftist currents prevalent in Iran. This traditional leftist current always comes to the fore at critical junctures and serves the other classes and particularly nationalism. This leftist tendency has always existed in Iran.

Iran was undergoing changes and new developments were taking place. Mansoor Hekmat died and the balance of power tilted towards this traditional left within the WPI. The traditional left by nature, and historically, does not need to unite and organise and does not need an influential Party. For the traditional leftist tendency, disintegration of a Party is unimportant. They operate rather like a sect. Within this sect one can justify any nonsense. This is the cause of their irresponsible behaviour.

We have and still are following Mansoor Hekmat's line. Our claim is well documented and can easily be proven during the life of the WPI. We were forced to go our own way. The political situation in Iran had changed and new challenges had presented themselves. The Party had to respond and play its role otherwise it would have been eliminated as a communist political force, as is the case with the WPI. They are busy giving ride to HAKHA (the loony ultra nationalist exiled TV presenter claiming to overthrow the Islamic Republic single handedly and setting a date to fly back to Iran and seize power), Ganji (An ex-Islamic Guard turned journalist and politician) and the PEZHAK ( a fascist Kurdish group). *[Reference to the new WPI's leadership support for the " militant actions" of these individuals and group]*

We were representing Mansoor Hekmat's line and went our own way. So did the new leadership of the WPI. Neither of us had to choose a different path and rethink our views. They are going their own way and so are we. These two traditions existed in the WPI and we are both getting on with our business. They made co-existence impossible.

**Mostafa Asadpour: Now that we look at the past year the differences and the distance between the WPI and Hekmatist Party seems wider. I wanted to ask you about the effects of the split vis-à-vis your activities. What has been the implication of the damage to the creditability of Mansoor Hekmat?**

**Koorosh Modarresi:** Mansoor Hekmat represented a distinct approach to the human being. He was the embodiment of a different approach to politics and political differences. Mansoor Hekmat represented a civilised, humanist, non-sectarian, non-factional and at the same time radical and militant approach. This was the departing point from all other leftist groups who

would take up arms against each other over any minor differences, or are “comrades” today and traitors and renegades tomorrow. Mansoor Hekmat created a hope that worker-communism can be different from this traditional left. The behaviour of the new leadership of the WPI first and foremost shattered this hope and optimism. The distinction with the traditional left disappeared. What is now remaining of worker-communism resembles everything but the Worker-communist Party. They look more like the marginalised Maoist groups. Their language and reasoning, their dealings with their opponents and us, bear all the hallmarks of the traditional leftists.

This was the most serious blow that we suffered. The damages inflicted on the WPI lead to the sinking of this vessel of hope and optimism. What we did was to launch a boat, amidst the storm that was threatening the entire vessel, and rescue those who did not want to sink into the world of the backward, marginalised and factional leftist and turn into a sect happy to survive for ever in the margins of the society. Those who have boarded this boat, despite any differences of views that they may have, share one thing in common: they did not want to leave the fate of the society, the fate of the working class, the communism and the left to the kind of practice that has historically, both in Iran and other parts of the world, proven to be bankrupt. What we managed to rescue from collapse is obviously a gain but what we lost was the influence and credibility of communism and considerable human resources.

Mostafa Asadpour: Let us get back to the Hekmatist Party. In the light of what has happened how do you assess your activities and how would like the others to judge you?

**Koorosh Modarresi:** Firstly we are representing a distinct social and communist line. The policies and tactics that we adopt are in line with that developed by Mansoor Hekmat. We represent the same tradition and critical approach that Mansoor Hekmat had especially when he was dealing with the WPI and its leadership.

We should, within the context of the politics in Iran, follow a unique and “without buts and ifs” worker-communist policy. We must remain a radical and militant force with its feet on the ground. We must define victory and show the shortest and quickest way to lead the socialist movement and the human emancipation to victory. We must represent this brand of communism in all its aspects, especially theoretically, conceptually and as a movement. Today we have, to a certain extent, achieved this aim. We are commanding a great deal of influence and support amongst the leftist activists and circles in Iran, who look up to us for direction. This is an important achievement.

But in practical terms we are facing a number of challenges. The major question before us remains to be whether we are able to build a real political party and provide the country with a credible political leadership or not. Can the current leadership build a mass Party capable of mobilising and uniting people around itself? Can this Party turn the current movement to overthrow the Islamic Republic to trigger the start of a permanent revolution towards a socialist revolution? Developing people’s uprising into a move to launch a socialist revolution, in a same manner as Lenin did from February to October 1917? These are the major challenges before us.

We have several areas of strength. The renowned communist leaders in Kurdistan are with us. This is a major source of strength and power. Communism in Iran has only been capable of producing radical popular leaders in Kurdistan. This was one of the strengths of Mansoor Hekmat’s line. This strength is now entirely with our Party. This Party can turn Kurdistan into a bulwark for communism instead of a bastion of nationalism.

With the formation of "Freedom Guards", we have laid the foundation of a strong Communist Party with great potentials to defend itself. Politics in Iran and specifically in Kurdistan is "armed". We must be able to build a strong Party with military might and potential capable of repelling the aggression of the armed Islamic, ethnic, fascists and political gangsters against the basic rights of people and the foundations of the civil society. We must make anyone, who intends to violate human integrity, freedom and equality, think twice before putting his intension into practice.

The day that we decided to go our own way, we declared that we will leave all the resources behind but will take Mansoor Hekmat's line with us. And that is what we did.

We have influence over leftist circles in Iran. As with other parts of the world these groups and circles are connected to wider communists' groupings, to the wider network of labour activists and the labour movements and will provide us with a launch pad to the wider labour and communist movement in the country.

These are our strength. We have overcome a difficult period. The time has come for a new round of offensive against the right and the traditional left, and anyone who stands in the way of freedom and the ideals of communism. We must embark on a political and organisational offensive to unite and organise people. The immediate challenge facing us is to build a political party and provide leadership in the society to topple the Islamic Republic as the first step in accomplishing the socialist revolution.

**Mostafa Asadpour: Mansoor Hekmat talked about a window of opportunity for the victory of communism. The condition has changed now. The political situation has changed in Iran and Mansoor Hekmat's image has been tarnished. Is the victory of communism in Iran still tenable?**

**Koorosh Modarresi:** In my opinion this window still exists and is still open. This is mainly due to our Party. Today due to the Party's influence in Kurdistan, a great opportunity has opened up to us, a door. There is this opportunity for our communism, Mansoor Hekmat's communism, to become the main political power in Kurdistan in short space of time changing the political map of Kurdistan, moving on to change the face of politics in Iran.

In the rest of the country our influence over the leftist circles has opened up a new window of opportunity for us, for the left and for the libertarian movement in Iran. Now that we look at these two parameters the window that Mansoor Hekmat had referred to is still open, albeit in a different circumstance. In Kurdistan this window is now wider but in the rest of the country it has narrowed. However it is still open.

Whether we are successful in making use of these opportunities depends on how we are delivering on the tasks that we have set for ourselves. If we resolve, without hesitation, to undertake the kind of work that would enable us to realise these opportunities, we would be able to advance our cause. The mere existence of such an opportunity is very exciting. Such an opportunity rarely presents itself to the communists. We must value this. We do have a chance to bring about improvement to the lives of millions of people and liberate them from the yoke of exploitation and the lack of rights. The opportunity of playing a role in making this happen is exhilarating.