



# Briefing 205

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

- Mansoor Hekmat (1951-2002)

**Editors: Maryam Namazie and Fariborz Pooya**

Tel: +44 (0) 07719166731

E-mail: wpibriefing@gmail.com

Website: www.wpiran.org

## Background and political necessities

*Patty Debonitas interviews Hamid Taqvae on Third Camp TV*



*Patty Debonitas: You wrote the manifesto and started the Third Camp*

*movement. Tell us why you wrote the manifesto?*

**Hamid Taqvae:**  
The Manifesto of the Third



*Camp against US Militarism and Islamic Terrorism* was written at a time when the conflict between the US and the Islamic Republic of Iran was at its peak. Everybody was talking about the possibility of an invasion of Iran; in the same way they invaded Iraq. It was the beginning of the nuclear crisis, which is still ongoing, with all

the ensuing talks about "a military solution", "economic sanctions as an alternative solution", and so on, and also the role the Islamic Republic of Iran was playing in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. These were the determining factors involved in writing the Manifesto of The Third Camp. The Third Camp itself was born out of the idea that in those conflicts neither of the two poles, that is, neither the Bush administration, or the Western governments in general, nor the Iranian regime represent the interests of the people of the world. The people, be it in Iran or in the world at large, have their own interests, their own goals, if you like, and thus their own corresponding policies. Therefore, they should be represented by and mobilised as a "third force" in this

conflict between the two reactionary camps. That was the whole idea behind building the Third Camp as well as writing its Manifesto.

*Patty Debonitas: I think you wrote it in 2006? But what I wanted to know is we have always had antagonism between powerful states, like in the Cold War. And I don't think that even in the Cold War period neither Russia nor the US really represented anybody other than their own government and the politicians attached to it and some other people who had vested interests in there. Why did the idea that there is nobody representing the people occur to you in 2006?*

**Hamid Taqvae:** It is very different from the situation we had during the Cold War.

During the Cold War one pole was the Soviet Union which was the outcome of the October Revolution. At that time, people wanted freedom, people wanted equality; so a camp took shape around those ideas. (And then, of course, the situation changed in the Eastern camp, that is, in the Soviet camp.) What we had, therefore, was a conflict between the state capitalism, prevailing in the Soviet Union, and its allies, and a Western government type of capitalism, i.e., free market capitalism. This was the basis of that conflict. Of course, one pole, the Soviet Bloc, was always talking in the name of Marxism, socialism, and communism.

But here the situation is totally different. What we call political Islam, or the Islamist movement, was created, all over the world, originally and directly by the US. The US' role in the creation of the Taliban in Afghanistan, for example, is common knowledge today. Or the way that the Western governments, in general, helped Khomeini and the Islamists seize power as a counter-revolutionary force in Iran in 1979. Both of these poles, the first and second camp, if you will, Western militarism and the Islamist movement, both have the same origin. At the time they called it "the green belt" to be created around so-called Communist Russia (or the Soviet Union). When the revolution in Iran started, the Soviet Union was still a threat for the West. So they thought of creating a "green", meaning Islamic (as green is a sacred colour in Islam) governments in the countries neighbouring

Russia. The West thought of it as a strong "wall", as a wise defensive tactic, against the Eastern Bloc, or the Soviet camp. That was the reason you had the Taliban against the Russians in Afghanistan. That was also the main reason why Khomeini was helped in 1978-79 by the West to seize power in Iran as a counter-revolutionary force in the name of the revolution. So, those two poles were helping each other against the then Soviet Union. But as soon as the Cold War ended and the Soviet Bloc fell, the previously collaborating camps started to fight each other. Now the Islamist forces had won their own wars, as it were, and therefore began to take care of the problems with their own methods.

The Taliban built a totally brutal regime in Afghanistan whose character was, in the first place, terrorism against the people there. The same thing was, and still is, true about the regime in Iran. As soon as it seized power it turned out to be against women's rights in Iran, against all liberties, against modernism, against workers, and so on. In short, it was against everything the revolutionary people had set out to achieve. Of course, in the beginning Khomeini came to power because he had raised a pseudo-revolutionary flag against the Shah as the "servant of the foreigners". And soon after the Shah had fallen he realised, under the force of the revolution that showed no signs of losing momentum, he had to posture against the US to somehow identify his regime with the revolution of the people. The

Shah was gone, so now they had to show that they were against the US, against "the great Satan", as he would put it. Hence, the hostage-taking at the US embassy and the empty "down with America" slogan, which is still being raised after almost 30 years. It is, of course, possible to be genuinely against the US from a totally reactionary, Islamist point of view. In that case, being against the US just means being against modernism, being against the 21st century, being against civil rights, being against civil society. And that is exactly what the Islamic Republic meant and practiced, and still means and practices. All of those rights and achievements, they claimed, had come about as a result of Western influence. For example, if women in Iran did not wear hijab, it was because of Western influence, and the West according to them was evil and represented Satan. We are against that. Or they claimed "Civil Society is a Western concept and that we are a Muslim society believing in the Koran. So torture is okay, because, according to the Quran, you can torture, or kill, or basically do whatever you wish to anyone who is against God and happens to be your captive now." Or they are against gays because Islam says you have to get rid of gays. You have every right to kill them, execute them, including by putting them in a sack and throwing them off high cliffs. That is what they actually do in Iran. Or they cut off the fingers and/or the feet of the thieves. And other similar savageries. So now, practically from the morrow of the victory of the revolution,

we witnessed a very reactionary movement in Iran; the same as with the Taliban in Afghanistan, of course. We call this movement “political Islam”; it is against modernism and all human values represented in Western culture, values that people have gained through the ages. Take secularism and freedom of speech, for example. People of the world, especially the labour movement in many countries, have fought for at least two, three hundred years, from the great French revolution onwards, for a civil society, with separation between church and state, as well as freedom of speech at the core of it. Freedom of speech was fought for, and achieved, especially as a means to criticise religion and in practice to mobilise against religion. These were achievements of the people of the world that Islam totally rejects based on their being “Western values”! They say, “We are against the West, so ‘to us our own culture’”, as it were. And today not even “to us our culture, to the Westerners their culture”, as the Jihadists are now waging their holy war against the “infidel Westerners” at large!

On the other hand, and at the same time, we have a way of thinking in the West called “cultural relativism”, which is what lies hidden, indeed beneath the surface of multiculturalism as its theoretical cornerstone. It was not just the Koran, it was also Neo-liberalism contained in cultural relativism that welcomed the exact same thing: to us our culture, to them their culture. The Neo-liberal thinkers argued, “Civil

Society is for us Western people. Those people are Muslims. They have different values, they have different cultures; they have different lifestyles. Let them be! Don’t criticise them! Who are we to judge!? Even in the West, let’s say, in Germany, male members of a Turkish family kill a female member because she got herself a boyfriend. Even in purely and grossly inhuman instances such as this the defenders of multiculturalism, the bigoted heroes of cultural relativism, would caution their “fellow-Westerners” against the universal human values by saying, “be careful! They are not of us. They are from an ‘Islamic country’ called Turkey, so it may be OK for them to kill their wife, sister or daughter in defence of what they consider to be their honour.” So you can see that Islamism and multiculturalism are basically two sides of the same coin; they both deny the universality of human rights and human values, albeit from two opposite standpoints.

To summarise: now, after the Cold War, we have a new force in the world. It calls itself the Islamic movement, which is, in character, political Islam, that is, organised Islam endeavouring to conquer state power. It is against the West; but against what in the West? This movement is against progress, modernism, secularism, freedom, civil society and civil values, in a nutshell, against whatever the human race has achieved through the ages which are now found accumulated in, and represented by, Western culture. They just went backwards to the Middle Ages

to challenge modernism under the banner of Islam. And, on the other side, we have people in the West who said that’s OK! That’s a new civilisation!! And that is how we came to have the phoney concepts such as “conflict of civilisations”, or the “dialogue between civilisations”, that sort of garbage.

The Third Camp says, “no!” Because when you come to think of it, and in a certain sense, it actually boils down to only two camps. One is civilisation, freedom, the last stage of all the achievements of the people of the world that happens to be found now in the West. But, having said that, it does not mean it originated only in the West. It is the product of hundreds of years of struggle by people across the world for a better, freer life. All those generations of the human race who struggled for freedom, for modernism, for equality, for civil society, for separation of church from the state, and so on, and so forth, struggled for something the end result of which we presently call “Western civilisation”. But, in fact, it is human civilisation, that is, civilisation as a collective achievement of humanity. So that’s one camp, the camp of people, civilised people, which is represented by this Manifesto. And then there are the other two forces that have their own conflicts, but are both totally opposed to humanity at large. Both of them are actually against Civil Society. Islamists say, “We are for an Islamic society so we are against Western Civil Society.” And in the West we have those who say: “There is no such thing as universal

civilisation, that is, there are no such things as universal human values as a collective achievement of the whole humanity.” So they are against civilisation as such, indeed, in the name of Post-modernism. Post-modernism is, therefore, as reactionary as Islamism. They have, in my opinion, the same reactionary character vis-à-vis human civilisation, that is, as far as universal human values are concerned, in two different wrappings. Third Camp means, simply put, the camp of the people, the camp of the civilised world.

*Patty Debonitas: So anyone can join?*

**Hamid Taqvaee:** Yes, it’s the camp of people who believe in the universality of our values simply as humans. It doesn’t matter whether you are Iranian, Muslim, non-Muslim, whatever. Because if, and only if, we are human beings, so we can be united, that is, we can have the same interests all over the world, regardless of our sex, ethnicity, creed, and race. Such factors do not matter because we are all people, we are all human beings, and, therefore, we love freedom, we love each other, and we want to have a compassionate, modern, technically advanced, civilised society. In this sense, when you come right down to it, you are not only against the Islamist movement because you are a civilised human being, but, by the same token, you are against Bush and Post-modernism as well; you are against all pseudo-spokespersons of “Western civilisation” who want us to recognise “Islamic

civilisation” as well. From their standpoint, whatever Islam says “is good for the Muslim people.” Don’t criticise it; don’t even talk about it! “They kill their own daughters, sisters and wives, maybe because their religion or their culture, in general, condones killing in the name of what it considers to be their ‘honour’. Their religion says women are not equal with men. So let it be that way for them.”

Again, just to summarise, we are confronted with a movement with two factions: Post-modernism and Islamism. They are, in character, one and the same reactionary movement as far as humanity, as far as the universal values of the civilised people across the world is concerned. Just forget, for a moment that the US wants to attack Iran. That’s just the political situation at this moment. Our movement, the Third Camp movement, on the other hand, has deeper roots. It goes beyond that particular political confrontation, which could well prove to be only a transitional phase. Our movement is the movement of the people of the world who are represented neither by the Bush administration (or Western governments, in general, or, in a yet wider sense, by Post-modernism and Neo-liberalism) nor by the Islamist forces. They are the people who want to have a civilised, modern society based on liberty and equality. Our movement is the movement of these people, who, first of all, believe people of the world, throughout the world, have common interests, have the same political goals and

ideals. Freedom is the same for everybody. Happiness is the same for everybody. Equality is the same for everybody. It does not matter what the colour of your skin or your religious background or your nationality is. It just does not matter. In this sense, the Third Camp is a camp of the people of the world representing the achievements of the French Revolution, the October Revolution, representing Spartacus, representing any movement in the world that has been about fighting for liberty and equality. Liberty and equality are currently being fundamentally denied, theoretically as well practically.

This is, in a certain sense, a new phenomenon, and the Third camp is all about mobilising to fight against it.

*Patty Debonitas: Denied by whom?*

**Hamid Taqvaee:** By both sides. By, on the one side, Western governments and Western bourgeoisie, which includes, of course, its theoreticians such as Post-modernist thinkers and strategists. When you come right down to it, Post-modernism involves nothing but denying universal human values. That’s what Post-modernism is all about. Or take Cultural Relativism which is a direct derivative of Post-modernism. If 50 years ago someone asked a thinker in the West, a liberal thinker let’s say, “how do you think the people of Africa should be liberated,” he/she would answer, “they need social welfare, they need good

schools, they need hospitals, they need a modern life, they need a civil society.” But, if asked today, he/she would first ask, “what is their religion”, “which ethnic group do they belong to?”, and other questions like these. The same liberals can’t give you a straight answer today, because, for them, now everything about human beings “depends”, in other words, is “relative”, and not “universal”. If you are a Muslim, you could, from their point of view, very well be happy with your hejab. As a Muslim - which, for today’s liberals, is defined as almost everyone just born in what we call an Islam-stricken country - you may very well have accepted lashing and maiming people or pushing them off cliffs as a suitable code of punishment for yourself and those of your culture, as it were. Maybe you as a Muslim even enjoy hunger, because it’s considered a blessing, or you are culturally used to it by now, or, whatever! “Who are we, the Western people, to judge you?” That’s the kind of condescending, reactionary thinking we are up against in the West itself in this day and age! Nobody raises a voice against present day inhumanities, and against the spokespeople of the Western Liberal tradition who condone them in theory and practice through churning out only justifications. Not even the so-called progressive Western opposition! Look at the women’s lib movement today. It raises no objection against hejab in Iran. I haven’t seen a feminist activist today talking about the deprivation of all women’s rights in Iran.

*Patty Debonitas: You mean women activists in Europe, for example?*

**Hamid Taqvae:** Yes. Women’s rights activists in Europe or in the West to be precise. Or civil rights activists in Germany or, let’s say, in Britain, or in US and Canada. They don’t criticise the hellish conditions the Islamic Republic of Iran has created for women. By law, and I mean by law, officially, women count as half of men in Iran. But the feminist movement won’t raise any objection anymore. Why? Because its leaders, thinkers, spokespersons and activists are Post-modernists now! So, not only do they not raise any objections, but, for them, it’s the other way around, in fact. Today they claim it is Iranian women’s right to live by whatever values and standards they believe in. Recognising the right of people to believe in anything they wish is one thing; respecting every belief anyone happens to believe in is quite a different thing. You have the right, and you should judge and criticise religion. That’s the basis of freedom of speech. People began demanding freedom of speech 300 years ago because the church wouldn’t let anyone criticise the Bible, Christ, and so on. So freedom of speech without having the right to criticise religion is just an empty phrase. And now look at the UN Human Rights Council which just recently passed a resolution that says nobody should “insult” religion, especially Islam!

*Patty Debonitas: So we are going back?*

**Hamid Taqvae:** Yes, of course, we are. We are going back to the Middle Ages. Having respect for Muslims, as believers in Islam, is one thing; having respect for Islam itself, having respect for its anti-human content (like the anti-human content of any religion) is something quite different. Because I respect people, because I respect human beings, I respect their right to believe in anything they wish. But, by the same token, I also must have the right to criticise whatever I consider to be against humanity, including religion. If religion is against people which it is, as we have experienced during the Dark Ages for a few hundred years and we know what Christianity did in Europe, and we also have the experience of the Islamic Republic which is presently doing the same in Iran, then we have every right, and not only the right but the duty, indeed, to criticise it; and not only that, but also to fight it.

If religion seizes state power in any society, it will do the same thing as the Taliban did in Afghanistan or the Islamic Republic is currently doing in Iran or Christianity did for 500 years all over Europe. That sort of “skill” in creating Hell on Earth is inherent in religion. So if a state won’t let its citizens criticise religion out of “respect” for religion, and forbids the “insulting” of religion, it simply means that the state has no respect whatsoever for humanity in general! Respecting human beings means I have, as a citizen of universal humanity, the right, that is, the right in practice, to criticise all the

beliefs in the world I believe to be against human values. It doesn't matter whether it is religion or the theory of Cultural Relativism I wish to criticise; whatever the name, it just does not matter. Any way of thinking such as "women are not equal with men", for instance, is against people, against the whole humanity. It just does not matter whether this belief, this dogma, emanates from God or Mr. Bush or Cultural Relativism; whatever the stamp you put on it, it is against people, and I must have the right to criticise it, and not only that, but to mobilise people, to start a campaign in order to put an end to it; the same way people in Europe put an end to the rule of the church in the Middle Ages.

So my point is that the Manifesto of the Third Camp is not solely rooted in the conflict between the US and Iran. That was the issue back then, but the ramifications of the content of the manifesto go much deeper and further. The Third Camp is a movement against today's capitalism, today's bourgeoisie and its states, and all the doctrines we are confronted with, doctrines which, in a very fundamental way and on the philosophical,

social, and political levels deny the very essence of humanity. Our movement is a movement for survival; the survival of civilisation. It's the movement of the people of the world who want to continue to live as civilised human beings. The civilised people of the world want to save their humanity no matter how they are labelled by the other two camps. The civilised people of the world want to save their humanity despite all the strivings by the other camp, or camps, to divide us into different categories such as creed, ethnicity, gender-specific, religion, or race which we, as human beings sans phrase, are not born with. Those categories, or divisions, are human-made, as it were, or, more precisely, fabricated by the ruling classes, by their states, by some almost extinct tribal chiefs in the Middle East, and by the sort of thinkers who think people of the world have no common interests and are, inherently, divided. Now they even claim we have different types of civilisations! I think it's much closer to the mark to say it is the first time we hear such nonsense! We only have one universal civilisation, which is the achievement of humanity as a whole. But now we are

pushed back, and Christianity, Islam, or better to say, religion in general, makes a socio-political come back, claims that we belong to different kinds of civilisation, and that we shouldn't criticise "other civilisations"! That's sheer garbage! What we say, from the standpoint of the interests of the people of the world, is that we have to not only criticise those ways of thinking, be it Islamic, non-Islamic, Neo-liberal or Post-modernist, not only should we have the right to criticise such reactionary garbage, but we should also actually mobilise a movement against them. And that movement, we believe, is the Third Camp.

*The above is the first part of an interview from Third Camp TV. Thanks to Jamshid Hadian and Patty Debonitas for the above.*

*Find out more about the third camp by visiting its website: [www.thirdcamp.com](http://www.thirdcamp.com).*

*You can also see Third Camp TV on New Channel <http://www.newchannel.tv/1third-camp.htm>.*

## **Islam matters because of political Islam**

### *Maryam Namazie*

More than many other things, Islam matters. But I think it matters mostly because it is the banner of a reactionary political movement. Otherwise, Islam is no different from



other religions. You can find just as much misogyny, cruelty and inhumanity in the Bible or other religious books as you can in the Koran. And Islam, Christianity or Judaism are fundamentally no

different from Scientology or Moon's Unification Church, which the German government deems to be 'cults endangering social and personal development.' After all, what do they think religion is?

But even so, today - as we speak - there is still a distinction to be made between religion in general and Islam in particular but for no other reason than that it is the ideology behind a movement that is, in many places, part and parcel of the state, the law, criminal so-called 'justice' system, judiciary, and educational system.

I think this point is key for a principled criticism of Islam and more importantly a progressive and humane response to the totalitarianism of our era. This means, firstly, that we have a duty to criticise Islam; this goes beyond the mere right to and freedom of speech and expression.

Clearly, the German government - in fact all European governments - the United Nations, the religious nationalist European left and other apologists for Islam don't think so. Germany's Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble, for example, is so concerned about Islam's image that he is quoted as saying that media reports on Islam often concentrate on the subject of violence and rarely focus on the reality of Islam in everyday life.

But the reality of Islam in everyday life is far more violent than anything even a minister in a government with close relations with the political Islamic movement could fathom. Entire generations slaughtered over decades and buried in mass graves in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The human cost of Islam in power is enough of a reason - the only necessary reason - to make criticism a task and duty.

After all, it is impossible - let me repeat impossible - to challenge a political movement that has wreaked havoc primarily for the people of the Middle East and North Africa if you are not allowed to fully and unequivocally criticise its ideology and banner.

Now I know some say that the problem is not Islam but the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. But in my opinion, there can be no Islamic feminism, Islamic reformism, Islamic democracy, Islamic human rights, and moderate interpretations of Islam when it is in power.

Of course there are Muslims or those labelled as such who have humanist, secularist, moderate, feminist, atheist, communist and other progressive viewpoints but this is not one and the same with Islam in power being as such.

In my opinion, a 'moderate' or 'reformed' religion is one that has been pushed back and reigned in by an enlightenment. And not before.

Criticism of religion has always been an important vehicle for progress and the betterment of humanity's lot.

And it is within this context that criticism of Islam finds meaning. The right wing's virulent criticism of Islam and its sudden championing of women's rights in the Middle East - whilst legislating

religious morality and misogyny here at home - self-servingly ignores the main issue at hand, which is religion and political power.

If we are going to win this battle again - as in centuries past - we have to push Islam and religion out of the public sphere. Full stop.

There can't be any compromise because too many lives are at stake. And compromise includes the misguided liberal attempts at interfaith coalitions thereby increasing the numbers of religions and beliefs that have access to power in society or more reactionary sorts of appeasement such as that of the German government or the likes of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. In case you haven't yet heard, the Tony Blair Faith Foundation launched recently in order 'to promote respect and understanding about the world's major religions and show how faith is a powerful force for good in the modern world.' Religion wouldn't need one public relations campaign after another if it was so good, now would it? Even calling it 'faith' and avoiding the term religion won't get around the fact that it is the genocidaire of our age.

Either way - misguided or purely out of economic and political interests - these endeavours only serve to increase, justify and consolidate the role of religion in society - and are part of the problem rather than any solution.

The fundamental problem being that they are more concerned with religion - either apologising for it or

trying to show how much better 'their own' religion is - than with real live human beings.

In my opinion, you have to choose.

You must either defend the human being or you must defend Islam and religion. You can't defend both because they are incompatible with and antithetical to each other.

Of course this doesn't mean that people don't have a right to religion or atheism. Of course they do but as a private affair.

Labelling millions of people as Muslims and collaborating with Islamic organisations as the German government is doing with its Islamic conferences only helps to hand over millions of often resisting people to the political Islamic movement. This despite the fact that according to the government's own admission, the Islamic organisations at the annual conferences represent at best 10-15% of those it has deemed to be Muslims.

This type of politics ignores the distinction between the oppressed and oppressor and actually sees them as one and the same. It ignore the important distinction between Muslims and those deemed to be such and Islam and political Islam. It is politics that implies

that people want to live the way they are forced to. That they actually deserve no better because it is 'their own culture and religion' imputing on innumerable people the most reactionary elements of culture and religion, which is that of the ruling class, parasitical imams and self-appointed 'community leaders'.

And so, criticism of Islam is deemed racism; it is not.

And so rights, equality, integration are raised vis-à-vis religion rather than the human being. Since when has people's integration meant the integration of their so called beliefs?

As I have said, whilst criticism of Islam and political Islam is an historical duty and necessity it has to be based within a politics that puts people first to have real meaning and affect real change.

It has to be done but for humanity's sake.

In the face of this onslaught, secularism, universalism, citizenship rights, a humanity without labels and values worthy of 21st century humanity can only be defended via another transformative enlightenment by this century's avant-gardes. We must give no more concessions to religion and cultural relativism; we must

no longer respect and tolerate inhuman ideals, values and practices. An uncompromising and shamelessly aggressive demand for secularism is only a minimum if we are to ensure that humanity is safeguarded. Today, more than ever, we are in need of the de-religionisation of society - a concerted battle against the religion industry, which is above the law, unregulated and never held accountable for its fatwas, murder and mayhem.

As Mansoor Hekmat, the late Marxist thinker said: 'It has been proved time and time again that pushing back religiosity and religious reaction is not possible except through unequivocal defence of human values against religion. It has been proved time and time again that preventing religious barbarism does not come about through bribing it and trying to give it a human face, but through the fight against reactionary religious beliefs and practices. What price should be paid... to realise that Islam and religion do not have a progressive, supportable faction?' (Mansoor Hekmat, In Defence of the Prohibition of the Islamic Veil for Children.)

*The above is Maryam Namazie's speech at an alternative to the Islamic conference in Koln, Germany on May 31, 2008.*

## **Update on WPI activities in this past month**

### ***Siyaves Azeri Reports***

May 1 was marked by worker strikes and demonstrations and increased mobility among workers in Iran. Despite extraordinary police measures,

workers in different cities and production units organised and celebrated May Day. Following the actions and demonstrations some labour

leaders such as Javanmir Moradi, Teh Azadi, Sheys Amani, Said Hazrati, Shiva Kheyrabadi, Abdollah Najjar, qaleb Hosseini, Alo Hosseini,

Bahaeddin Sadouqi, Sousan Razani, Selah Zamani, Hamid Athari, Aram Ebrahim, and Nasrin Mahmoudi Azar from the Free Union of Workers in Iran and other non-governmental organisations and human and women rights groups were arrested.

One axis of international activities of the WPI in the month past was launching international campaigns to exert pressure on the Islamic regime in Iran to free the worker leaders and May Day detainees. To this end, WPI activists had several meetings with labour unions and organisations worldwide to discuss the ways to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic, to call their support for the workers in Iran, and for acquiring letters protesting the Islamic Republic and in defence of the arrested workers. WPI also participated in the international campaign for the release of May Day detainees that were called upon by the Free Union of Workers in Iran.

In response to the International pressure, so far, some of the workers have been released on bail, yet Javanmir Moradi and Teh Azadi are still in prison. The campaign and activities still continue and will persist until all the workers are released.

The month of May has also been the month of united and fierce struggle of Haft-Tape Sugar Cane workers in the city of Shoush, southwest of Iran. The strike continues for more than 25 days. Thousands of workers and their families organised rallies and mass demonstrations in the city centre. The workers vow to continue their struggle until they achieve their demands. The WPI launched an international campaign in defence of the workers of Haft-Tape Sugar Cane and organised protests in Hamburg, Germany and in Gottenberg and Stockholm, Sweden on May 20. WPI also organised a protest in downtown Toronto, Canada, on May 23. Pictures from these protests can be seen at [www.rowzane.com/0000\\_2008/e\\_m05/20-stk.htm](http://www.rowzane.com/0000_2008/e_m05/20-stk.htm) and [http://www.rowzane.com/0000\\_2008/e\\_m05/27-canada.htm](http://www.rowzane.com/0000_2008/e_m05/27-canada.htm).

On May 4, a demonstration in Malmo, Sweden was organised against the Islamic Republic. The planned speech of the ambassador of the Islamic Republic had to be cancelled. The demonstration protesting the planned speech by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran had been called for by WPI - Sweden Committee, the International Federation of Iranian Refugees and the

Committee in Defence of Women Rights in Iran.

On May 10, demonstrations in defence of the right to asylum was organised in Gottenberg and Malmo, Sweden. Some 400 people participated in the rally in Gottenberg. About 100 people participated in the protest in Malmo that was called by the International Federation of Iranian Refugees and was supported by several refugee rights, human rights and political organisations. Pictures from these demonstrations and rallies can be accessed at [www.rowzane.com/0000\\_2008/e\\_m05/11-ifir.htm](http://www.rowzane.com/0000_2008/e_m05/11-ifir.htm). The IFIR also organised a protest in front of the Swedish parliament on May 23. Several speakers from the IFIR, Social Democrat Party, Left Party, Green Party, Youth Organisation of People's Party, and the Afghan Association were delivered. Pictures may be seen at [www.rowzane.com/0000\\_2008/e\\_m05/27-hambastegi.htm](http://www.rowzane.com/0000_2008/e_m05/27-hambastegi.htm).

On May 10, the WPI's Germany Organisation conference was held. The action plan that determines the priorities of Germany Organisation of the WPI in the coming period was discussed and adopted. The conference also elected Mohammad Shokohi as Secretary, Mahin Kousha as treasurer and an executive committee.

## ***Siyaves Azeri responds on Fitna***

A reader has commented on WPI's statement about *Fitna* the movie as follows: "Some people could say that this is PC editorial by someone that

*should not be PC. When do we people discuss the verses used in the movie? For the moment too much of the global debate*

*is about moviemaker rather than the movie."*

The central point of WPI's statement about *Fitna* is that this movie and the uproar

surrounding it should be understood within the context of the confrontation between two reactionary poles of state terrorism led by the USA and political Islam. *Fitna* is not a theological statement, nor is it a purely ideological statement. It is, first and foremost, a political statement that takes the side of one of these reactionary poles. It produces and reproduces certain theses that ironically are supported by *both* sides of this polarisation.

WPI's statement correctly emphasises that political Islam as a political force that claims a greater share of power on the global scale nowadays is a product of Western governments and not rooted in the beliefs or culture of the people that live in the region. Political Islam was brought to the fore of the political scene during the Cold War against the rival camp of state capitalism that was led by the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and against egalitarianism, libertarianism, left and communism in the countries of the Middle East that are plagued by Islam, on the other hand. Western governments and political Islamic forces and states are in unison in introducing political Islam and Islamic ideology as the representative of the people in Islam-ridden countries - or those who are known to be "Muslims." *Fitna*, the movie also repeats this thesis insistently. It also reproduces an ideological idea that is shared by the two poles of international reactionism: the false dichotomy between the "us" and "them." The "us," in this particular case, happens to be the Western governments which, on the one hand flirt

with political Islam and Islamic terrorism, support Islamists politically, economically, and militarily, bring them into power and legitimise them as the representatives of the people in countries that are plagued by Islam and the "Muslim population," while, on the other hand, pass anti-immigrant bills, ghettoise immigrants, promote hatred by falsely pointing to them as the cause of unemployment and the source of crime etc. and leave immigrant 'Muslims' to the mercy of mullahs, imams, religious schools - the budget of which is generously provided by these very governments. The "them" happens to be the "Muslim," whom is claimed to be represented by the political Islamic forces and states - a claim that is also supported fiercely by Western political forces both in position and opposition. What is ignored is the fact that the so-called "Muslim" is the firsthand victim of Islam, Islamic ideology, and political Islam. What is kept hidden is the fact that the so-called "Muslim" has escaped to the West from the atrocities and crimes that are committed by political Islam and Islamic terrorism in the hope of finding humane living conditions.

The politics that *Fitna*, the movie represents is the immediate ally of the policy that has launched the attack against freedom of speech and expression under the pretext of respecting the beliefs of "them" - Muslims. *Fitna* does not do this indirectly only, that is, it does not only indirectly ally the holy attack on freedom of expression by providing an alibi or forming

the ground for a counterattack on freedom of expression by, for instance, provoking the Muslims or hurting their religious feelings and faith. It directly and immediately reproduces the ground for the attack on freedom of expression by blaming the "Muslim" and not the system of belief that is Islam, itself. Even when apparently Islam is the subject of criticism, it is "criticised" for not fitting Europe, that is, it is not criticised as a system of belief *per se* but as a religion that suites the "Muslim" but happens to be a threat against the European. Therefore, according to this view, Islam is good if it is exercised against the people in countries that are plagued by Islam, in that case it can be tolerated and there is nothing in it to be criticised.

*Fitna* also participates in this holy jihad against humanity and freedom of expression by promoting racist views and launching ethnicist, racist attacks on people from a Eurocentric point of view. It responds to one political reactionism with another form of political reactionism; it retaliates one superstition with another form of superstition, which is as dangerous as the other. What both poles of reactionism in this backward confrontation sacrifice is human dignity and the most basic of human rights and the ideas of freedom and equality.

The WPI's statement does not intend to be "politically correct" as it correctly underlines the political and worldly benefits and positions behind the make of the film *Fitna*, on the one hand, and the holy war against freedom

of expression, basic human rights, and humanity in general, on the other hand. The ideological struggle against reactionism in form of religion, ethnicism, nationalism, racism, political Islam etc. can only be perpetually and insistently actualised if it is a part of a political struggle; an important aspect of ideological struggle

is to decipher the political realities and necessities that produce and reproduce ideological structures. In the world today, a persistent ideological fight against Islam in particular and religion in general is tightly interwoven with the political struggle of the pole of humanity against the two poles of international reactionism, namely political

Islam and Islamic terrorism and state militarism. WPI's statement on the occasion of *Fitna* the movie shows the only possible way to launch this struggle.

*Siyaves Azeri is the Head of the Committee of International Relations of WPI. He can be contacted directly via email at [siyavesazeri@hotmail.com](mailto:siyavesazeri@hotmail.com).*

## FITNA REMADE

Reza Moradi, a WPI Central Committee member and member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ex-Muslims, has produced *Fitna Remade* in response to Geert Wilders *Fitna*, the Movie. You can see it by going to: <http://www.fitna-remade.com/Pages/fitna-remade.html>. Reza says:

*People must be able to say what they want about religion in general and Islam in particular. Today, it's a right and responsibility especially when it comes to Islam because it is a religion in power and because of the suffering it is causing the world over – particularly in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa.*

*Fitna, the Movie, however, doesn't really criticise Islam and more importantly the political Islamic movement. Rather, it attacks immigrants, labels millions as 'Muslims', and implies their support for a movement that millions have opposed, resisted and fled from.*

*I had to do a remake to show the real story from one of these millions.*

## Mina Ahadi publishes '*I have renounced*'

MINA AHADI has just published a book in German entitled: *I Have Renounced, Why I am fighting for freedom and against Islam* with Sina Vogt in February 2008. To get a copy of the book, visit: [www.randomhouse.de/book/edition.jsp?edi=261245&frm=true](http://www.randomhouse.de/book/edition.jsp?edi=261245&frm=true).



## Protest Iranian President Ahmadinejad's visit to Italy!

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of one of the world's most anti-human regimes is to attend the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation's three-day summit of world leaders on global food security, climate change and energy which opens

June 3 in Rome. His presence in Italy must meet with the widest protests by all humanist, freedom-loving people in the country.

The regime does not represent the Iranian people but has been committing

crimes against them, against the whole human community, indeed, for the past 30 years. Aside from the execution of tens of thousands of political activists since 1981, aside from the imprisonment and torture of thousands of rights activists in different

fields of social life, it is a regime of sexual apartheid, i.e., it is officially against half of the 70-million population in Iran. In its laws, it considers women as half of men. Further, it views them as sex objects, as the root of all depravity in society, and therefore prevents them from entering into many fields of social life or attaining certain positions. Besides, it has constantly persecuted them on a daily basis on the streets for the past 30 years for “crimes” such as wearing make-up, the slightest violation of the inhuman hejab, for walking with an unrelated man, and so on. It has stoned dozens of women to death sex outside of marriage. Homosexuals have been hanged, or put in a sack and thrown off a high cliff. As reported by Amnesty International, the regime “has executed over 24 child offenders since 1990, more than all the other countries in the world; and since 2005, 14 child offenders, more than the rest of the world put together. At least 71 child offenders sit on death row in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” Amputations and the gouging of eyes are frequently implemented as other parts of its Islamic code of punishment, observing, it claims, “strict

hygienic standards” of course!

At regional and international levels, it forms the cornerstone and the source of inspiration for Islamic terrorism. Its moral and material support for Islamic terrorist groups across the world, its planting bombs in all corners of the world killing and maiming innocent people, its endeavours to acquire nuclear weapons, have all contributed to turning it into a peril for the citizens of the globe. Besides, it is ludicrous that the president of a regime itself responsible for imposing unprecedented levels of poverty and hunger on the people in Iran, is planning to take part in an international convention on securing food for the world! Workers in Iran have all been impoverished during the three-decade-long rule of this regime. Inflation has been rampant and almost daily for the past 30 years, and the officially determined minimum wage is a third of what constitutes the poverty line according to the statistics produced by the regime itself.

Freedom-loving people of Italy! You know the nature of this regime very well. You have in the past

organised the most extensive campaigns in defence of the women in Iran, such as Kobra Rahmanpour, and against its other crimes. It is high time you, in solidarity with the people in Iran, demanded this regime be expelled and isolated from the rest of the international community. It is high time you saw to it that Ahmadinejad, one of the cruellest authorities of this murderous regime, shall not be able to comfortably visit Italy. The regime he represents is, indeed, worthy of what the people of the world did with the regime of racial apartheid in South Africa.

Our party, as the most steadfast and organised section of the Iranian opposition, calls on you to protest the visit to Italy by the representative of the terrorist, murderous, anti-woman, repressive regime of Iran through holding rallies, demonstrations, and any other means possible.

Long live international solidarity of the civilised, freedom-loving people!

Down with the Islamic, murderous regime in Iran!

**Worker-communist Party of Iran – Organization Abroad**

Visit [www.wpiran.org](http://www.wpiran.org) for more information