



Briefing 210

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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

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They must be prosecuted! New Channel TV's interview with Hamid Taqvae on the presidential 'election' in Iran

Kazem Nikkhah: You have said that elections in Iran are a farce though things do happen during each election. Why?

Hamid Taqvae: Calling these events an election is a farce, including in comparison with elections in Turkey and even Pakistan let alone the west. There are no events and changes that take place that have anything to do with people's votes or what is called an election. And I'm not just talking about this particular election but all of the elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our use of the term farce is not just propaganda to expose the regime; the elections in Iran are a farce

because they are not real elections.



Kazem Nikkhah: One person does leave and another comes in their place though...

Hamid Taqvae: Yes, there is a change within the ruling gang but the public don't play a role in this...

Kazem Nikkhah: But isn't this the case in elections in other countries that are not considered to

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WPI's landmark protest against Iranian regime at ILO conference

On Wednesday June 3rd, WPI activists carried out a protest action at the opening session of the 98th International Labour Conference in Geneva to urge for the expulsion of the Islamic regime of Iran from the ILO, while highlighting the situation of jailed workers in Iran.

The conference venue was the UN's Palais des Nations, where around 4,000 delegates had gathered in plenum at a packed Conference Hall.

Seconds after the sounding of the opening bell, at around 10.20am, three WPI members took to the stage while holding pictures of a number of jailed workers in Iran. Pointing in the direction of the Iranian delegation, they called



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be sham elections?

Hamid Taqvaee: We are also critical of elections in the west for example but ‘elections’ in Iran are a wholly different story. The crux of our criticism of elections in parliamentary democracies in the west is that people get to vote and then have no say until another four years when someone else takes over who is not very different from his or her predecessor! But in the west there are political freedoms, and people come and vote for various political platforms and policies. Of course there are mechanisms in which the ruling parties and classes manufacture public opinion with the assistance of the media. But from a legal and rights perspective, any party can introduce its candidate(s). The situation in Iran, however, is incomparable. You don’t have any political freedoms or the freedom to form political parties. Even the most basic political and civil freedoms don’t exist.

In the first instance, only the factions closest to the state and only those given the go ahead by Khamenei, the supreme spiritual leader, can participate. The rest are excluded. Only the closest insiders can run and that is why the final few candidates are always pillars of the regime - and the regime’s most criminal elements at that. That’s why they all have known track records of repression and crimes against the people. Look at this election – from Ahmadinejad, Karoubi, Mousavi to Rezai – all have been instrumental in the repression and executions that have taken place.

Even many in their own ‘second Khordad’ or ‘reformist’ faction are not allowed to participate in the election. If in Turkey or Paki-

stan a Council of Guardians decided on who could run, the election would be cancelled! In other elections, if a candidate gets less television airtime than another, complaints are made to rectify the situation. Now if you compare the situation in Iran with that of Sweden or Denmark or France, you will see that even in the first instance what happens in Iran is anything but an election!

Kazem Nikkhah: Are you saying that a real election is better than this sham?

Hamid Taqvaee: You can have any criticism against real elections but the issue is that what takes place in the Islamic Republic of Iran is not an election. The general criticisms of parliamentary elections are irrelevant when it comes to Iran. This sort of criticism is a form of concession to the regime. Karoubi, for example, has said that if he becomes president, he will end censorship. Come on! This regime kills journalists, including in the well known serial murder cases. Under Mr Khatami, the head of the so-called reformists, a number of journalists whose crime was to somewhat criticise the regime were killed and their bodies found on roadsides. The evidence is there; the bodies are there. It’s clear what happened but the killers are no where to be found. Sort of like the siphoned off billions that are no where to be found! So for such a regime, talk of removing censorship is a bad joke. To simply say there is censorship in Iran is absurd. What censorship! In the Islamic Republic they murder journalists. They don’t just purge articles; they basically purge journalists!

It’s the same when one talks about the elections. To criticise the elections in Iran as you would

elections in France is a concession to the regime. This is not the issue either especially given that the regime is more repressive, dictatorial and inhuman than for such types of criticisms.

In the last so-called election, Karoubi said he went to sleep for a few hours and when he awakened, Ahmadinejad’s votes were up by several million! They themselves confess to the fraud that takes place. And still it is called an election!

Kazem Nikkhah: Let me say it this way, if we compare this election with that of other regimes like the former Shah’s regime, it may be the first time that there is some sort of competition between the candidates and the public is being asked to intervene. Doesn’t any of this have any value?

Hamid Taqvaee: As I have said before this has nothing to do with elections but it is a political event. Elections in Iran mean that someone will be victorious from the infighting within the regime’s factions and its in-crowd and become the president or the head of the Islamic assembly. All these are real fights amongst those governing but it has nothing to do with the fate of the people. In this sense, the election is a mechanism within the ruling gang – and that too in the most limited sense of the word. Even many of the ‘Second Khordad’ or so called reformists from within the ruling gang are not included. And there are splits within the reformists as well as the conservative faction. They are at each other’s throats. In my opinion, the reason for all this is that they are feeling the heat. This is an important point. It’s because the people not only don’t accept the elections but the entirety of the regime.

Kazem Nikkhah: People are taking advantage of the climate to come and show their opposition to the regime so some believe this is a positive occurrence in the elections and therefore, it isn't a farce.

Hamid Taqvaee: The issue is not that the people take advantage of the sham election to speak their minds. They take advantage of many other things too to do the same – especially because they know it is a farce. Okay some will vote for a variety of reasons, including getting a stamp in their passport or fear or expedience but no one in Iran goes to vote with the same motives as those in France. During the Shah's time this was the case and today, in other ways, it is also the case. Even if there wasn't a political crisis in Iran and infighting amongst the ruling factions, people who go and vote know their vote is worthless.

Another reason for my saying it is a farce to call it an election is that the Islamic regime gets its legitimacy from the Koran, Islam, and the Supreme Spiritual Leader and so on, not people's votes. They have set up unelected institutions like the Supreme Spiritual Leader, the Council of Guardians and so on, that can also veto anything they want. From deciding who can run for the elections to what legislation is passed in the Islamic Assembly. This has happened on countless occasions.

So how can this be called an election? Now Ahmadinejad might be president or Mousavi or anyone else. But any decisions made on the international scene or domestically at the Assembly needs Khamenei's approval. If he doesn't approve, he makes a speech at Friday

prayers and all unfavourable decisions are scrapped. In such a situation, even if there was no election fraud, the elections are meaningless.

Kazem Nikkhah: If it is a farce, why even talk about it? What is its political significance?

Hamid Taqvaee: As I've said before, its political significance is that the rulers are at each others' throats because they don't have the support of the population at large. From the people's viewpoint, this is an opportunity to come forward and undermine them. The elections are not about electing one person over another; it's about the Islamic regime's survival. You see this in their own statements – they'll say for example if we don't take care, none of us will survive and we'll endanger the entire system.

Kazem Nikkhah: Amongst the opposition there are two main positions and the Worker-communist Party of course has a third stance. Those who are nationalist-Islamic and second Khordad or so-called reformist say that people should participate in the election and vote for a 'reformist' candidate. They say this will somewhat improve this situation in Iran. Another grouping of opposition says people should stay home and boycott the 'election.' The WPI says people should ruin it for them. What do you mean by this?

Hamid Taqvaee: I believe this is already taking place. People are not sitting at home. When Mousavi went to Ahvaz, the pipe-manufacturing workers declared that all the candidates were one and the same. When he went to Zanjan, the students condemned him for his role in the 1988 mass killings. The Sherkat-

e Vahed workers also declared that the 'election' has nothing to do with the interests of workers and people. People aren't quiet. In Iran, the issue is not only that people don't accept the election or this or that candidate. They don't want the entirety of the regime and they make use of the opportunity to declare that they have already made their choice. That the regime has to go. That they have chosen happiness over mourning and life over execution and killings... They need to come out in the streets to say the regime's heads should be prosecuted not elected.

Kazem Nikkhah: When Khatami became president the WPI's stance was that people selected him as a way of intensifying the factional infighting; wasn't this positive? Wouldn't this be the case if Karoubi or Mousavi became president?

Hamid Taqvaee: Let me first explain the Khatami era. Our position was that the people hadn't voted for reform as was being said by some but that in fact their vote was a vote against the supreme spiritual leader. We said it was a vote for the overthrow of the regime. We said by voting against the supreme leader's candidate, the people aimed to weaken the regime. Not that we agreed. People made these calculations; they weren't correct. You see the infighting will intensify the more they know people are against all of them. Even now, the second Khordad or so-called reformist faction has built political capital on Mr Khatami's winning of x number of votes. Even though he holds no weight now, this gives them a notch up and was a mistake. What I mean is that the regime's factions should be at each others' throats but this will only fully happen when they

all feel the heat.

The supporters of the supreme leader are saying that if a so-called reformist comes to power, he will loosen the reins, and protests will intensify. The so-called reformists are saying if a conservative candidate wins, they will increase repression and the people's protests will intensify. In a sense, both are revealing a truth; the reality is that whether Ahmadinejad, Karoubi or Mousavi becomes president, there won't be any fundamental or even any superficial change in the situation.

They call Khatami a reformist! My question is what did Khatami do that could be labelled as reform? They themselves say he didn't do anything – but of course they say it was because the opposing faction didn't allow it. The point of the matter is that when he was president, he did not do anything. And not only did the numbers of executions and stonings not diminish but the serial murders took place under his presidency. The attack on the students happened under his presidency...

Kazem Nikkhah: They say the opposing faction was responsible.

Hamid Taqvae: Okay but you were the president. If you wanted to you could have resigned on 18 Tir of the Persian calendar when the attack on the students took place. Otherwise what's the point of being president! It is ridiculous to ask people to vote for you as a reformist and then say you cannot make any reforms because others won't allow it! You could have informed people on day one so they wouldn't vote for you. What this means is that supreme leader was not on board.

And this takes us back to my first point and that is that this regime cannot be elected because there is a supreme spiritual leader that can veto everything. Because this regime gets its legitimacy from Islam and not the people.

With regards the reformists, I must add that in my opinion in Iran reformism – like elections – is a farce. The so-called reformists say things that are tragic comedy. It makes one laugh and cry at the same time. It's like saying Hitler's rule was bad because during his reign, they took two years to asphalt our roads! Of course the roads should also have been asphalted but those who reduce the problem to this are actually trying to cover up the main issues at hand. There are reformists – like Ms Shirin Ebadi – who at one point began a campaign to remove mines left over from the Iran-Iraq war. This is a humanitarian task but if it becomes the only task – whilst every day people are being executed and stoned and she has nothing to say about them or is silent on the serial killings and complains that there is censorship in the county when journalists are being killed, this is either pleading ignorance or assuming that the people are ignorant! It is an insult to people's intelligence for someone to come and work for 'reforms' in this manner. A precondition for any reform is that the supreme spiritual leader is set aside. If they really mean what they say, they should bring a platform that says they want the supreme leader's resignation, an end to an Islamic regime, Islam's separation from the state, educational system and people's lives...

Kazem Nikkhah: Doesn't this go beyond reform?

Hamid Taqvae: No, as I said

before, a precondition for those who speak of reform under Nazism is to call for the fascists to get out of government and to be prosecuted. Otherwise, what reform? You can't be under Hitler's yoke and complain about the lack of asphalted roads. This is no longer called reform. Under a regime where writers are killed, you can no longer merely complain about censorship. Khatami, Kahroubi and Mousavi are defenders of the Islamic system under the banner of reformism; they are not reformists.

The other point is that this is election-related. Three months before the election, suddenly Mohsen Rezaei steps up to say he wants to give women insurance or Karoubi says he wants to end child executions. Well I say Mr Karoubi, when you were the head of the Islamic Assembly did you bring any legislation calling for an end to child executions? In your era, hundreds of young 17, 18 year olds were executed and are being executed right now too...

Kazem Nikkhah: Why are they saying these things now?

Hamid Taqvae: They know that people have sympathy towards these issues – particularly that our Party has initiated a massive campaign against executions. This issue and the existence of New Channel TV station are hot topics and so they say this to collect votes. They say this so that maybe some will vote as a result of certain misgivings and say it is a choice between bad over worse. That they will say Karoubi or Mousavi are better than Ahmadinejad. In this sense, in that society both the election and reformism are a farce and without meaning. We don't have reformists. They haven't brought

any reforms nor wanted to. That the supreme spiritual leader cracks a smile does not make reform. That you ask for your cousins to also become candidates in the election is not reform. There is nothing viler in the world than stoning. This regime stones people to death and I have yet to see one of these so called reformists call for an end to stoning. The first precondition for reformism is to come forward and say that stoning must be abolished and that anyone who issues a stoning sentence must be prosecuted... or for example Karoubi is now defending the rights of minorities. Where was he when the regime attacked Kurdistan and slaughtered people in Sanandaj? His badge of honour is that he was one of imam Khomeini's chosen ones – the very imam who issued the order to attack. And now he is remembering minority rights? During Khatami's era, we labelled them 'Voltaire Pasdaran' – that is yesterday's notorious Pasdars have slightly shortened their beards and become Voltaires and freedom-lovers! This doesn't count. It's ridiculous and has nothing to do with freedom-loving. In fact, I think, we should grab the reformists by their collars and prosecute them for their

high-level roles and participation in the regime's killings. In the US, Obama came to power with the slogan of change and reform. His political capital and badge of honour was that he had opposed the war in Iraq when he was a senator. Now had he supported Bush, he wouldn't have been labelled a reformist. They think that people in Iran are ignorant. It's an insult to people's intelligence for people like Mousavi, Karoubi or Rezai to come and call themselves reformists! Their hands are soaked with people's blood from when they were in the Pasdaran and part of the ruling murderous gang. From Abdolkarim Soroush who led the cultural revolution and slaughtered students to Mohsen Rezai who in the Pasdaran attacked women, workers and youth, to Karoubi and Mousavi whose track record includes the massacres in 1981 and 1988. All of them are criminals and murderers.

In addressing these candidates, the issue is not even political. The issue is not that they are politically right or left wing. They all have criminal records and some like Rezai are even wanted by Interpol for their role in terrorist activities abroad. These people have assassinated opponents

abroad like Gholam Keshavarz, Sedigh Kamangar, Bakhtiar, Fereidoun Farrokhzad, Ghasemlou, and Sharafkandy in Mykonos and tens of others. They are a bunch of murderers. A political critique or a label of reformism is too much for them. It is not as if the debate is about aspects of their platform. No! The people's fight with them is that they are murderers. They must be held accountable...

The above is part of an interview, which was broadcast via New Channel TV on May 26, 2009. It was first published in Farsi in a special issue of the Young Communists' Organisation. It was translated into English by Maryam Namazie for WPI Briefing 210.

The Worker-communist Party of Iran—Organisation Abroad has called for an international day of action against the sham election in Iran on June 12, 2009.

To this end, several organisations of WPI have mobilised rallies in different cities around the world.

Down with the Islamic regime of Iran



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**WPI's landmark protest
against Iranian regime at ILO
conference continued from
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for the boycott of the Islamic regime at the conference and for its expulsion from the ILO. They said a regime which arrests, jails and flogs workers should not be in the ILO; a regime which executes children and stones women to death belongs not in an organisation bearing the name of 'labour' but in international courts to answer for its crimes against humanity.

The action, which lasted for around three to four minutes, was intercepted with the audience's repeated applause. The warm reception it received is an indication of the increasing international isolation of the Iranian regime, in particular among the world's trade unions.

A WPI statement, calling for the boycott of the Islamic Republic, was widely distributed to the delegates after the morning session inside the UN compound.

Concurrently with the action inside the hall, a rally was held at the Place des Nations nearby, in front of the Nations Gate, which lasted till around 3pm.



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Freedom, equality, workers' rule!

A snapshot of WPI activities in May

Siyaves Azeri

May Day 2009 was an exemplary day of struggle and a great victory for the working class in Iran. Despite the Islamic regime of Iran's undeclared curfew and threats, dozens of worker organisations celebrated May Day in Tehran and other cities. In Tehran, some 2000 people gathered at Laleh Park. Security agents brutally attacked the demonstrators injuring many and arresting more than 170 people including well known worker and women's rights leaders. In response to regime's atrocity, the Worker-communist Party of Iran immediately launched an international campaign for the release of detained activists.

To this end, WPI organisations abroad prepared several actions all around the world. On May 23, tens of WPI activists organised a rally in Stockholm, Sweden. Demonstrators carried banners in defence of detained workers and their posters. They distributed hundreds of pamphlets among the passer bys. On May 23 there was another protest rally in Frankfurt, Germany. WPI activists gathered in Frankfurt, made speeches in defence of detained workers and demanded their immediate and unconditional release. They also called upon worker and human rights organisations to join the campaign and put the Islamic Republic under pressure for the release of arrested workers. On May 27 members and activists of WPI Canada Organisation formed a rally in Ottawa in front of the Iranian embassy. Demonstrators

protested against the arrest of the workers and human rights activists and the execution of Delara Darabi, who was arrested at 17 and was executed by the Islamic regime in the early hours of May 1, 2009. The protest went on for some three hours.

On June 3, 2009, as the annual conference of the International Labour Organisation was about to begin, three activists of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, accompanied by New Channel TV crew, protested in defence of the workers and the people in Iran. Just a few seconds after the chairperson of the conference

also available in this issue of the Briefing.

It should be added that a number of May Day detainees have been released due to increasing international protests and pressure. However, 13 activists arrested in Laleh Park rally and 8 other workers that participated in May Day celebrations at their work place are still under arrest. Saeed Youzi, Jafar Azimzadeh, and Mohammad Ashrafi are among the detainees and have been subjected to severe torture. The campaign for the release of the May Day detainees will continue until all the detainees are freed.

کارگران زندانی آزاد باید گردند!



welcomed the participants and guests, Farshad Hosseini, Bahram Soroush, and Yadi Kouhi went on stage and defended workers and held up pictures and posters of May Day detainees in Iran for some 2000 participants and guests present at the conference. Details of this landmark event can be read in the separate communiqué of WPI, which is

In response to the call made by four international labour organisations for protests worldwide in defence of the rights of the workers in Iran, the Worker-communist Party of Iran—Organisation Abroad published a communiqué in order to declare its support for this action. Four global union organisations representing more than 170 million workers around the globe have called for an international action day to demand justice for the workers in Iran. Demonstrations will take place outside of the Islamic regime's embassies around the world. ITUC, EI, ITF, and IUF are the unions that formed the coalition in defence of the rights of the workers in Iran. WPI also called upon all worker

Long Live Socialism!

Boycott the Islamic Republic of Iran at the ILO conference!

A delegation from the Islamic regime of Iran is attending the ILO's annual conference. These people are not representatives of Iranian workers. They only represent the Islamic regime of Iran, which is a persistent and systematic abuser of workers' rights. This regime jails and flogs workers for organising in a union, for attending May Day rallies and for protesting over pay and working conditions. This regime is a horrific abuser of human rights. It executes children and stones women to death, and has the highest per capita record of executions in the world. Such a regime does not belong in the ILO, but in international courts to face charges for its crimes against humanity. Such a regime should be expelled from the ILO and from all international bodies. We request all the workers' groups and all delegates appalled at the abuse of labour and human rights in Iran to walk out of any sessions at which the representatives of this regime may want to take the podium and speak. Their mere presence should prompt your immediate walkout. Just like the South African regime during the years of racial Apartheid, so the Islamic regime of gender Apartheid and gross labour and human rights abuse should be boycotted at all international bodies, and first and foremost at an organisation which bears the name of labour.

§ Protest against the attendance of the Islamic regime of Iran at the ILO conference! § Boycott the Islamic Republic of Iran's delegation! § Call for the release of all jailed workers in Iran! § Join the rally today at Place des Nations ('Nations Gate') 12:00-2:00pm!

A regime which arrests, jails and flogs workers should not be in the ILO!

A snapshot of WPI activities in the past month, continued from Page 7

organisations all around the world to join the protests in order to strengthen the struggle for the rights of workers in Iran and demand the immediate and unconditional release of May Day detainees, worker leaders and activists and all political prisoners in Iran.

On May 25, 2009 WPI Australia Organisation announced in a communiqué that in response to the efforts of WPI activists the Australian Council of Trade Unions joined the campaign for the release of detained workers and in defence of rights of the workers in Iran. The letter reads "The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), on behalf of our affiliates and two million members, is writing to you once again to protest in the strongest possible terms the series of events which marred the May Day celebrations in your country and to express our continued and serious concerns as to

the deterioration in the situation of trade union and other fundamental rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Also on June 2, 2009, the union of doc workers of Australia wrote a protest letter demanding the immediate release of detained workers in Iran. The union also declared that it joins the campaign demanding the expulsion of the Islamic regime from international organisations including the ILO.

The WPI's thirty second Plenum of the Central Committee took place during May 29 and 31, 2009 in Sweden. Alongside the members and advisory members of the Central Committee several WPI cadres also participated in the Plenum. The main theme of the Plenum was the determining role and position of the party in the upcoming political developments in Iran and the relation between the party, its policies and activities with revolution and the question of political power. In his opening speech, Hamid Taqvaei drew attention to outstanding activities and important achievements of the party be-

tween the two plenums. He said that today, one of the determining conditions toward the formation of revolution in Iran is recognition of the party by large sections of society as a competent force that can form the future government and represent the people. Mostafa Saber also spoke on the same topic. In his detailed report and speech, Asqar Karimi touched upon the activities of various party organs and emphasised the central role of the party and New TV Channel in organizing massive actions and events such as March 8 and May 1.

A resolution about "Selecting the Party on a Social Scale as the Future Government" was extensively discussed and was unanimously ratified. Another resolution about the "Relationship between the West and Political Islam after the Fall of Neo-conservatism" was also discussed and ratified unanimously.

The Plenum elected Hamid Taqvaei as the general secretary of the Central Committee unanimously. The plenum also chose the 21 person Political Bureau.