
Split in Worker-communist Party of Iran

And Formation of

Worker-communist Party of Iran – Hekmatist

An interview with

KOOROSH MODARRESI,

The leader of the Worker-communist Party of Iran-
Hekmatist

conducted by

YANAR MOHAMMED,

Member of Worker-communist Party of Iraq's Politburo
and the chairperson of the Organization of Women's
Freedom in Iraq

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Yanar Mohamad for doing the interview, Toma Hamid for transcribing it, and both as well as Javad Aslani for proof reading the final edited copy.

Koorosh Modarresi
Dec 2004

Part 1*

Yanar Mohammed: Koorosh Modarresi is one of the most prominent Marxist figures in the Middle East and one of the leaders of the Worker-communist Party of Iran. He left the Party, on August 24 2004, and founded the Worker-communist Party of Iran-Hekmatist. Koorosh Modarresi is also a long-time supporter of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq and also a strategy planner for Worker-communism movement post-war Iraq.

We welcome Koorosh here for being with us today. We would like to ask you about the major reasons behind the split in the Worker-communist Party of Iran. Can you brief us upon the reasons for the split?

Koorosh Modarresi: It is difficult to understand the split and the way it happened without knowing the history of the Worker-communist Party of Iran. The split was not a thunder in clear sky, something happening out of the blue, somebody became “revisionist”, i.e., turned into a “right winger”. Unfortunately this old story of the emergence of a “revisionist” is the way the other side, new leadership of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, is using to

* This is the transcription of the Yanar Mohammad’s interview with Koorosh Modarresi on October the 2nd 2004. Some minor changes have been implemented by interviewee for clarity. The original audio files in English are accessible from <http://www.hekmatist.com>

explain this split. You have to look at the split in the context of the history of our Party. This difference or this rift has existed since the beginning of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, or even before the formation of the party. We have always had two sides on the issue of the course which the Party should take, on the type of the Party or even type of communism we thought we need to put forward. We always had our differences on important issues as the explanation of what has happened to communism in the last 100 years, on historical and Marxist account of Russian Revolution and causes of its later defeat during 1920s, demise of existing left or communism in Europe and the rest of the world, on answering questions like why we have not been able to organize a socialist revolution after the Russian Revolution or have not been able to seize political power? Why the more radical a communist or leftist party becomes, the smaller it becomes? Why has the left turned elitist, small pressure groups? Why have the left not been able to create a real radical communist political party in the world and change people's life for good; to get rid of wage-labor and create a socialist society? Why communism as a political movement is not growing? Why Marxist groups are not growing? Why can't they change the lives of people in reality, in the real world?

This discussion has been going on, right from the beginning of the formation of worker-communism. In fact, answers to some of these questions have been one of the fundamental issues in the definition of worker-communism (see "Our Differences" by Mansoor Hekmat¹). I will not get into the details of how we formed Worker-communist Party of Iran, but right from the beginning, there have been two tendencies, two outlooks or two kinds of traditions in the Party. We had the "traditional" radical left answer to all those questions, a reflection of a tradition in radical socialist movement that, in all its history, has been just a pressure group in the political arena. This tradition considers itself Marxist. They believe in some sort of socialism and they advocate for that socialism. But in reality, they have not been able to make socialism happen. They have not

been able to organize a socialist revolution. And this has been the tradition of this kind of socialism all over the place for the last 100 years; in Iran, in Europe, in America and in Canada. The left has turned into some kind of ideological formations, and without being too harsh on them, they have turned into some kind of a cult and a sect. Their point of reference is not the real social movement outside in the society, but ideas and beliefs. Socialism for traditional left, before everything, is a system of beliefs and not a social or political movement in the society to do something.

This tradition was the given background of our party. We came out of the traditional left in Iran, and the most radical one which we called the Revolutionary Marxism during late 1970s and early 1980s. And there was a second trend or tendency in the party which was represented by Mansoor Hekmat based on his interpretation of Marx and Marxism. This trend was a distinguishable trend in Iranian communist movement. Hekmat was going back to Marx, especially on the role of social and political movements as advocated by Marx and Engels' "The German Ideology" and the role of human will in history in Marx's "Thesis on Feuerbach" which was the backbone of "Leninism". Hekmat philosophically and methodologically went back to these theses and he made important contribution on these subjects

So, right from the beginning we were faced with a crucial question: "building a real political party or following the trail of pseudo-parties of left and creating yet another pressure group? This "fork" before us was put in a more understandable way of "either we will create a political party, which, in real life, can and will organize a socialist revolution or we will end up with an elitist, ideological group which sings "socialist" hymns, whispers "socialist" prayers, writes poetic socialist compositions and just keeps chanting socialism; without being able to understand how to achieve socialism.

This was the debate, this was the rift. If you listen to the audio files of all our congresses, all our Central Committee's plenums and Politburo's meetings, while Mansoor Hekmat was alive, which some of them are now available on the internet, in Farsi unfortunately, you will clearly see the rift. In the last plenum in which Mansoor Hekmat attended, 14th plenum of the Central Committee, August 2001, he said that he was not worried about the Party (Worker-communist Party of Iran) going to the right or the left. What he was assured of was that this party definitely was not on his line and was closer to a pressure group and a traditional leftist group rather than a political party, as he saw it. This evaluation was not a unique statement. You can find it, practically in all his debates in our meetings and in conversations with all those who have been in contact with him. This statement has been his evaluation of the party during the last 12 years, right from the beginning of the formation of the party. Of course the root of the situation goes back to the way the party was formed. There definitely exists a history for our differences. And only those who have not been associated with Hekmat's trend deny this fact because going back to this history will portray them in a "wrong side" in a party associated with Mansoor Hekmat.

Current crises in the Worker-communist Party of Iran were based on this rift and our split is nothing but the parting of the two historical sides in the Worker-communist Party of Iran, i.e., parting of the two sides which have existed during the last 12 years. We believe in building a political party, a huge political party, a mass political party that seizes the political power and organizes socialist revolution. We believe that the socialist revolution will not happen by itself. We have to organize it. We are not revolutionaries "as such". We are Worker-communists or socialist revolutionaries. We will use a given non-socialist revolution as a jumping pad for our revolution accordingly, but, we fight for a socialist revolution and the Party should fight for it. For this you need a political party.

This might sound too general, but there are different characteristics which a political party has, and a pressure group does not have. By the way, I am in no way discrediting pressure groups. There are many pressure groups, which exist, and we need them to exist like environmentalists, anti-nuclear coalitions, etc. They are not seeking political power. They are putting pressure on governing parties, main stream political parties and “the system” to move in a particular direction. We have suffragettes and women’s rights organizations, children’s rights groups, etc and then there are political parties. There are important differences between the two. Political parties are, by definition, focused on political power and they organize themselves on this basis.

Therefore, the question is “how a communist movement organizes a political party” in an environment which does not allow you to win an election or even reach out to the majority of the people to win them over? You have to organize a revolution or better to say an uprising. These are the questions, which are on our plate. This is true not only for Iranian communist movement, but, also for the Iraqi, British, European, Canadian and American communists. Revolution, in its political sense, is nothing but taking or seizing the political power. But, how, when, and by whom this is done?

Living like socialist saints, enlightening people, praying for the God of socialism and hope good for the next generations is not some thing a political party does. We want to organize a socialist revolution during our own life span and make it happen, and create a free and liberated society. This brings in the necessity of the political party. Socialist revolution is nothing but the seizure of political power by our party. Just like the October Revolution, in order to bring onboard the majority of people, you need to seize the power at a particular time which you can keep the power, polarize the political arena and mobilize the society. I do not want to get into the details of this discussion; you can refer to Mansoor Hekmat’s speech in the 2nd Congress of the Worker-communist Party of Iran and my speech at

Marx Society- London on Russian Revolution as well as the lecture on Party and Political Power.

Any way, after the death of Mansoor Hekmat, the balance of power inside the party changed in favor of the traditional left. I am not talking here about a person. What I mean is the traditional leftist attitude in which socialism is not much more than an ideology, you have to stay and remain radical, and socialist revolution will happen by itself and then you will rule the society, some thing like immanent resurrection or doomsday theory. Within this tradition, socialism is immanent and sooner or later it will happen. This is the given attitude and mentality of socialists and Marxists all over the world. This attitude is the passive trend which by definition is infertile. This is the interpretation of history which, I believe, Marx is criticizing in the “Thesis on Feuerbach”.

The crack, which the split initiates from, is right here. If you look at the issues, which define the split, you will see the hallmarks of this difference. For example in the history of communism in Iran during the last 30 or 40 years, the only time when the communist or the socialist movement has formed some kind of mass movement, exercised political power, organized tens of thousands of people to evacuate a city, or been able to fight the government, all of that have happened in Kurdistan. That is history. Because of different factors we have not been able to do this scale of activities elsewhere in Iran. In the split from the Party, not a single important sole, that was associated with that experience of politics, society, political power and mass mobilization, went the other way.

They know the logic of power; they know you cannot win a battle with slogans, you have to organize, you have to have a plan, and you have to organize the revolution. Revolution will not happen by itself.

Critiques and supporters of the theses which I put forward 2 years ago, which I will later on come back to, do not reflect the current

split. If you look at the split, most of the people on this side, were more critical of those theses than the people who are on the other side. I mean those theses were not the issue which defined the line of this split. Some people on this side were totally against those theses and some people on the other side were more positive towards the theses.

The first issue, which split the party on the current dividing line, was the issue of leadership. After Mansoor Hekmat the question which rose was “does our party need a leader?” Our answer was positive. We approached the problem from a social point of view, arguing that party leader is not an ideological leader; we are not looking for some one to replace Mansoor Hekmat. Our position was a classical position of any political party. A political party without personalities does not get anywhere. So, the party needs to have a leader. We cannot go to the society and argue that “look, we are unable to provide a leader for our Party” and at the same time convince them that we are able to organize the revolution and govern the society. Nobody will believe you.

Yanar Mohammed: Are you telling me the difference was about the idea of leadership, having one figure as leader?

Koorosh Modarresi: What I am saying is that after Mansoor Hekmat, the first rift with the lines more or less the same as the lines of the current split, started right from this issue. Our argument was simple: we are building a political party so we need a leader, like any other political party. From the other side we were hearing this argument that we are not able to provide one. We do not have anyone who can unite the Central Committee. We do not have someone who is eligible, good enough to put him or her forward. They did not bother to think how the hell people should believe us that we have a structure to govern society, if we do not have somebody who 20, 30 or 40 people can sign up to? Their argument was based on a cultist

view towards leadership rather than a political view. I mean if you look at leader as an ideological leader then you will be looking for some ayatollah in Marxism who everybody considers himself/herself as his/her follower. But if you look at it from a political point of view, as a political stand or as a political position, then every party can have its leader. In a political party the majority rules. The majority puts somebody forward as the party's leader. This person represents the party. And, we had so many of them. We think that we have people whom we will nominate to become president, to become prime minister, minister of defense, chairperson of soviets and councils etc. We believe we have many of this kind of qualified people. We have the most qualified people in the Iranian politics. If we believe that we do not have such a person, then by definition we are getting nowhere in regards to the aim of taking the political power. How can we claim we will organize the revolution or we will reorganize the society without being able to unite around some one as a political leader?

***Yanar Mohammed:** In your opinion, the collective leadership could not have been an alternative?*

Koorosh Modarresi: I have said many times that leadership in our party is collective. We have a congress every two years; we have a central committee that holds a plenum every two months. We have a politburo convening every month. The leader is under close scrutiny of the politburo etc. But politics and social activities are, by nature, personalized. If people come to you and ask who your leader is, what would you say? Would you say we do not have a leader? If the question was not already on your table, you might have been able to dodge the question and get away with it. But if it is already on your table, then you have to provide an answer. If you have had a leader before and if half of your Central Committee wants to have a leader, the situation which we had in the 16th plenum in August 2002, then your answer is important. Majority of our central Committee members and the party did want a leader. The society expected us to

introduce a leader; simply because every other political party has a leader. From a “leftist” point of view, we have constantly been breaking the traditions of the Left. Having a political leader was not part of the Left’s tradition neither in Iran nor in other parts of the world. We broke away from this traditional left and we were attacked by them viciously, calling us followers of the bourgeois tradition. This leftist tradition did not and does not understand the social logic of politics. In the traditional radical leftist way of thinking you do not need a leader, everybody is equal! And everybody is a leader. We think politics are personalized. You have to have personalities, faces, names and too many of them in politics and in fact in any social activity. A political or social movement needs numerous personalities with their own style, personal and political characters. The more personalities a movement has the stronger it becomes. Furthermore, you need to have a leader to represent you outside, to give a human face to your politics, to organize the executive system in your party and so on. What I am saying here is the elementary stuff and common knowledge in any other real political parties. Nobody has a problem if you say Margaret Thatcher was the leader of the Conservative Party, or Tony Blair is the leader of the Labour Party. But, if you introduce someone as the leader of some radical leftist party, everybody will think of him or her as some ideological cult leader. The problem of having a leader with all its simplicity goes back to the heart of traditional radical leftist attitude towards politics, society and political power. It goes back to the difference between a pressure group or a marginal leftist formation with a big political party aiming for the political power.

The first debate which created the fractions which you see in this split was on the issue of leadership and not the theses which I submitted, and I will get back to them later. The other side was pro-collective leadership; the argument was that we do not have a person to unite or represent us. We were arguing that we are not electing some kind of spiritual or ideological leader. We wanted to appoint somebody to a political position, like the chair of the political bureau

and other positions in the party and according to the rules which we had for it.

The second divisive issue, in which you can distinguish the two sides similar to the first issue and the later split, was the so called slogan of “Long live the councils!” which was proposed by Hamid Taqvae and supported by others. During July 2003, there were mass demonstrations in Iran. I was the leader of the party at the time and we played an important role in the demonstrations. Right-wing opposition, who are loosely organized around the Monarchy, tried to make the referendum the main issue in these demonstrations. We put forward “Long live freedom”, “Long live equality” and “Down with the Islamic Republic” as the core and the banner of these demonstrations. I argued for this line and I formulated it within our leadership and publicly. And, we were successful. We discredited the right-wing opposition’s slogans and won over most of the demonstrations in Iran and abroad. Most of the demonstrations were held under our slogan. With this victory, our party’s position surged in the society. The question was what is the next step for the party? The Worker-communist Party of Iran was at the top of the Iranian opposition during the mass movement in those days.

Yanar Mohammed: I just need to point out here, were you against the idea of referendum then? Because this is one of the points about which there is controversy now and we will need to expand on it later?

Koorosh Modarresi: This is nonsense. Of course I was against it. I wrote against it. I formulated the slogan which was popularized in Iran; Equality, Freedom and Down with the Islamic Government. I argued for it as the only way to defeat referendum. This is documented. I have written and made many speeches on it. I talked live to people on TV and Radio programs during the course of the demonstrations. These slogans were attributed to me and I formulated the movement against referendum. Unfortunately, I have

been deliberately misquoted and people have been misled on this issue by the new leadership of the Worker-communist Party of Iran. I will come back to this point later.

Yanar Mohammed: But for our listeners to be clear, I want to point out that I was one of the people who understood that your strategy was based on referendum. Not your tactics, your strategy?

Koorosh Modarresi: No, no, that is not a strategy nor a tactic. If one person in Iranian politics defeated referendum, wrote about how to defeat referendum and won, that was me, not anybody else. I hope I am not arrogant in this, but that was me and nobody else wrote about it.

Yanar Mohammed: I want to talk about the first point you made as a main difference between the two sides, let's call them parties: Mansoor Hekmat emphasized on building worker-communism that is based on a social movement and the party of that social movement will be heading to political power. Is that realizable without a mass worker's revolution, I mean a socialist revolution?

Koorosh Modarresi: No it is not. But, it also depends how you define the “mass movement” and what do you mean by a socialist revolution. I do not think any Marxists would say socialism is achievable without a socialist revolution. But the differences step in when you define what in fact is a socialist revolution. I will get to these differences. But, let me first finish making my point during the previous question. About the discussion which deepened the rift in the Party.

After the July 2003 demonstrations in Iran, the Worker-communist party of Iran went to the top of the opposition parties. When we summed up our activities in that period trying to plan our next step

for our party towards the political power, to figure out how to organize people, how to go further, we were arguing that the only force which can push people forward, is the Party, itself. Party is the link to the power. Party should go further and should organize people. I came out with some theses on the necessity of a mass political party. We argued that we have to expand the party; Worker-communist Party should become a mass organization itself. This mass organization is not an alternative to the other mass organizations. During periods like the current ones, this is the party which mobilizes people, plans and executes the revolution. We need a strong and powerful Party. Like the Bolsheviks during the October revolution. It was the Bolsheviks who planned and executed the uprising and the seizure of the political power and not the soviets. I mean the Party was the core of this movement.

The other side in the party, came out with a classic traditional radical leftist argument. They insisted that the party takes the political power via councils, soviets and other mass organizations, and not by itself. Against our focus on the party, they put forward a new slogan: “long live the councils”. No councils did exist at the time; in fact no mass organization did exist at all. The only effect of this slogan was to take away the attention from the party, which did exist and was our only tool in the political struggle in Iran, and focusing the attention on some non-existing organization, which was not clear what it would have done even if it existed; would it be a revolutionary council or a pacifist conservative one. This slogan was focusing the party on some thing which was out of our reach and out of our control. This was a typical, traditional radical and passive attitude in society which you can find all over the place. Our argument was based on this fact that what we can do is to influence the society by the party itself. We need to create a mass party, a machine that can work in these circumstances and guarantee a revolutionary attitude and action.

Again you could see the same line up both sides of this argument. We have been a pro-soviet, a pro-council movement. Defending the

council movement is our hallmark. I mean we have been defined as one of the factions of communism in Iran, which believes in council movement, but you have to be careful as to the slogan you are putting forward. Those days the next step for the party was to go out and stretch itself and create bigger networks of activists and people and change the balance of power in Iran. For example we came out with the idea of “controlling districts” or even to create some kind of dual power in some cities like Tehran and Sanadaj and other ideas like that. The question was, apart from workers, how should we bring the youth movement and the women liberation movement on board of our ship? How to influence the situation? How in real life we should go forward. The other side went to the traditional left. They said, long live councils, and until we have no council we can do nothing except waiting and waiting for councils to form and for the masses to come out. This is the core of the difference between interventionist attitude of Marx (See “Thesis on Feuerbach”), Leninism and Hekmatism on one side and the passive method of Mensheviks and the traditional left on the other side.

I can show other instances of the rift too. What I am saying is that, the theses that I put forward 2 years ago had nothing to do with this split. This split is about other issues which have been brought forward during Mansoor Hekmat’s period and he was fighting for them and we were fighting for them as well. The split was about those issues and not the issue of whether socialism is important or not important. This is silly. I mean that was and is not the issue.

Going back to your question regarding socialist revolution; I think what is coming out of The Communist Manifesto, actually from the summation of the experience of Paris Commune, is that if working class wants to organize a socialist revolution in its social dimensions, i.e. abolition of wage-labour, money and capital and bring in socialist economy, it should seize the political power. The pre condition of the socialist transformation of the society is the overthrow of the state power and taking the political power by the working class. This, I

call a socialist revolution. Like the October 1917 revolution in Russia. There is no way workers' movement or working class or the proletariat can start transforming the society without seizing the political power. So, first thing comes first, working class needs to seize the power.

Yanar Mohammed: And getting to power is not through the masses of councils and people, it is through a mass political party?

Koorosh Modarresi: Well, there is this traditional discussion in the left and in the working class movement. How can workers seize the political power? This question has been as old as the communist movement itself. And, you have different opinions and trends in the way the question is answered. You have people like Gramsci, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Social Democrats, and Anarchists etc.

What is the meaning of this statement that the working class should seize the political power? We, the Hekmatists, have believed that seizing the political power by the working class is nothing but seizing the political power by its party. Working class itself cannot seize the power. This is a kind of illusion that the working class will come together and organize and becomes a mass organization that grows and grows, forms trade unions and councils and then in a revolutionary period the mass of working class will go and take the power. The Leninist point of view, and the Hekmatist point of view, is that the political party will take political power on behalf of the working class. A communist and working class party can not wait to become a majority and then seize the power. Bourgeoisie will not let you. They will not let a communist or a working class party win the political power via elections. Waiting for the party to become majority is an illusion. Theoretically, it is possible to get to power by election but in real life, in real situation, the way bourgeoisie is working, the way society is working, they will not let you get to power through election. They have mass media, they have armies,

they have religion, they have churches, they have mosques, and they have all the systems of distortion of truth on mass scale. They have monarchs, queens and kings to prevent this from happening. In critical conditions they come out as a figure above all the politics and as a symbol of the nation to save the day. This is why they put on their uniform and become the “commander” of the army and the soul of the nation to save the nation from communists.

So in our opinion the political party should take the power in the society when it is still a minority. In order to become a majority you need to take the power. Without taking the power, communists and working class cannot become the majority in society; that is the whole idea of Leninism. Lenin in 1917 said whenever people are neutral, optimistic towards us, but neutral, we have to take the power. We should not wait for the majority to become pro Bolsheviks.

Yanar Mohammed: By minority?

Koorosh: By Bolsheviks, I mean October revolution was a revolution done by whom? By a couple thousand people in a hundred-million society? I do not know the population, was it 80 millions? Or was it 100 millions? The revolution was done by one city, Petrograd, a small faction of the social democrats in those days – by Bolsheviks. A couple of thousands attacked the Winter Palace, captured the power and declared a socialist government. Many people in the Left and in the Right call October revolution a coup, because a minority did it. I believe it was not a coup because different factors were involved. One was that it happened in a revolutionary period and after the seizure of power the society was so polarized that most of people turned to Bolsheviks after a very short period of time. Bolsheviks polarized the society around “peace”, “land” etc. Slogans like that represented most of the people and most of people supported them. Without capturing the power they cannot expect people to support you, or even you can not reach them. You need to capture the power under given conditions, and not just in a normal day, though.

If you go and capture the power now in Britain or Canada, the bourgeoisie will turn the society against you and that is a coup. But in a specific period (for elaboration on it, see Mansoor Hekmat's speech in the 2nd Congress of the Worker-communist Party of Iran), you can go and take the power and that is the pre-condition for a social revolution. This is nothing but the socialist revolution. So if you ask me is it possible to build a socialist society without revolution? I say no, we need a socialist revolution but socialist revolution means the conditions in which the Worker-communist or a communist party seizes the political power. That is the meaning of revolution. So, if I am working for a socialist revolution I should be working for the party to seize the power. The two are the same. That has been one of the major differences in Worker-communist Party of Iran. We do not wait for a revolution to happen. We organize the revolution. October revolution was, as far I know, the first pre-organized revolution. All revolutions happened by themselves. October revolution, October uprising, was the first in the history of human being, which was planned, the date and the time was set. This is the difference between the revolution which the working class and communists have to organize and the revolution that other classes would plan. Other revolutions can depend on a general spontaneous mass uprising to overthrow the government. We had this experience in Iraqi Kurdistan. People rose up and overthrew Saddam Hussein's rule and formed the councils but Kurdish nationalism came to power. I mean the mechanism by which a socialist party can get to power is different from the regular mechanism of other parties or other traditions. They can get to power through election or through waiting for a revolution to happen. Our attitude brings some kind of activism, which is absent in the traditional radical leftist attitude and practice. Turning back to the antique ideas of traditional radical left, the Worker-communist Party of Iran has had a serious set back into pacifism. This was a target of our criticism and exploded the whole rift into a split.

Yanar Mohammed: I need to ask you about this particular point. I will throw random ideas that I heard from the WCPI, that all people are with “us”, the workers, the youth, the women and that 90% of people will be on the streets and then, we will organize the revolution. The other opinion is that we can start a revolution from far away through our TVs, through our media, through influencing people from far and when the right time comes, we will be going inside Iran to organize the revolution. Is the society ready for this sort of revolution?

Koorosh Modarresi; I think Iranian society is ready for a socialist revolution. But, this statement does not mean that people will come out with slogans like ‘long live socialism’ to overthrow Islamic government and establishing a socialist state. This is not the way society functions and this is not the way things have happened in history. What I am saying is that we represent the majority of people; socialism represents the interests of the majority of people. I have no doubt about that. It guarantees the well being, and the freedom of the majority in any society including Iran; but it does not mean they are actively supporting us now because most of them do not know what we stand for, in the first place. We cannot reach them. We might have one radio station or a couple of publications but we cannot fight BBC, CNN, Sky, Fox news, in their territory. Bourgeoisie is giving people a picture of the world on a global scale; tell people how to think and how to live. They gave a picture of Iraq which was not true. They convinced majority of people the way they should see the world. It is not possible to convince the majority of people that all this system is upside down. After all, the world is a small village and everybody is connected, specially these days. So you should break this monopoly on the information and control on people’s lives, in order to reach them. I suppose, we have enough influence in Iran, many people know us, that if we can seize the power, and declare, say, ‘the declaration of the universal rights of people’ as the basis of

law of the land, we will attract most of the people. What I am saying, is that the other party thinks of revolution in a very traditional way. They think that revolution will happen and is independent of our will, revolutions depend on the mechanisms of the society itself and parties cannot make them. This is a very classical and old kind of Marxist argument. We think that bringing a revolutionary condition in a society has its own mechanisms, most of them out of the political parties' control. However, once the revolutionary condition sets in, whether the revolution happens or not, or what kind of revolution happens, totally depends on us. This brings an important role of will in history and might sound voluntaristic. However, I believe this is the difference between Feuerbach and Marx. This is the kernel of the Marx's statement that philosophers have so far interpreted history but the question is to change it. This is the spirit of Leninism and in fact Hekmatism.

The other party thinks the revolution will happen and if we are famous, if people know us through TV, radio and through media and if people think about us as socialists, then once the revolution starts, and the Islamic government is overthrown and people are on the streets, they will fly back to Iran and people will gather around them and they will organize the society, they will form the councils and mass organizations, and then they will go for political power.

Well of course this is an illusion; other parties and forces who have participated in the overthrow of the Islamic regime or are strong and active in the society will not let you to follow this shiny road to socialism. Once a revolution has happened, not by you, then someone else has made it happened and that one has the most power and control over it.

Yanar Mohammed: started or initiated it?

Koorosh Modarresi: Somebody has some kind of dominance in it. Even that party might not have initiated it, but is the moral authority

or has some kind of authority or some kind of control on it. These things do not happen by themselves. Somebody calls people to do something. Somebody plans this kind of activities in the society, it might be the mosque, it might be by a priest, and it might be anybody or any party. One party has the dominance or using the old word 'hegemony', on the whole thing. In our period, anti- communism is an art; bourgeoisie has elevated it to an art. Bourgeoisie has fought with us. During Lenin's period they were thinking of him like another Zapata. They did not know this kind of communism. They regarded Bolsheviks as some sort of nationalists who want to industrialize Russia. Nowadays, they know us, they have fought with us. We have fought with the bourgeoisie. They will not let us to get there on this path and with this pace. They will send suicide bombers to every council. You have lived in Iraq; you know how difficult it is in these days to form a mass organization. They will simply blow up the whole building. Overthrowing the Iranian regime in some circumstances may cause some kind of dark scenario happening in Iran just like Iraq. Islamic regime will not melt. They will have people who will fight for them and become suicide bombers, they can form some enclaves; and start fighting. Then we have the Monarchists especially the right wing fascists who have said they will fight the communists. And they are all armed to their teeth. Kurdish nationalist forces are also armed and they have this "tradition" of solving political differences with arms.

In this situation, you can not just wait. You need to have a plan to prevent the disintegration of the society and to prevent this dark scenario from happening, we have seen it in Yugoslavia, we have seen it in Lebanon, in Beirut, and we have seen it in Iraq. Believe me, if this happens in Iran it will be worse than all of these. We need to be active, we need a strong party which is capable of challenging these armed militias and we need to have a plan to create an atmosphere in which dark scenario becomes less probable. A plan was put forward by Mansoor Hekmat during his late years which was based on the idea that we need to create a very powerful political

party, which can clear, which can prevent others from adventurism. Then we need to create some kind of a platform, a civilized platform, which everybody can sign up to even the right-wing bourgeoisie.

Yanar Mohammed: What do you mean by that last part?

Koorosh Modarresi: Bourgeoisie or conservatives, if you call them, do not have interest in the disintegration of the society. Bourgeoisie has an interest in “integrity” and “stability” in order to have a labour force going to the factories or doing things and creating profit for them. They do not have an interest in the disintegration of the society. They are pro-dictatorship, pro-despotism, but they are not pro disintegration and anarchism, the whole idea of nationalism and the sacredness of borders are raised by them. Society, after all, is a market place for them. They do not want to break up the market. So if you exert enough pressure you may push them to sign up to some kind of deal according to which they will accept not to solve political differences by means of arms, or sign up for some kind of bill of rights for people which secures the civil structure of the society. Of course you cannot do it just by propaganda. You need to be powerful yourself. The party should be powerful and put political and social pressure on every body to sign up or become isolated in the society. People and society do appreciate this fear or rather struggle against disintegration and chaos.

Yanar Mohammed: You are talking about organizing civil life and that is in the case of the dark scenario?

Koorosh Modarresi: I am saying that the way to prevent the dark scenario is to have a very strong communist political party on the scene. This is the only guarantee you can get. Other people will not give a damn about what you say. They are after their own interests.

Kurdish nationalism, for example, will enslave Kurdistan. They have done it in Iraq.

Yanar Mohammed: Koorosh, before we end this segment I want to wrap the subject of socialist revolution. Your party has been accused of using the working class cause in order to reach to power and then you promise of a socialist revolution that may or may not come, while the other side is talking about revolution without organizing for it, which becomes closer to a kind of utopian dream. Can you elaborate on that?

Koorosh Modarresi: I think the core of our approach is in activism which is the core of Marxist methodology. Nothing happens unless you make it happen. We want to seize the power; we have to capture political power as a party in order to organize socialist revolution, and in order to bring on board the majority you need to be in power. This is our aim and our agenda. We do not think the revolution will happen by itself. We are not pro-revolution as such. We have not been pro-Islamic revolution. We are not pro any kind of Islamic revolution in any country for example. We are pro-socialist revolution and we have decided to organize this politically. This is a mass movement. We have to create a mass organization. We have to create a certain party which is able to do this job. This is not conspiracy, this is a political action. But the will should be there, the plan should be there, the strategy should be there. You should be clear minded about all these issues. You should not have any illusion in that the people will give you the power by themselves. You have to get the power. This is what the other party does not understand.

They claim we do not believe in socialist revolution. I again might sound arrogant, but I think after Mansoor Hekmat, most of the literature in defense of socialism, arguing why socialism is possible today and why it is necessary today, have been argued by me not by

anybody else from the other side. The literature is available and their claim is just not true. They claim we are not socialists any more or we do not believe in socialism. The thing is, we believe socialism can be achieved in this way by an active political party, which has a plan for it. Not just waiting for something to happen. They are waiting. In a while, it will become clear that they will be just sitting down and writing compositions about revolution, how good a revolution is, and long live socialism; creating literature, just propaganda, just agitation for socialism. But you will see us not just doing that but organizing people on the real ground, creating networks and bring people together and if you like.....

Yanar Mohammed: The revolution you mean!

Koorosh Modarresi: The revolution. We will try to make the revolution. Those are the differences. I will come back to the method they are describing the split and I will talk about why it is not real and does not make sense.

Part 2

Yanar Mohammed: *We start the second segment of our interview with Koorosh Modarresi about the split in the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPIran). Koorosh, we have been acquainted with theses you have written for politburo in the year 2002. Our understanding is that you have forwarded strategies in there that imply that reaching to power could be done through referendum, could be done through sitting with other bourgeois parties on provisional government and also other ways of seizing power that do not relate to socialist revolution. Of course as the result of this, your theses are described as non worker-communist, as opportunist and it was said it was the beginning of the “Right” tendency in the Worker-communist Party of Iran. Is it possible that I know your views on this?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Yes of course. But, before getting there, first you have to ask yourself what happened in the WPI? Why somebody suddenly and out of the blue came with some Right-wing tendencies? If you are familiar with the history of the Left you will find out that this is a ready-made recipe which we can find in any cookbook of traditional left. Whatever happens they attribute it to someone who has changed his/her *ideas*, who has changed his/her *beliefs*, and has come forward with some kind of “Right” or “Left” tendencies. Traditional ideological left has always explained the history in this fashion. In this view, when you ask, for example, why Stalin came to

power? What happened to the Russian revolution or what happened in China? They will attribute whatever has happened to some kind of changes in one's *ideas* or *beliefs*. Hence, things have happened because Stalin, Khrushchev, Mao or someone else, has revised his ideological beliefs and has become a "revisionist". The root of every change goes back to the realm of thought, to the world of ideology. Every thing happens because of the way that people think about it. And then, this attitude is the corner stone of the reason that the traditional radical left has not been able to organize a mass party and make the revolution happen. This attitude is the core of ideological formations rather than political ones, be it a cult or a radical leftist organization. When you attribute historical or political events, especially the bad ones, in WPI, the Bolshevik Party, or in China, to some kind of "right wing-ness" or "Left wing-ness" in the school of thought, i.e., the way people think, then, the recipe for the prevention of these things happening again is to focus on the way people think. This approach opens the door to the ideological investigation as a means to make sure that people do think the way you think, to guarantee prevention of bad things happening and to prevent another "infiltration" of bourgeoisie into the ranks of proletariat via "poisonous" "right" or "left" tendencies. How can you prevent someone like Stalin from changing his views on democracy, socialism, revolution, etc ... and actually emerging in a party or society? With this way of thinking, the recipe is straight forward, i.e. focusing on people's thoughts is the key. Hence, you get the traditional criticism and self-criticism in the radical left tradition, which is nothing but a "modern" holy inquisition! Worker-communism was, right from the beginning, a trend which defined itself opposed to this kind of non-materialistic interpretation of history. You can go back to Mansoor Hekmat's "Our Differences"² in which he distinguishes worker-communism from the "revolutionary Marxism" on this base. Also you can go back to our discourse on the Russian Revolution and its defeat as back as 1980s³. So, for those who are familiar with the historical materialism of Marx and worker-communism method, regardless of the nature of

the thesis which I put forward, the way the new leadership of WPI explains the split, is a traditional ideological leftist method, is not correct, cannot explain the logic of history, has nothing to do with worker-communism and Hekmat's method, and finally as a result will turn the WPI back to the rank of ideological sectarian leftist formation. Even if the theses which I put forward were wrong, which they definitely are not, the explanation of the split based on these theses can not describe what happened in the Worker-communist Party of Iran. If I fall under a bus today, this "theory" about the split in WPI will simply evaporate. Will have no meaning any more and they have to "explain" how more than half of the party and the majority of the central committee who had nothing to do with those theses have left the party. Why all these people who have split are not saying they have split in defense of my theses? Actually, many people in the Hekmatist party have been more critical about my 2002 theses than those who have stayed. The reality is, our party, the WPI-Hekmatist, is pro-something else. We are pro Hekmat.

The ideological way of understanding and explaining the split in WPI by its current leadership has necessitated a kind of ideological offensive. They launched an "ideological" or a "cultural revolution" within the party against the "infidel" and the devil itself. Character assassination, personal attacks and focusing all their propaganda on me is a hallmark of this old tradition of Maoism, Stalinism and all cultist lefty tradition.

Yanar Mohammed: *Let me interrupt you here Koorosh because for many of us this is very confusing. I see one of their interviews and I hear the word right-wing repeated 50 or 60 times now this gets me to the question: when do you describe a tendency as right-wing, when, is it based on materialist analysis. When does that happen?*

Koorosh Modarresi: If you are talking about one person, you can talk about his or her beliefs, but if you are talking about a movement, which involves more than one person, then you cannot attribute it to the beliefs. If you attribute what happened, for example, in the Iranian Worker-communist Party to a single person, which at least for the time being, the new leadership of the WPI is sticking to, then you can not justify the departure of the majority of the party from WPI, unless you are claiming some kind of satanic spirit has haunted people's souls and minds. This is in reality the spiritual or mystical twist which is traditionally given to Marxism by traditional radical left; trends like Maoism or Stalinism. Attributing political events to a "renegade" or an "infidel" is the common root of this non-materialistic method with the religious one. Suddenly a chapter in history closes another chapter opens, based on this hocus pocus method. History is invented in this way. Then you can "explain" what happened to Koorosh. He was the defender of socialism, they praised him, even in the last congress they praised his role in the defense of Marxism after Mansoor Hekmat, they elected him as the leader of the party, then, suddenly they go back to 2 years ago and claim that the theses which he openly put forward, and they all knew about, has been a "right tendency" and now it is convenient to denounce all the credits and announce Koorosh as The "great Satan"! Well, even if those theses have been wrong, which they are not, the way the new leadership of the WPI is arguing is classical political opportunism. They are saying that they have lied for their own sakes and believe me they are still opportunists.

Furthermore, this method is an arbitrary way of describing history and very "convenient" for every opportunist. Using this method, one can, arbitrarily, attribute any political event to anyone and any difference can be given an ideological or religious spice for which one can start a Cultural Revolution on this basis, like the Cultural Revolution in China.

If you observe the new leadership of WPI and if you watch the circus they are calling the 5th congress, you will notice that this gathering is not a communist or even a simple straight forward political

gathering. It is an evangelistic gathering, a ceremony for denouncing Koorosh Modarresi. This can not be right. This circus and this way of political behavior is not only anti communist it is against any shred of decency and it is a case for classical political opportunism.

Yanar Mohammed: *You called it a cultural revolution inside the party. Can you elaborate on that, because that is a new term by itself?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Cultural or ideological revolutions are not new phenomena either in politics or in cultist psychology. We have seen these “revolutions” from political parties of Maoists to the cults like David Koresh’s Texas Davidians or Iranian Mojahedin Khalq, all designed to justify a political turn or political blunder, i.e., a real interest in the real world.

Although this tactic has been used by political parties, it is the hallmark of cults and marginal ideological organizations. When you organize a political party, the basis of your unity is a political unity and not an ideological one. For example in a conservative party, you have different trends within the boundaries of conservative tradition or movement. Within such a party you might have different factions, and different ideas. But, what makes this party a political party, and not for example, a discussion group, is the unity in action, unity in will, unity in practicing a political resolution, unity in . around platform or a program or ratified documents. In a political party everyone is bound to these collective decisions; at the same time there is room for disagreement within the framework of the political tradition of that party.

Then if you have a party in disarray, you will try to bring a kind of political unity .to that organization, define a perspective; define some kind of platform, which unites the party in the real world. But if you base the unity in an organization on ideological unity, it will set the stage for pseudo-religious formations. Then you have to focus on ideology and theory and to guarantee the unity and to prevent the

infiltration of “satanic” bourgeois ideological ideas, you have to poke your nose in other people’s heads, figure out what they think. In this case, when one faces a disagreement, instead of trying to find a common platform for a common political stand and a common political action, he/she will focus on ideology.

First, I do not think dynamics of social and political changes lie in the battlegrounds of ideological conflicts; these phenomena are rooted in the conflict of social and political movements. Second, social and political histories are continuous processes of social and political conflicts between social and political movements, trends or horizons. We have to distinguish these movements or these traditions in different periods for different societies. In these conflicts, the defeat of one is the triumph of the other. Defeat of socialist revolution in Russia is the victory of capitalism and not “Stalinism” or “revisionism” ideologies. This, I believe, is one of the major contributions of Karl Marx to historical materialism, which has been elaborated by Mansoor Hekmat.

For traditional ideological left, ideology and philosophy is “the mother of all unities”. In this tradition if you are to create a unity, that unity is ideological. In this system any political discourse or disagreement ends up with the creation of angels and demons. Socialism becomes mystical socialism; a spiritual atmosphere in which people swear to socialism, swear they are revolutionaries, people “purify” themselves and denounce their “bourgeois tendencies” etc. This ideological ritual, call it tragedy or comedy, happens everyday in traditional marginal radical left formations. They sink deep inside themselves; they try to create some kind of ideological or cultural revolution. Hamid Taghvaei raised the banner of the necessity of a “Baptism” for WPI! This is his exact word. “I want to baptize the party” he said! It is a shame somebody uses these kind of terminology to express what he wants to do in politics in general, let alone in communist politics. “Baptism” is necessary to expel the “evil spirit” which has penetrated this party. Well, the only way to defend the sacristy of the party is to reject or to denounce this Satan, to wage an ideological war against him and “spiritually”

vaccinate people against the “right-wing” tendencies of Koorosh Modarresi! Unfortunately, this is the way they understand politics. It is not the result of their “bad will” or their “bad nature”. This is politics as leftist cults understand it.

Yanar Mohammed: *Actually I have heard this about you: that you are not convinced in the slogan of “socialism now” and that socialist revolution is “too violent” that people may be scared of it .*

Koorosh Modarresi: Anyone familiar with worker-communism, with a little bit of academic conscious, would not accept this claim. As I said this is a ready made recipe from the traditional left cookbook. But let’s go back to the discussion which the new leadership of WP.is referring to. This is a discussion which took place more than two years ago, in August 2002. Unfortunately, the two basic “notes for discussion” which I submitted to politburo have not been translated to English yet. We will translate them soon. The first document is dated August 24, 2002 under the title “The collapse of the Islamic Republic and the role of the Worker-communist Party of Iran”⁴. This document, as it clearly states at its introduction tends to have “brain-storming” role. The second document is dated 4 days after the first one, i.e., August 28 2004, is for adaptation. This 2nd document is under the title “Worker-communist Party of Iran and the downfall of the Islamic Republic, a guideline for the leadership of the party and not for publication”⁵. Both documents are pretty much consistent with the same attitude and we will publish both in English soon. Here, I will focus on the 2nd document which is more precise. Ok, this was the situation: we saw the possibility of the collapse of the Islamic Republic. I put forward couple of questions to the politburo; questions which I think any serious political party should be clear about. Especially, our politburo should have been clear about them. We had to look into the situation and try to analyze it as objectively as we could, without agitating ourselves. In the document the first “thesis” says:

“The downfall of the Islamic Republic will bring forward the issue of the government which will replace it”.

Immediately in the same “thesis” it continues that:

“Policy of the Worker-communist Party of Iran about the future government for Iran is clear. Worker-communist Party of Iran considers socialism to be the only way to provide freedom, equality, welfare and happiness for people. WPI considers socialism as an alternative for today and will use all its efforts to materialize this alternative and taking the political power by the party. WPI will do all it can to replace the Islamic Republic by taking the power. With taking the power WPI will declare all the items in the party’s program as the rights of people and will guarantee the broadest political and social freedoms. WPI will guarantee that people in Iran will be able to decide their future governmental system with total freedom.”

As it is clear the 1st thesis declares that our policy is to get to power, establish a socialist government and declare all the items in our program as the law. It says that we believe socialism is for today, immediately and we will implement them the moment we get to power. This was the first “thesis”.

The 2nd thesis deals with a situation in which a revolution overthrows the Islamic regime without putting us into power, i.e., a revolution or a collapse of the government which has not been organized or conducted by us. The 2nd “thesis” says:

“The policy of WPI, in case it has not risen to political power, is, like any other serious political party, to try to get the political power, attract people to the necessity of a socialist government and materialize it.”

The 3rd “thesis” focuses on this situation because if we get to political power we know what to do, the difficulty and the challenge is when things do not go the ideal way. The 3rd “thesis says:

”The collapse of the Islamic government, without us taking the power, will .pose the society with two dangers:

- a) The disintegration of the civil and the social order, i.e., the danger of a dark scenario.*
- b) Rise of the bourgeois parties to the power, imposing a political system on people and forcing people out of the direct action in political arena.”*

As you see the third “thesis” deals with the condition in which the Islamic regime is overthrown but we have not been able to take the power. It says that the society faces two dangers: one is the dark scenario, i.e., the disintegration of civil structure like what happened in Lebanon, in Yugoslavia and now happening in Iraq, in which, people like nationalists, federalists, Islamists and other sectarian and cultists groups will take advantage of the situation and start to disintegrate the whole society. This is one danger and the other danger is some kind of bourgeois or right-wing party or figure coming to power and starts to pull people out of streets and denying them the right to intervene in politics. The question is “what do we do to prevent these things from happening?”

Yanar Mohammed: *Did you give an answer to that.*

Koorosh Modarresi: Of Course, in reply to these questions, we put forward a clear line of action. We said in order to prevent the dark scenario we need a very strong party on the ground. We need a strong party which has strong leverages for action and pressure. If you go through say the 5th “thesis” You see the “leverages” which I have put forward:

“The tools which enable WPI to face this future and directly intervene in the political arena are:

- a) Organizing the party as a mass political party. An organization which by itself is a strong leverage to intervene in the situation.*
- b) Organizing different kinds of mass organizations especially the ‘general assembly movement’*
- c) Party’s armed force in Kurdistan.*
- d) Organization for the Liberty of Women*
- e) Different Communist organizations (youth, students etc).”*

Another idea which you find is that if the bourgeoisie come to power and we are not in power we should not accept them as the permanent state or permanent government. We have to declare them as a provisional government. We should ask for a provisional government to be in power. And if the Worker-communist Party of Iran is not in power, we should declare that participating in a provisional government is our right. We have not even said that we will participate in such a government but declaring that the participation to be our right. What I am saying is if someone else came to power I would tell them, and I would want people to tell them, that you are not a permanent government you are a provisional one. I have the right of participation. Whether I will exploit this right or not is another matter. This government does not have any agenda except that it guarantees the freedoms, the right of people to intervene in politics and the right of people to choose their destiny.

Yanar Mohammed: *so the question here is will you be willing to sit down with Islamists on such provisional government, will there be any precondition to it. What is the situation that you...*

Koorosh Modarresi: No, this is the government after the Islamic government is overthrown.

Yanar Mohammed: *what about 2nd of Khordad[†] for example?*

Koorosh Modarresi: 2nd of Khordad is finished. 2nd of Khordad does not exist any more, It ceased to exist. It is a “dead parrot”. There is no 2nd of Khordad any more. What is happening to 2nd of Khordad movement is they are disintegrating. They have actually already disintegrated. They are disintegrating into two factions or sides, if you like. One faction that is more attached to the ideas of Islamic government and is moving toward “fundamentalists” like Khameneie.. President of Iran, Khatami, himself is leading this side. The other part is going away from the idea of Islamic government, toward right wing or conservative opposition, who for the time being are loosely organized around Monarchists. I do not believe any part of 2nd Khordad “en mass” and not on personal basis will move toward left or toward us. They will move toward right and they will denounce Islamic government and Islamic rule. A character like Akbar Ganji[‡] about 2 years ago switched to a conservatism of the Thatcherism flavor. So talking about 2nd of Khordad in the situation which I am talking about is really irrelevant.

Yanar Mohammed: *so there will be preconditions as to go into these councils*

Koorosh Modarresi: I do not know, we have to see, what I am saying is we should emphasize on both people and our rights. What will happen then I do not know, I am not a prophet to predict exactly who will be there and what the situation will be. This is not a matter predictable from now. What I am saying is we have to influence the situation from both sides, from down on the street by mass

[†] 2nd of Khordad is the so called reformist Islamists associated with the President of Iran Mohammed Khatami.

[‡] Ali Akbar Ganji, one of the prominent philosophical and political leaders of 2nd Khordad.

organization by your own party's might, by your own party's armed forces, and by your own party's mass organizations, as well as from the "above", by taking control of some part of government, if you can, by putting pressure on the government and provide best blue print for a government in such circumstances. But, there is couple of points which we can say and we should be clear about. Such a government will be a provisional government with a clear confined and limited agenda. The agenda is to give people the right to choose, to guarantee the broadest political freedoms, to guarantee the right of people to intervene in politics. Furthermore, in the "theses", the decision on the future of the government has been given to the council of representatives of people. Whatever you do in these circumstances is a matter of tactics. In a situation like the situation in Iraq, for example, if tomorrow the government asks the Worker-communist party of Iraq to join the government, I do not know whether we should say yes or no. Should we refuse such an invitation by definition? Or in principle? I don't think so. We might refuse, and we might not, but by definition as a matter of principle you can not refuse these participations in non socialist governments. On the other hand if the Islamic regime is overthrown and somebody else has come to power, I think we should declare that you are not the sole owner of the power. Other people, including us, have the right to get involved, whether we will use this right or not is our problem which should be decided upon it when the time comes. My strategy whether I am participating in power or not, is to try to capture the power by our party. This is the socialist revolution. This is the aim we have to be clear about.

Yanar Mohammed: *So you did not set the referendum or being part of provisional government as political strategy, it was a tactic to.....*

Koorosh Modarresi: Of course not. It is a tactic; the whole discussion was about tactics. When I put forward those "theses", I thought we had agreed on some principles in our strategy. These

principles were put forward by Mansoor Hekmat under the generic title of “Party and the political power”. The principles I talked about earlier. The main idea being that we will capture the power as a minority, we should be ready to establish the government as a minority, we should declare our program as the law of the land and implement it, and by this act we will bring the majority of people to our side. This was the strategy. Then you have to talk about tactics. Otherwise, just repeating the strategy and writing articles about revolution will not do you any good. You have to define the tactics you need, i.e., to achieve my strategy you should be clear that if this happens, I will do that, if that happens I will do something else etc. Otherwise, you will just repeat yourself. This is the role of leadership in any Party, to analyze different situation and select appropriate tactics. I don’t know since when talking about a provisional government has become a sin. Since when have they denounced Lenin’s thesis in “The Two tactics of Social Democracy”⁶? Most of the works of Lenin in Two Tactics is his rhetoric in the defense of the necessity of a revolutionary provisional government. Mansoor Hekmat has a big chapter in his book on “State in Revolutionary Periods”⁷ on the idea of a provisional revolutionary government. Traditional left has rejected Lenin from a Trotsky’s point of view and they have never accepted Hekmat’s point of view. Suddenly rejection of both Lenin and Hekmat on these issues was the fact of life! Neither “Bolsheviks” nor “Trotskyists” interpretation of Lenin’s thesis on the idea of “democratic” revolution is correct. I believe both interpretations in their nature are “Menshevik”⁸. “Common” understanding of the traditional left is based on this idea that Lenin, in his “April Theses”, has changed his ideas on revolution to those of Trotsky. Which I believe is a totally wrong idea. I think Lenin and Trotsky both were consistent in their views. Lenin has talked about provisional government and Mansoor Hekmat has a lot of literature on the necessity of a provisional government. Necessity of a provisional government. This much further than what I have said! The disagreement does not lay here, it is somewhere else. The disagreement is not on socialism as such, but on the traditional leftist

interpretation of it, and on the fact of the change in the political balance in WPI after Mansoor Hekamt, in favor of the traditional leftist interpretations of Marxism. WPI is heading back into an old alley. Of course I want a socialist revolution. But how can you achieve it? This is the question. Being a revolutionary in rhetoric and praying for the god of all revolutions 5 times a day will not get you anywhere.

Yanar Mohammed: *Koorosh, at some point many rules and principles of the party were broken because we heard that socialism was under threat and I understand from you now that what you forward as provisional government or referendum was no strategy, it was just a tactic. Some of us are getting confused here. We are hearing different stories. I would like to ask the other question here: What gives anybody the right to carry out “character assassination” and to decide that this character is the “right” and when is it Okay to break the rules and the disciplines of the party?*

Koorosh Modarresi: You need to be an *Ayatollah* in the politics to be able to do these kinds of things. If you are an *Ayatollah* then it is easy. Just issue couple of ideological “*fatwa*”, declare “satanic souls” or right-wingers, denounce them all. This is the way ideological, sectarian and cultist view in the left has understood politics. Another face of this reality is that when more than half of the party has left WPI and its new leaders declare it a victory in which the Party is strengthened! You can think this way if you belong to a cult in which the “Devine” has won regardless of your numbers. They do not understand they are weakened by this split. Their position, and our position, in society have weakened. A political party is about political power and about bringing people on board. Political parties try to organize, and try to attract people. Cults and sects, on the other hand are not bothered with this. They are “ideological”. The first thing they are bothered about is their unity in their ideology. So they

don't care if hundreds of people have left them. It is OK as long as the purity of their belief is "preserved". Faith and purity is strength. This is a cult and a sectarian psychology. After Mansoor Hekmat we were aware of these "potentials" in the party, we tried hard to defuse their ideological swirls. We gave them the leadership of the party to bring them to their senses and defuse the race they had started and ideological meaning which they were giving to the very petty competition they had started right after the death of Mansoor Hekmat.

Yanar Mohammed: *in the 4th congress.*

Koorosh Modarresi: Before the 4th congress. I did not want to turn the 4th Congress to a place to resolve any differences or a forum for vicious ideological debates which could have overshadowed the political unity which existed in the party, at least till then. I thought it would have been lunatic and sectarian to turn the congress into a platform to show our differences. I put this objective quite explicitly and clearly in many politburo meetings and central committee plenums. I advocated for a congress which will be a platform to show our strength, to turn the congress into a political event in the Iranian political arena. The point is everybody did agree with this objective and we agreed on this objective for the congress. Somewhere, during the preparations for the congress we noticed a heated effort to lobby votes for an undeclared faction calling itself "left" without regards for the party rules and without any regards for the agreement which we had, moreover constantly denying the charges in the meetings. Knowing the volatile lunatic nature of this traditional attitude, to defuse the situation, in a letter to the central committee I called for an end to the undeclared "race" for leadership. In that letter, I declared that I will not nominate myself for the leadership in the next plenum; furthermore, I nominated Hamid Taqvaei to be the leader of the party. I campaigned for him and got him elected unanimously. The only thing we wanted was to push the party forward on its adopted

policies and create a relaxed atmosphere to discuss what we should do in the real outside world.

They agreed to this arrangement even later in a politburo meeting; and in a plenum they signed a resolution rejecting any “rumors” about a right and left division in the party⁹. But in reality, due to the way they understand Marxism and politics, they lacked the ability to act creatively, the way the Hekmat’s tradition was, to play an active role in creating new opportunities and changing the environment in which we act. They had this “traditional left” strategy of waiting for an eminent revolution to happen and then ride the wave of revolution to victory. Hence, after the 4th Congress, the party went into a “coma” with the only living sign of issuing “super revolutionary” orders and rhetoric, without any new initiatives, without any new policies, without doing anything positive. This situation was criticized by us and this critique sent the other side into swirl of witch hunting to safe guard their control on the situation. Then the whole hidden, denied and denounced right-left story was recreated and put into action.

Yanar Mohammed: *When was that?*

Koorosh Modarresi: A while after the 4th Congress, or after the 20th plenum of the Central Committee. We started to comment how not to follow the events, how to intervene in the situation. And, we asked questions: why do not we have a plan to change the situation? Why we are waiting for revolution to happen? Why we do not have a staged plan to change the political situation, etc¹⁰. We said that we should not wait for the situation to change by itself. It is not guaranteed that any revolution will happen in our favor. Things do not happen in our favor because we are revolutionaries., or people will not join us just because we are telling the truth. We have to change the situation; we have to play an active role in creating the situation on our favor. Suddenly the rift started to open again at the highest level in the party. We said that we need to create a huge political mass party, networks of people around us in Iran who are

active in changing the political arena. We had some ideas and some plans to change the balance of power in Iran to strengthen our position, to strengthen people's position, and they did not have a clue what we were talking about.

The only way they could have defended themselves, the only viable way to defend themselves, and to create some kind of unity in their ranks, was to initiate some kind of "cultural revolution" and then "remember" the importance of something that I have said 2 years before that date, a two year period which we have "lived together" and praising each other. Then, suddenly, out of the blue, they remembered that 2 years ago I had said something and denounced me as a "Satan" to create a sectarian, cultist, and mystique atmosphere and started an evangelistic "light seeing" act, "seeing" the truth. I mean...

Yanar Mohammed: *Socialism?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Yes, they said they have "found" the truth about Socialism! Have you seen their "congress"? It is a complete circus¹¹, an evangelic event. Some guy comes to the podium and declares that he has been a "right winger" for two weeks and now he is "baptized" and has changed to a "left winger"!! "Halleluiah, I saw the light!" would have been the only appropriate conclusion for this ceremony they called the 5th Congress. I might be exaggerating, but, this is the backbone of their mentality and the cause of the infertility of the traditional left. I mean when we go back, this is the same mentality, they cannot grow out of. They are waiting and putting revolutionary phrases together. A "revolutionary rap", you can call it. It is unfortunate. As all the cults and sectarian groups do, they thought they have the right, of course for the good of the people and for the good of revolution, to twist the reality, to twist the facts and demonize someone to baptize the party and exorcise the devil out of the party's revolutionary soul. They did character assassination "in the interest of revolution". This, as I mentioned earlier is in fact the mentality of a sect, this is the mentality of an ideological formation;

and definitely this is not a political party. This is the mentality, which has forced people to testify against their own conscious, to say things in public which they do not believe in¹². You have seen it before; during Stalin's purges, Mao's Cultural Revolution or Iranian religio-political sect, and Mojahedin Khalq's Ideological Revolution, they have put people under pressure to testify against their conscious. They tell them a very well known story: "we are under attack by bourgeoisie and to defend against this bourgeoisie attack you have to come to TV or a meeting and denounce bourgeoisie and praise the ones who have denied your rights or have tortured you. This has happened so many times in history not because of the bad will of people, but, because of tradition or interests of a politico-social movement and hence a certain school of thought and values in which people's right is relative and not absolute. Your human right depends on your political side. This is "political relativism" which is more dangerous and more reactionary than its cultural counterpart.

Yanar Mohammed: *But my question here is that more than half of the central committee have left their long-time party and these are veteran communist politicians, they have left their party to join your newly founded party, is it that they were your followers, or was this about something else, new precedent in the party that you have mentioned as a cultural revolution and some tendencies that they did not define as worker communism?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Definitely they are not "my followers". They are, as you mentioned, veteran communist politicians and party activists and they do not follow anyone but their own judgment on real issues. If you ask anyone in the Hekmatist party why you have left WPI, they will give you a clear answer, they have done this because they think the WPI's new leadership has turned the party to the traditional left policies which we, alongside Mansoor Hekmat, have fought against. The Party has abandoned Hekmat's theses on

“the party and political power”, which we believe is the corner stone of any conscious political act by a revolutionary party. They have abandoned his theses on the danger of dark scenario, they have abandoned his theses on socialist revolution, they have gone back to the traditional definition of socialism, traditional definition of socialist revolution and traditional definition of activism and they are passive. By passive I do not mean “motionless”, but without an action which changes the world, as Marx puts it. An anarchist might be very active, but anarchists, in my view, are passive, because they cannot change the world. If you can not change the reality, whatever you do, even if you bang your head against a stone wall, you are not active, you are jumping up and down, and you are not changing the world. The traditional radical left has always adopted some kind of anarcho-passive policy. In words they are anarchist; in reality they are passive because they are not able to move the society forward even one step. Others socially active players, be it Islamists or Nationalists, have set the stage and the rules for the society and for they themselves.

Back to our discussion; contrary to what the new leadership of WPIran is claiming, people who left WPIran are not Koorosh’s followers or pro-Koorosh. They are Worker-communists and Hekmatists. The split was not about my theses but about their tradition and the change in the political settings of WPIran after Mansoor Hekmat. The new leadership of WPIran is amazed why the majority of the Central Committee who left WPIran are not talking about those discussions which we had two years ago. Well, to be honest they pretend that they are amazed; this “amazement” is a smoke screen to hide the change in WPI’s positions in favor of the subdued trend in the party during Hekmat’s period. Our problem with WPIran is that the party has changed direction and there is no room for changing it by political means. No body has changed ideology, what has changed is the balance of power between Hekmatists and the traditional left in the party after Mansoor Hekmat and we were unsuccessful to keep the party’s character as before.

What I am emphasizing is that there have been two trends in the Worker-communist Party of Iran, we lived together for 12 years and we struggled against each other all these 12 years. You can see this struggle in every meeting, literally in every meeting, during Mansoor Hekmat's period. After Hekmat was gone the balance of power changed, we could not control it anymore, and we did our best to prevent this split but unity needs a partner. You cannot unite with yourself. If you do not have a partner who recognizes a common law, a common rule, a common interest which should act as an anchor in "troubled waters", there is no chance you can stay together. Even in sport's game, if there is no rules for one side and rules only apply to the other side the game can not be played. This trend in WPIran was not obeying any rules or in fact any common sense and interest, except its sectarian ones. They said they would not accept the Plenum of Central Committee's authority, which by our rules after congress has the highest authority in the party. They called for some kind of assembly of members abroad who had the money and the passport to travel to Germany, and they called it the "5th congress". This assembly was anything but a congress. Congress is the assembly of the representatives of different organizations in the party, this assembly was not by any means, or by any party rules a congress. The congress should have been called by central Committee not by anybody else.

Yanar Mohammed: *What was your reason for not accepting the congress?*

Koorosh Modarresi: It was not a congress; it was not representing the party.

Yanar Mohammed: *before the split, the idea was not to go to the congress?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Of course we had to go to the 5th Congress. We said we will attend the congress, but this meeting was a sham and not a congress. We were clear about the situation in the party. We looked at the whole situation from a social, and not ideological and sectarian, point of view, as a movement, we have said this many times that we do not have any interest in discrediting WPI, we do not have any interest in discrediting its leaders. We had given this image about ourselves during the last 25 years that these communists are different from others, they do not discredit themselves, each other, they are modern, they are civilized, they have the interest of their movement in mind. We announced that we are not going to the 5th congress to knock on every member's door to discredit part of its leadership as opportunists. This is not the struggle that we want to get involved in. We will go to a congress, which the Party should legally have. Let's go to the Plenum of the Central Committee. We do not have the rules for an "emergency congress". So we have to ratify the rules in the Plenum of the CC. Let's clarify how we should call the congress, who is calling it, how the election should be held, how the organization inside Iran should be represented and other things in this nature. Suddenly they said no we do not accept the Central Committee and we ourselves call upon the congress, upon the "members" to come to Germany. This was a dirty trick.

Yanar Mohammed: *There was a call to the members to clear their stand and decide their position from the differences. When I heard this, I thought this was putting too much pressure on the members and negating the role of the leadership.*

Koorosh Modarresi: Well, this is the core of the ideological revolution and evangelic inquisition they called upon. They put couple of "ideological questions" forward and asked every body to clear his/her position on those questions, "denounce the infidel", Koorosh Modarresi, and "baptize" him/herself. They sat up a questionnaire for members of the party. Ask them to declare that they

“believe in revolution”, they “believe in socialism”, etc. They put everybody under pressure to “take a stand”. “Take a stand” and “denounce Koorosh” was the buzzword of the Cultural Revolution to change the face and character of the party. This was really shocking. NOT investigating people’s thoughts was one of the hallmarks of our communist tradition against the traditional left. They suddenly changed all the definition of the organization and they “bypassed”, as they themselves called it, the party rules. So, we had two choices, we the majority which we had in the Central Committee, we could have convened the Plenum of the Central Committee and relieved them from duty, amend the Politburo and select a new leader. We could have even expelled them. That was one option which we had.

Yanar Mohammed: *What do you mean all of them?*

Koorosh Modarresi: All those who had declared that they did not accept the authority of the party rules and it’s Central Committee. They were a minority and they were rebels against the party in a sense. We had the right and we had that opportunity to expel them. We thought in long term this is not in the interest of the socialist revolution and the trend of Hekmat. In any case they would have gone to this fake congress of theirs and if we had adjoined the Plenum of the CC, which we could have done, we would have ended up with two parties with the same name and one attributing itself to the plenum of its CC and the other to an assembly called congress. This would have brought more confusion. We would have faced the society with a more classic sectarian view of the communists and the traditional dirty struggle between two leftist parties. In this case we would have lost all the credibility and nobody would have won this struggle. Even if we had won the battle by members vote we would have lost the war to the conservative opposition (Monarchists) in the society. We were not interested in doing that and the other part, they did not have any anchors, and they were spinning without an anchor. We came to the conclusion that if we can not save all the party, we can save more . than half of it. If half of the party wants to go

through this metamorphosis of changing to a social “frog” we might be able to save the rest and keep the window of opportunity open to influence the Iranian politics .. That would have been more in the interest of socialism than just staying and fighting a vicious fight which no body would have won, in addition to getting involved in a dirty fight and character assassinations etc. This was not our world and this was not our tradition. We were confident about ourselves and our capabilities, we left everything, money, TV, Radio, everything in the hope of saving ourselves and the society from an ugly, time-consuming and politically wasteful skirmish which would have damaged Worker-communism and Mansoor Hekmat more that starting from “square one”. Even if we had won in a congress, it would have been a loss for communism and for socialism. So we left everything. We said “you keep the name and the assets” we will take the tradition.

Yanar Mohammed: *the name?*

Koorosh Modarresi: We could have kept the name, the assets, everything. But, then at the end of the day we would have had two parties with the same name; which is a classical history of what we have seen with this kind of mystic left. They could have simply got us involved in this fight for another 2 years. And, in my opinion, that was not the way to go forward.

Yanar Mohammed: *We are coming now to the part were the Worker-communist Party of Iraq gets involved. As you know, there was almost an immediate response from WP Iraq in support of your party as the continuation of the line of Mansoor Hekmat and by that consequently the Worker-communist Party of Iran decided to attack the WP Iraq and to denounce it of representing the right-wing as well. This created a dilemma for us in Iraq; so far we have followed a strategy that was planed by both parties; a strategy,*

which the WPIran had a major role in formulating and adopting. It was strange for us to hear that our party was attacked as a right-winger just because we decided to take one of the sides.

Koorosh Modarresi: Well, this is again a sectarian or cult mentality. If you want to characterize a party and to label it, as right or left, you need to look at its policy toward the subject of its activity in social dimensions. For example, if you want to say WPIraq is right or left you have to look at what it is doing in Iraq, what its policy toward the government in Iraq is, towards socialism in Iraq and towards organizing people in Iraq is, or what its tactic and strategy is, then you can decide whether this party is right or left. But if you are a cult or you belong to your sect you do not need this method. You can judge by ideology, by the way people relate to you via their thoughts and not their position in real political or social movement. If I am not a follower of your spiritual leader then it does not matter what I do socially and politically. I am out of the picture, I am right, you are left. I am against the spirit and you are against me. Society and social practice and position are nothing and ideology and thought is everything, this is the kernel of sectarianism and cultism. My mentality, my ideology identifies and defines me and for you I am “disconnected” from reality. Otherwise, if someone has a little bit of concern about people and cares about what is happening in Iraq, he/she would have been concerned about weakening WPIraq, despite the difference which one might have with the way they think. You and I belong to the same movement which is a social and political movement before any ideology. We care about the interests of our movement. I understand that the only hope which people in Iraq have got is this party, good or bad whatever it is, this is the only hope. WPIraq is the only hope, is the only light in the sky of Baghdad or Iraq and it is the light at the end of the dark scenario tunnel in Iraq. I cannot simply and irresponsibly denounce you because you do not think the way I do. If I do so, this would have been a traditional, sectarian, backward, irresponsible attitude toward the reality. With

such an ideological attitude one does not realize the reality and hence can not change it by definition. This is the core of the impotency of the traditional and marginal left. Obviously, WPIran has taken the same attitude towards the Iranian society. This attitude does not give a damn about what happened to the party, it did not feel any responsibility towards the social dimensions of its activities.

Yanar Mohammed: *In Iraq we are thought of as the extreme left and we are causing a headache for the bourgeoisie. We still do not consider ourselves action-oriented enough, i.e., to focus on political power and reach out for it; to mobilize a social movement in the dimensions needed. We still think we have not completely implemented the results of Mansoor Hekmat's tradition in politics. For us it is a major insult to be called a "right-winger". This, by itself, is not fair. Secondly, if they keep attacking us, how would any future cooperation be possible? Thirdly, they have decided to create a party within the WPIraq and called it a "faction". WPIraq's leadership has refused to accept a faction based on this platform. Now they still try to create a split in WPIraq. Our cadres and our members wonder whether WPIran knows or cares about what we are going through. Do they know how hard the dark scenario is on people of Iraq and that we are the only hope? How could they do this to us? Is it possible that they have prioritized their own objectives such as the size of their group or the support for their group? We are in that political black hole of the universe and we feel very much betrayed, because there are attempts to split the party. It started with the faction which was refused by our leadership because it did not have a political platform. It was a faction in support of another Party on a platform irrelevant to what we were doing. Now they are trying for the mobilization of our*

members against WP Iraq's leadership in a way which is totally unaccepted among political parties.

Koorosh Modarresi: This is very unfortunate, during the last 12 years we have tried to strengthen the Iraqi Worker-communist Party, we have shared everything with each other, we have been different names rather than different parties, and we have the same interests and belong to the same movement. WPIran has stepped away from this traditional Hekmatist line and it does not recognize the society, or better to say ,it does not associate itself with society, an attitude which has been the point of departure for the communism of Marx and Hekmat. WPIran, after the current split is more involved with its own small world. They have declared the split in WPIran a “victory”! Something which has “strengthened” communism or socialism! This is simply ridiculous. This turn of WPIran will weaken people’s optimism towards Communism. We have a huge task in front of us. We need to reclaim the trust which people had in Worker-communism. WPIran is not bothered with these aspects any more. Not because its leadership is “selfish” or “immoral” but, because they do not have the necessary political concepts. They are not bothered because they are less political animals and more ideological one. They are more like a cult or a sect which define their world in terms of their ideas and ideology more than realities and political movements.

If you are able to see political movements and the political tendencies in Iraq, then you will recognize the place of WP Iraq as the tip of an iceberg with a massive body inside the society. It does not matter if the tip of the Iceberg is not as clean as you like, I do not mean it is not clean this is just for the sake of the argument, you characterize the party by its social and political position and you will feel more responsible, you have to recognize the interests of your own movement .

Yanar Mohammed: *And that we, the Worker-communists in Iraq stand a chance to bring a change to the lives of people?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Well, this is the only chance we have got. Big or small this is the only chance.

Yanar Mohammed: *Back to the issue of calling the split a victory by WPIran; Saddam Hussein has taught us a very hard lesson. Whenever we got defeated and devastated, he called it “victory”. I want to know your opinion what this split mean to the workers in Iran, to the youth and to the women.*

Koorosh Modarresi: Confusion and disappointment. We have lost the trust. We have lost people’s trust and I think this split has been a blow to our chance to take the political power and a fortune for the conservative right wing opposition (Monarchists) in the balance of power between left and right in the political arena. We would have been much stronger in the party if we had stayed together. We had stayed together for 12 years and we could have stayed together for another 12 years. We might have had a split as a result of some kind of social event in Iran. Any party can have a split. If we have had the interest of our movement before us then we would have recognized that these people, everybody are the *crème de la crème* of Iranian socialist revolution and “character assassinating” them is a claim against the reality. With the loss of half of a party, only as a cult you can claim victory. Maybe someone has retained the “purity” of its ideas but socially and politically, this is a loss. Maybe you have rejected the Satan and now you feel purer ideologically, so you feel stronger. But, in reality we have decreased from, say, 5000 to 2500, this fact means we are weaker in numbers.

Furthermore, people thought of us as different kind of Marxists. Mansoor Hekmat was indeed a different kind of Marxist. He was a political banner for different kind of socialism a social movement

rather than a cult. He tried hard to create a political party. We have to do it without him. This makes life more difficult, but we have the chance and that is the interesting and exciting fact. You can change the current situation for a better one.

Yanar Mohammed: *Not an ideological group?*

Koorosh Modarresi: No, not an ideological formation. What distinguishes us from WPIran is not only our insistence on the theoretical contributions of Mansoor Hekmat to Marxism, which I believe are major contributions, but, more importantly, is the way we have politically behaved differently from the others, for example, the way he formulated the possibility of a dark scenario in Iran and why you should be careful about it, this is our problem. I mean if you are an ideological sect, you might say I do not care I do not give it a damn and do exactly what WPIran is doing to WPIraq.

Yanar Mohammed: *exactly.*

Koorosh Modarresi: I mean if you are associated to a movement in the society, then you are concerned about the possibility of the dark scenario, or how you get to power. You need to step away from agitation and propaganda, you need to sit down and tell me how the socialist revolution will happen. Is this a “resurrection” which is doomed to happen? Will it happen by itself or some party will bring it about? And how does that party make it happen? How in the real world do you organize it? Answering these types of questions will distinguish us from WPIran in the future. Answering these types of questions were, in fact, that which distinguished Hekmat from other current Marxists.

WPIran has turned back to one of the social traditions which took part in its formation and was indeed dormant for the last 12 years. We could have seen its presence by WPIran’s massive inertia to move towards a political party during Mansoor Hekmat’s period. I believe WPIran, now, will be accepted more in the league of the

traditional radical left than before. WPIran is now arguing the way the traditional left has argued for the last 60 years or so. They belong to the same social “reality”. A tradition in which people become renegades, and they become revisionist, etc. a tradition of hatred and denunciation.

This is not that party which we built with Mansoor Hekmat anymore. People are disappointed and we have a huge task of strengthening the party again, actually building a new party and making it known. Many people do know us, but we have a huge task of building a new political party. I have stressed on this fact that our aim is not to recover those principles which were lost after Hekmat’s death. Our major task is to build a mass political party, which WPIran has never been one and Hekmat was trying to build. In the 14th plenum of the CC of WPIran, Mansoor Hekmat said WPIran is not a political party it is much closer to the traditional radical leftist groups. We have build a real political party, a responsible party and a party which creates opportunity for a socialist revolution on the real ground, a party which changes the balance of power in reality and organizes, knits, or weaves people together and make socialism happen; a party which does not wait for a socialist revolution but makes it happen, organizes it the way the October Revolution was organized.

Yanar Mohammed: *Koorosh, can you summarize the differences, to give us a better understanding of what happened in WPIran?*

Koorosh Modarresi: We tried to create a communist mass political party on the common ground of a tradition radical leftist past and in coalition with this trend. Mansoor Hekmat was our front runner and leader. WPIran was always a stage for the argument and between the two trends and its situation represented the balance of power between the two trends. This party has always been able either to move forward to its future, which Hekmat has portrayed, or it could have gone back to its ancient past. This was a battle between past and future of WPIran. We were right in the middle of the path, between

future and the past, when we lost Mansoor Hekmat. The difference is simply like this; we want to create a mass political party, a mass socialist party which can organize the socialist revolution on the ground and is not waiting for it to happen by itself. We insist on the theses put forward by Mansoor Hekmat under the general titles like “political party”, “political party and political power”, “political party and society” and “state in revolutionary periods”. That is the strategy that we should take, that is the kind of party that we should make.

The other side believes in the very much traditional radical left politics. They are revolutionary because they believe in a revolution, they are radical because they are radical, but they can not materialize anything.

The difference is simply that our party will be a political mass organization; it will have a very active role in politics to change the situation on the ground and organize the socialist revolution. Right from now, our aim is to replace the Islamic regime by ourselves not by anybody else, not any kind of other revolution but by our own revolution; the socialist revolution. If something else happens, and another revolution is formed, then we will have our tactics toward that revolution.

Maybe for the time being, noticing the differences with the naked eye might not be that easy, but very quickly, you will see the differences. I think we will have different faces. Our images will change and we will have an image of more of an “interventionist” party which gets involved in everything and has tactics for everything and tries to knit and weave people together, to organize people, to change the balance of power. We will try to take the power as a minority, whenever we know that we can keep it based on a popular support and our own strength. We know we have to form a government as a minority, and we are not ashamed of saying that, in fact we think we must be crystal clear about it and if there is one spot of hesitation in our strategy, we will not be able to do this job. WPIran has moved towards its traditional radical leftist past.

Traditional radical left has always attacked Hekmat for his thesis on political power and revolution calling it a recipe for a coup, they way WPIran is currently attacking us exactly with the same arguments.

Yanar: *coup d'état?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Exactly, coup d'état. Then they said that Hekmat's theses on the possibility of a dark scenario in the wake of the collapse of the Islamic Regime are a recipe for collaboration with the bourgeoisie, with monarchist and the right-wing opposition. WPIran now, believes that due to "new circumstances", naming the formation of the revolution as such in Iran they do not need any of Hekmat's policies anymore. How convenient! They claim there is a situation in Iran which makes "party and political power" thesis not necessary, which makes the dark scenario not possible, and makes state in the revolutionary period thesis not applicable. They have "bridged" over all the differences which have distinguished Worker-communism from traditional radical left. WPIran has changed to a very standard, radical left party which is just focused on propaganda. WPIran has changed to an agitprop organization.

Yanar Mohammed: *Is this a recipe for waiting for a revolution to happen by itself?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Yes it is. This is the whole idea, being satisfied with the creation of some kind of agitation and propaganda (agitprop) machine. But, the problem is agitprop machine can not materialize revolution. You need a political party. This was a formula actually used by Mansoor Hekmat during the last plenum he attended. He said WPIran is still closer to an agitprop machine rather than a political party. They agitate, they make propaganda, they have radio, and they have TV, they write compositions call them literature and they try for form a ...

Yanar Mohammed: *Pressure?*

Koorosh Modarresi: They try to change by enlightening people. Let me put it this way, they are enlightening peoples' minds but they do not move people forward and do not define political objectives and define political tactics and hence they do not need to organize people. They can not organize people; they don't need it. Things happen by themselves in their system. Theses which were put forward were nothing but tactics to deal with a complicated situation. These are tactical theses for given situations which we might run into. They did not understand that they do not need such tactics. They think by chanting "Socialism", "Socialism", socialism will come true. And if they enlighten people's mind they will get the revolution. That is the traditional infertile method of forming a pressure group which we have seen in traditional left

Yanar Mohammed: *Unfortunately character assassination is what they have used and it has worked both ways.*

Koorosh Modarresi: Yes, this is ugly. We have told them many times that the more you assassinate somebody's character from this side you will assassinate your own character too, because people will say, this guy which you claim was this and that was your leader, or member of Politburo. You have praised them, you have lived with them and suddenly they have become "infidels"? If you are a political party, then simply reject the theses which you do not approve. Why you care about people's ideology? This is the difference between a political party and a cult. If you are in a political party, then you put any theses for vote and you do not vote for them if you don't like them and this is the end of the story. But if you are a cult, then here comes the story about the ideology, inquisition into the ideological motives, investigating people's ideology. Inquisition is about searching people's souls and ideology. They do not see communism as political movement, hence, they do not see the need for a political party. If you are a cult or some kind of sect, then there is another story. You have to get involved in some

kind of vicious attack and character assassination and demonizing people.

Yanar Mohammed: *I think this sums up a large part of the story, I would like you to address the workers in Iran, the youth, the women who had high hopes for this party and who were given a very strong blow by this split in the party. What will you say to them?*

Koorosh Modarresi: Well, I recognize, there has been a very big blow against the hopes for the possibility of changing Iran for a better world. Mansoor Hekmat said, WPIran has created a window, a small window of opportunity in Iranian politics, a small window he stressed, to change the society for good, to bring about a socialist revolution. This event, the crises and the split, worked against this opportunity. It almost closed this window. Our decision to resign from WPIran and founding Hekmatist Party is nothing but putting our feet in the doorway to prevent it from shutting. We have kept this window just open. Opening this window of opportunity wide again is our task. Fulfilling this task is not possible without recognizing the blow and starting the reconstruction. I believe we will be getting people's trust in Worker-communism and show that whatever they have trusted in Worker-communist is emanating from our Party. Worker-communist was a mixture of similarities with other left and distinguishable characteristics from them. Whatever was distinguishable from other left, I believe, is on our side and the similarity with the traditional left has stayed on the other side. We will do our best to organize people in Iran to reconstruct their trust, and to organize a mass political party. This is our duty. We are doing our best to put these things behind. Life is ahead of us and still we have an opportunity to contribute a lot. We have the opportunity and capability to change the society, to bring about the socialist revolution in Iran to bring freedom, to bring equality, to bring welfare and to bring happiness to that society. Still we have a fair chance.

Yanar Mohammed: *And definitely you have the support of the WPIraq, the workers, the youth, and the women...*

Koorosh Modarresi: I would like to say a couple of things in this regard. I think the support of the WPIraq was very important. One of the important factors is that WPIraq is a real organization involved in one the most complicated situations in the world. The hope of many in Iraq is with this party. These are not people drinking in Cafés on the side walk and discuss politics. This is a real party with real people who are the only hope in Iraq. The support of WPIraq brought indeed a lot of confidence and helps us to put Worker-communism back on the political map of Iran. WPIraq's support shows that we have been able to attract right people. Another factor is that the balance of power in the worker-communist movement .at large, inside the socialist movement in the global sense has shifted in our favor with this support of WPIraq. WPIraq's support has opened the opportunity for us to show to all interested parties in the world that more important issues are involved, than what WPIran is claiming. We have attracted the attention of many socialist and communist organizations around the world, I receive emails, I receive phone calls from them and this has been possible because of the WPIraq. I think we need to get involved in the problems of Worker-communism in Iraq and in Iran. We are two different names simply for the same task so I hope that we will have more fruitful and more active collaboration with each other. I appreciate the, practically unanimous, support of the leadership of the WPIraq, the cadres of WPIraq, all its members. And we are proud of getting this support and thank you Yanar for giving me the opportunity to talk to you.

Yanar Mohammed: *Thanks Koorosh Modarresi*

Koorosh Modarresi: sure.

Yanar Mohammed: *The best of lack*

Koorosh Modarresi: same for you.

¹ **Mansoor Hekmat**, *Our Differences, autumn 1989*

² **Mansoor Hekmat**, *ibid.*

³ Mansoor Hekmat, *The Experience of Workers' Revolution in the Soviet Union; Outline of a Socialist Critique, 1986*

⁴ **Koorosh Modarresi**, “*Collapse of the Islamic Republic and the Role of the Worker-communist Party of Iran*” an internal WPIran politburo paper for discussion, August 24 2002, for the original Persian document see: <http://206.220.209.205/03-qatname-manshur-h/220824km.html>

⁵ **Koorosh Modarresi**, “Worker-communist Party of Iran and the downfall of the Islamic Republic, a guideline for the leadership of the party and not for publication” 28 August 2004, for the original Persian document see: <http://206.220.209.205/03-qatname-manshur-h/220828km.html>

⁶ Lenin, V.I., “The Two tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution”, collected works, Vol. 9, Forth English edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977.

⁷ **Mansoor Hekmat**, “*State in Revolutionary Periods*” No. 1985

⁸ **Koorosh Modarresi**, *Lectures on Analytical Review of Russian Revolution*, Marx Society, 2000-2001, <http://www.marxhekmatsociety.com/russiaindex.htm>

⁹ See the joint declaration of the politburo and the leader of the party which was adopted unanimously by the 20th plenum of the central committee in <http://www.hekmatist.com/>

¹⁰ See for example Koorosh Modarresi, earthquake and communist organization, interview with Youth Communist, and Rahman Hoseinzade, A plan for action, internal party seminar, <http://www.helkmatist.com>

¹¹ See the video of the 5th Congress of WPIran at:

<http://www.rowzane.com/>

¹² See Mehrnoosh Moosavi's file on her "removal" as the editor of "Rahai Zan", the paper of the Organization for the Liberation of Women, at <http://www.hekmatist.com/> Just for an example.