

## PRISON, ANOTHER ARENA OF STRUGGLE

By Mahmoud Salehi & Najibe Salehzadeh

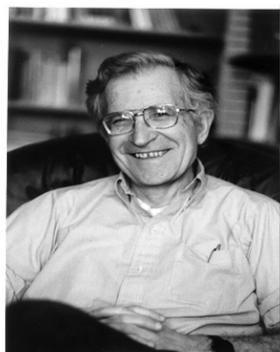
**S**o in the end Ali Nejati, Head of Haft Tappeh sugar-cane factory's Worker's Union, friend and defender of all workers and those who live hand to mouth, has been imprisoned. Servants of capitalism have thrown him into jail for the crime of leading the workers of Haft Tappeh to organize and educate regarding their rights. Servants of capitalism have thrown him into jail so that the workers who've entered the arena and activists throughout Iran withdraw from the pursuit of their unpaid wages and those of their fellow workers. Indeed, Ali joined his four friends and colleagues, Fereidoon Nikoofard, Ghorban Alipoor, Jalil Ahmadi and ...

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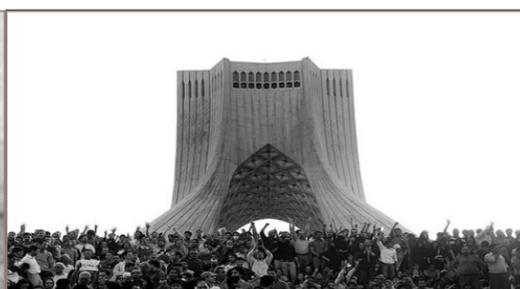
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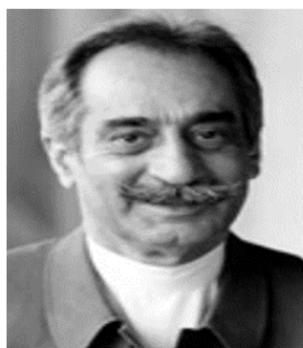
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Workers of Haft Tappeh sugar-cane company need a class solidarity movement for the freedom of their leaders >>Page 2

By Komala TV

Ali Nejati, President of Haft-Tappeh sugar cane company's Workers Union who has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment by the Islamic regime' judiciary, was arrested on Saturday morning, November 1 and transferred to Dezful city prison by security forces. Nejati was previously imprisoned in March 2009 and released on bail on April 14 after 37 days in the intelligence prisons of Ahvaz and Shush cities.

The regime has also sentenced four members of the workers union: Fereydoun Nikufard, Jalil Ahmadi and Qorban Alipur to six months' imprisonment and Mohammad Heydarimehr to four months of imprisonment. All four were arrested in the past few days and are now in prison.

The arrest of workers union members is happening while more than a thousand workers of this sugar-cane company went on strike on Monday November 9 in objection to not getting paid, without result.

It is obvious that these five leader workers and fighters who were elected and popular representatives and members of the workers syndicate have been sentenced because of their objection in 2007 to unpaid wages and for their efforts to form a Haft Tappeh syndicate and in a word because they defend the basic rights of workers.

According to the court verdict of Dezful city court these worker activists have not only been sentenced to imprisonment but also been banned from undertaking any human rights activity for themselves or others. They are now prohibited from entering their workplace for three years.

The cruel sentences against these five worker leaders show the barbarism of the capitalist regime. These

## Workers of Haft Tappeh sugar-cane company need a class solidarity movement for the freedom of their leaders

workers as others of their economic standing at Haft-Tappeh have no other income than selling their work power. In 2007 after repeated requests for their wages after several months of not getting paid began their fight for survival to save their families from hunger. Dezful's unjust court - a defender of capitalism - has sentenced these workers to imprisonment because of their efforts for their



basic rights. But the truth is that the management of the company is guilty. It's the management that has not paid workers on time and it's the management that has imposed the poverty and hunger and caused many more social problems for the workers' families.

The other crime worker leaders have been accused of, their efforts to create a worker syndicate, is one of the basic rights of workers. Without the freedom to form a union workers cannot demand their rights in society or so much as make their rightful claims that are legally written on paper.

Worker unions prevent the capitalism system from reducing the social aspects of workers' lives. Why should capitalists and factory management have the support of organizations such as Islamic

associations, the Labour Department Council or the Ministry of work, security forces, government and all regime oppressive organizations, but workers don't even have the right to create their own syndicate or union.

There's no doubt that Haft Tappeh sugar-cane workers will not be silent against this regime's apparent attack of their basic rights. They know well that these worker activ-

ists are in prison for defending the basic rights of all workers. The workers of Haft-Tappeh sugar-cane factory have shown a good example of the power of class solidarity to other Iranian workers through their struggle in recent years.

By pursuing their campaign of continual strikes, by bringing the struggle out of the factory environment with demonstrations in the city centre of Shush and gaining the support of the people and their families, the workers have renewed their power. These workers established their union through such struggles, and by their actions have paved the way for the formation of worker unions despite the limitations of the Islamic Republic. These workers drove the security and repressive forces out of the factory by their collabora-

tion, and with the slogan "Prisoners workers must be freed", eventually forced the regime to release the workers.

Currently, workers can only stand against this obvious attack by the regime with their protests and gatherings with their families and by gaining the wide support of the people in the city and region and eventually force the regime to release prisoners workers. We must demand the unconditional and immediate release for these five and all the prisoners workers in our protests and the release of political prisoners must be among our demands. We must respond to Ali Nejati, President of the Haft Tappeh Workers Union's call and invitation and turn the bursary decalred by him into a Haft-Tappeh workers resistance fund and one for the resistance of workers everywhere. We need to help these workers families financially and act so that they don't feel the pressure of worry and financial hardship preventing them from reaching their goals and basic rights and all they have fought for until now. Organized and united protests of thousands of Haft Tappeh workers and their families with the wide support of the people in the city and region, the support of other labour centres, the efforts of workers institutions and organizations and unions inside and outside Iran to mark the beginning of a class solidarity movement, has the power to make the Islamic regime retreat from its attack and get the workers released but also to make the queue for revolutionary struggle stronger and more powerful for the freedom of political prisoners.

Noam Chomsky is widely known for his critique of U.S. foreign policy, and for his work as a linguist. Less well known is his ongoing support for libertarian socialist objectives. In a special interview done for Red and Black Revolution, Chomsky gives his views on anarchism and marxism, and the prospects for socialism now. The interview was conducted in May 1995 by Kevin Doyle.

**RBR:** First off, Noam, for quite a time now you've been an advocate for the anarchist idea. Many people are familiar with the introduction you wrote in 1970 to Daniel Guerin's *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, but more recently, for instance in the film *Manufacturing Dissent*, you took the opportunity to highlight again the potential of anarchism and the anarchist idea. What is it that attracts you to anarchism?

**CHOMSKY:** I was attracted to anarchism as a young teenager, as soon as I began to think about the world beyond a pretty narrow range, and haven't seen much reason to revise those early attitudes since. I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children, our control over the fate of future generations (the basic moral imperative behind the environmental movement, in my view), and much else. Naturally this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy, and so on. But not only these. That is what I have always understood to be the essence of anarchism: the conviction that the burden of proof has to be placed on authority, and that it should be dismantled if that burden cannot be met. Sometimes the burden can be met. If I'm taking a walk with my grandchildren and they dart

## Noam Chomsky on Anarchism, Marxism & Hope for the Future

out into a busy street, I will use not only authority but also physical coercion to stop them. The act should be challenged, but I think it can readily meet the challenge. And there are other cases; life is a complex affair, we understand very little about humans and society, and grand pronouncements are generally more a source of harm than of benefit. But the perspective is a valid one, I think, and can lead us quite a long way.

Beyond such generalities, we begin to look at cases, which is where the questions of human interest and concern arise.

**RBR:** It's true to say that your ideas and critique are now more widely known than ever before. It should also be said that your views are widely respected. How do you think your support for anarchism is received in this context? In particular, I'm interested in the response you receive from people who are getting interested in politics for the first time and who may, perhaps, have come across your views. Are such people surprised by your support for anarchism? Are they interested?

**CHOMSKY:** The general intellectual culture, as you know, associates 'anarchism' with chaos, violence, bombs, disruption, and so on. So people are often surprised when I speak positively of anarchism and identify myself with leading traditions within it. But my impression is that among the general public, the basic ideas seem reasonable when the clouds are cleared away. Of course, when we turn to specific matters - say, the nature of families, or how an economy would work in a society that is more free and just - questions and controversy arise. But that is as it should be. Physics can't really explain how water flows from the tap in your sink. When we turn to vastly more complex questions of human significance, understanding is very thin, and there is plenty of room for disagreement, experimentation, both intellectual and real-life exploration of possibilities, to help us learn more.

**RBR:** Perhaps, more than any other idea, anarchism has suffered from the problem of misrepresentation. Anarchism can mean many things to many people. Do you often find yourself having to explain what it is that you mean by anarchism? Does the misrepresentation of anarchism bother you?

**CHOMSKY:** All misrepresentation is a nuisance. Much of it can be traced back to structures of power that have an interest in preventing understanding, for pretty obvious reasons. It's well to recall David Hume's *Principles of Government*. He expressed surprise that people ever submitted to their rulers. He concluded that since *Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. 'Tis therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular*. Hume was very astute - and incidentally, hardly a libertarian by the standards of the day. He surely underestimates the efficacy of force, but his observation seems to me basically correct, and important, particularly in the more free societies, where the art of controlling opinion is therefore far more refined. Misrepresentation and other forms of befuddlement are a natural concomitant. So does misrepresentation bother me? Sure, but so does rotten weather. It will exist as long as concentrations of power engender a kind of commissar class to defend them. Since they are usually not very bright, or are bright enough to know that they'd better avoid the arena of fact and argument, they'll turn to misrepresentation, vilification, and other devices that are available to those who know that they'll be protected by the various means available to the powerful. We should understand why all this occurs, and unravel it as best we can. That's part of the project of liberation - of ourselves and others, or more reasonably, of peo-

ple working together to achieve these aims.

Sounds simple-minded, and it is. But I have yet to find much commentary on human life and society that is not simple-minded, when absurdity and self-serving posturing are cleared away.

**RBR:** How about in more established left-wing circles, where one might expect to find greater familiarity with what anarchism actually stands for? Do you encounter any surprise here at your views and support for anarchism?

**CHOMSKY:** If I understand what you mean by *established left-wing circles*, there is not too much surprise about my views on anarchism, because very little is known about my views on anything. These are not the circles I deal with. You'll rarely find a reference to anything I say or write. That's not completely true of course. Thus in the US (but less commonly in the UK or elsewhere), you'd find some familiarity with what I do in certain of the more critical and independent sectors of what might be called *established left-wing circles*, and I have personal friends and associates scattered here and there. But have a look at the books and journals, and you'll see what I mean. I don't expect what I write and say to be any more welcome in these circles than in the faculty club or editorial board room - again, with exceptions.

The question arises only marginally, so much so that it's hard to answer.

**RBR:** A number of people have noted that you use the term 'libertarian socialist' in the same context as you use the word 'anarchism'. Do you see these terms as essentially similar? Is anarchism a type of socialism to you? The description has been used before that *anarchism is equivalent to socialism with freedom*. Would you agree with this basic equation?

[Continued on 14]

## Pre-December 7 Intimidation and Arrests

Iran has increased its pressure on student activists ahead of National Student Day on December 7. Throughout Iran a dozen students are reported to have been jailed this week, including eight student activists arrested in Tehran on November 19.

Abbas Hakimzadeh, a senior member of Iran's largest reformist student group, who had recently been released from jail after spending 120 days in solitary confinement was reportedly arrested at his home in the early hours of November 19. His personal items, including his computer, were confiscated. Seven other student activists were arrested a few hours later during a raid by security forces at the home of one of the students. The detained students are members of the Liberal Students of Iran's Universities, a group which campaigned for reformist cleric Mehdi Karroubi during Iran's presidential campaign.

The Paris-based spokesman of the group, Saeed Ghasseminejad, told RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) that the arrests are a move by the authorities to prevent students from protesting against the government on December 7. Ghasseminejad, predicts that the protest will go on despite the pressure and arrests, and that opposition against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad goes beyond a few students and is widespread throughout Iran.

A Tehran-based student activist who did not want to be named for security concerns told RFE/RL that authorities are turning Tehran's notorious Evin prison into a university with the number of students they've arrested ahead of Student Day.

On November 19 two more students were reportedly arrested in Tabriz. At least one student is reported to have been arrested in Shiraz earlier this week. Another student activist, Salman Sima, was arrested on November 14 in Tehran.

The arrests come as a prominent figure in Iran's student movement, Abdollah Momeni, was given an eight-year prison term in connection with the protests that shook Iran following the disputed June 12 presidential vote.

A colleague of Momeni's in the policy-making committee of the Graduates Association of Iran, Mostafa Khosravi, told RFE/RL's Radio Farda that the heavy sentence against Momeni is a warning to any students planning to join an anti-Ahmadinejad protest.

## Death Sentence for Five Post-Election Detainees

Iran's judiciary has issued the death sentence for five post-election detainees. The court announced that the accused were charged with membership in "anti-revolutionary, terrorist and adversary groups". The names of these convicts will not be announced until the sentences are finalized.

It has been indicated that 89 of the post-election detainees have been tried for charges of "activities against national security," "propaganda against the Islamic Republic" and "disturbing public order and peace", "burning and destroying public property," "collaborating in assault of people and government officials" and "armed combat". The announcement also claims that the sentences may be appealed.

To date five mass trials have been held for post-election detainees that were mostly broadcast on national television. Several Shi'ite clerics, political parties and human rights groups spoke out against the unfair procedure of these trials. More recently, political prisoners have been tried individually behind closed doors.

In the protests to the alleged fraudulent re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, more than 4000 people were arrested. The judiciary claims only 400 of these detainees are still in custody.



## Trial of 13 Aban (4 November) detainees in Shiraz. 18 students in prison

After three postponements, the trial of Shiraz University students took place at Branch 2 of Shiraz Revolutionary Court. According to *Amir Kabir* news agency, issuing of the final verdict will be on 9 December, following the transfer of the cases of four students to Branch 14 of the Revolutionary Court. The students will remain in custody in Shiraz Adelabad prison until the final verdict is issued. They are prohibited from having visitors during this time. The detained students are Banaie, Jalali, Saeed Rezaee, Zahedi, Zohoorian, Aref, Poorfat-hi, Taheri and Poorsoltan.

Dr. Masihollah Haghghatjoo is also among the detained students. Dr. Haghghatjoo, who has a PhD in Plant Nutrition from Germany, is accused of placing a 30 meter green fabric on the walls of the governor's office and

## Prison sentences for Political Detainees

Iranian political detainees mostly charged with threatening national security by joining post-election protests in Iran have been receiving heavy prison sentences by the judiciary.

Ali Behzadian-nejad has been sentenced to six years in prison for "comments published on his weblog and collaboration in disturbing national security and propaganda against the system," Mr. Behzadian-Nejad is related to Mir Hossein Moussavi's campaign manager.

The post-election turmoil in Iran started in June when presidential candidates including Mir Hossein Moussavi accused the establishment of fraud in the ballot challenging Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's victory. In the past five months, the State has been suppressing nationwide protests against the Ahmadinejad government. Widespread arrests and heavy sentencing for the detainees are the main policies of the government in dealing with the protests.

Two student activists, Omid Lavasani and Alireza Aushouri were also given six-year sentences. Aushouri is a member of Moussavi's campaign group and Lavasani, according to his lawyer, was the web designer for [mirhosein.com](http://mirhosein.com) and not an actual member of the presidential candidate's campaign.

Kambiz Nowroozi, media activist and executive director of the legal committee of Iranian News Publishers Guild, according to his lawyer, has been sentenced to two years in prison and 76 lashes for charges of "propaganda against the regime by participating in June 15 demonstrations, conspiracy against national security and disturbing public order."

Another post-election detainee, Faramarz Abdollah-Nejad was sentenced to 28 months in prison for "propaganda against the regime and joining gatherings with the purpose of acting against national security" and according to his lawyer, his sentence was confirmed in the appeals court.

attempting to give speech against the regime on 4 November.

Ali Salehpoor, Kazem Rezaee, Yahya Tavoosi, Neda Eskandari, Khadijeh Ghahremani, Nazari, Shirvani and Bagheri are other students arrested by the Intelligence Ministry of Shiraz. There is no exact news of the student's circumstances.

More news on next pg—>

## Iranian authorities claim Kahrizak physician committed suicide

Iranian authorities have finally closed the file of Ramin Pourandarjani, the physician who examined some of the victims of the alleged torture and violence in Kahrizak detention centre. The physician died on Tuesday at the Tehran Security Forces' medical unit. At the time the cause of his death was announced as "heart failure during sleep."

Reformist websites described his death as suspicious and Commander of Police, Brigadier General Ahmadi Moghaddam confirmed that 26 year old Pourandarjani had indeed been summoned by the police and threatened with imprisonment. Iranian lawmaker, Vali Esmaili has told *Mehr* news agency that in a meeting with security forces and Deputy Interior Minister he was informed that investigations confirmed that Ramin Pourandarjani had

"committed suicide." Esmaili claimed that "there is no connection between the suicide of the Kahrizak physician and post-election events". This claim contradicts Police Commander Ahmadi Moghaddam's remarks concerning Ramin Pourandarjani on Wednesday maintaining that "after being summoned by the judiciary in connection with the Kahrizak investigation, fear of imprisonment had led

him to commit suicide." Reformist websites report that Pourandarjani had told his friends and relatives that he was in fear of his life. He had reportedly examined Mohsen Ruholamini at Kahrizak and was witness to the extent of the injuries he had suffered in custody. Mohsen Ruholamini eventually died from the inju-

ries sustained in Kahrizak. *Norooz* website maintains that prior to Ramin Pourandarjani's death, his mother had contacted Mohsen Ruholamini's father to tell him that her son's life was in danger for "having revealed certain truths about the torture and death" of his son. The site also reports that Ramin Pourandarjani's body was sent to his birthplace of Tabriz without permission to carry out an au-



topsy. Kahrizak detention centre was closed down in the heat of post-election protests when unofficial reports of the "murder, torture and rape" of detainees caused widespread public outrage. The death of Mohsen Ruholamini was pivotal in the centre's closure since he was the son of a conservative Islamic

Republic official. *Mowjcamp* claims that "knowledgeable sources" in parliament as well as Pourandarjani's family and friends have informed them that the young physician had met with the special parliamentary committee in charge of investigating the post-election violations of citizen and detainee rights and that details of "Mohsen Ruholamini's torture" had been reported to the committee in that meeting. Government officials deny such a meeting ever took place. The head of the special parliamentary committee announced that there are 100 lawsuits involving violations against detainees at Kahrizak detention centre and eight people have been charged with violations. Four months after the establishment of the committee no reports have yet been released regarding its findings.

## Ahmadinejad sees end of Liberal Democracy

Amidst persistent protests against the alleged fraud in the June presidential elections, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad this week declared that the participation of 85 percent of the Iranian population in the elections marks the end of liberal democracy.

IRNA cites Ahmadinejad saying that the Iranian elections were held in "absolute freedom, while in other countries, up to 96 percent of elections are pre-determined." He added that the Iranian people had demonstrated that the level of "Iranian democracy is such that the candidates were even allowed to question the foundations of the system." Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's remarks were said in the shadow of continued arrest of protesters across the country as well as death and long

prison-term sentences being handed to post-election protesters. Maintaining that Western democracy has reached its zenith, he claimed that "this is the best opportunity for our nation to introduce our culture, literature and thinking to the world." Following the June presidential elections, the candidates disputed the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claiming that the ballot was rigged. Mass protests all across the country took shape demanding justice. The government has ignored the call of the public and cracked down on protesters with violence and continued arrests. Two presidential candidates have challenged the legitimacy of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government and vowed to continue a legal battle against it.

## More student activists arrested in Iran

The Islamic Republic has started a new wave of arrests focusing on student activists. Last night seven more student activists were arrested in Tehran. *Advar* News reports that the group had gathered in the home of Ehsan Dowlatshah and were arrested upon leaving. The homes of some of these activists were also raided and their personal belongings confiscated. Abbas Hakimzadeh was arrested on Thursday morning at his home in Tehran. Neda Eskandari and Khadijeh Ghahremani were arrested on Tuesday in Shiraz. The two had been suspended from university for two terms and were arrested upon going to the University Disciplinary Committee to follow up on their situation.

After the November 4 demonstrations of election protesters, many Shiraz University students have been summoned by the Committee and arrested. In Tabriz, two students who had disappeared finally contacted their families and informed them that they have been arrested by the Ministry of Intelligence.

*Norooz* website also reports that two members of Youth Headquarters have been arrested and there is no news concerning their whereabouts.

The Campaign for Human Rights in Iran condemned the arrest of all student activists by the Islamic Republic saying: "The objective of cracking down on members of the student organization is to impede the new Iranian generation from becoming free thinkers and from collaborating with one another."

## Saeed Habibi sentenced to three years in Prison



**S**aeed Habibi has been sentenced to three years in prison according to the verdict issued by Judge Mohammad Maghisei, head of

Branch 28 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court referring to Article 610 of the Islamic law. Saeed Habibi, former director of Tahkime Vahdat committee and member of Human Rights Reporters, was charged with propaganda against the regime and society and conspiracy against national security.

This leftist student was put on trail on Saturday 26 September 2009. The charges against him were communicated to his lawyer Dr Mohammad Shari as follows: Attending protests against the regime at Khavaran cemetery, attending Marxist leftist meetings, attending meetings on Student's Day at the University for Social Sciences and launching Red Knowledge blog.

Saeed Habibi was previously arrested in December 2007 during the widespread repression of leftist student repression. He was released after 70 days with a

## Arrest of students in Shiraz

**T**wo female students of Shiraz University were arrested by the Intelligence Ministry. Neda Eskandari, a political science student and Khadijeh Ghahremani, agriculture student of Shiraz University were referred to the disciplinary committee simply for contesting their sentences of two semesters' denial of study and two semesters of deprivation of education and welfare.

They were arrested by Shiraz's intelligence agents on 18 November (26 Aban). No further information is known of the circumstances of these students.

Meanwhile the trail of those arrested on 13 Aban has been postponed a second time on Judge Yazdani's orders. The students' families have been told that they may be held until 7 December (16 Azar). [16 Azar is National Student's Day in Iran].

## Broad arrest of liberal student activists in Tehran

**A**ccording to independent news sources in Iran several liberal students were arrested in Tehran on the eve of December 7 (Azar 16). Herana agency affiliated with human rights activists in Iran stated that, Sourena Hashemi, Mehrdad Bozorg, Farzan Rauf, Ehsan Dolatshah, Ali Mousavi, Sina Zahedi and Alborz Shokohi were among those detained by security forces and transferred to an unknown location. After the arrest of these students guards ransacked Sourena Hashemi and Mehrdad Bozorg's house, taking personal belongings. The officers indicated that the students would be transferred to Evin prison. No further information is available regarding these arrests.

## Iran's best-selling newspaper Hamshahri banned



**I**ran's best-selling newspaper, [Hamshahri](#), has been banned for publishing a picture of a temple belonging to the outlawed Bahai sect. The Press Supervisory Board "closed Hamshahri for publishing a picture of the Bahais' temple and encouraging tourists to visit this place on its front page" on Sunday, the ILNA news agency reported on Monday.

The Press Supervisory Board, which is the Iranian government's press watchdog, said publishing the picture was a violation of article 12 of the press law.

The Tehran Municipality has published Hamshahri for nearly two decades.

Deputy Culture Minister Mohammad Ali Ramin confirmed to the media that Hamshahri has been ordered closed.

## 16 hanged in Iran in the last 10 days



**I**n the past 10 days 16 people have been executed in Kerman, Esfahan, Hamedan, Qaem Shahr, Bojnoord, Ahvaz and Sanandaj for various crimes. Judiciary authorities have announced the crimes of three of the executed as Moharebeh (warring with god) and corruption on earth; one for being a member of an opposition group, four others with rape, and the remaining with the charge of drug dealing. The latest case of execution took place on the morning of Wednesday 18 November at Bojnoord. According to Ahmad Keikhosravi, Head of Southern Khorasan Court, the victim was a 23 year old who was charged with 14 attempted robberies and one rape while working as a water officer in northern Khorasan.

The head of northern Khorasan's court had stated that the Supreme Court had denied the appeal request and transferred the case to Bojnoord for completion. Ahmad Keikhosravi added: "The execution of this sentence follows a recent order from Sadegh Larijani, Head of Iran's Judiciary in a meeting with Supreme Judicial officials with regard to "decisive and prompt action against those attempting to disrupt people's social comforts and security".

On Tuesday 17 November the Public Justice of Esfahan reported the execution of three people charged with drug dealing in the province. In its Wednesday issue, *Keyhan* newspaper introduced the executed people in central prison of Isfahan with acronyms, two males and one female, adding that the crime of the two male defendants was supplying crack and the female defendant had been charged with "drug addiction, transportation to Esfahan by swallowing 50 grams of crack".

Akbar Beiglari, prosecutor of Hamedan told news agencies: "Rape is a heavy crime and a rapist's punishment is execution. This punishment applies to both single and married men, regardless of the plaintiff's private consent".

On 14 November two 21 year old defendants, Habib and Mohammad were hanged with charges of rape and murdering a nine year old girl in a village near Kaboodar Ahang in the province of Hamedan.

## Five Journalists Convicted, Another Arrested and One Released

A UN general assembly committee has expressed deep concern about "serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations" in Iran, especially in the crackdown following President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed election in June. In a strongly-worded resolution on 20 November, the human rights committee accused the government of stepping up its use of torture, flogging, amputation and other forms of cruel and inhuman punishment.

"Despite such clear condemnation from the United Nations, the Iranian authorities continue to torture journalists and try them without any transparency, behind closed doors," Reporters Without Borders said. "The UN general assembly must follow up this committee's work by adopting a resolution denouncing the lack of transparency in the ongoing political trials and the illegal and arbitrary sentences being passed on opposition activists and journalists."

The latest journalist to be detained is **Sasan Aghaei** of the daily newspaper *Farhikhteghan*, who was arrested yesterday at his Tehran home by intelligence ministry officials after they had carried out a search. It is not known where he was taken.

Aghaei, who also edits the blog *Azad Tribun*, is the third *Farhikhteghan* journalist to be arrested since the election. The other two, **Masoud Bastani** and **Reza Norbakhsh**, the newspaper's editor, have both been given six-year jail sentences.

**Reza Rafiee Foroshani**, a freelance journalist who works for Iranian and international news media, has meanwhile just been given a seven-year jail sentence, plus a suspended sentence of another five years in prison, on a spying charge.

**Mohammad Ali Abtahi**, a cleric known as "blogging Mullah" who was serving a six-year jail sentence, was freed yesterday on payment of a record bail amount of 700 million toman (520,000 euros). A deputy minister in former President Mohammad Khatami's government and an adviser to opposition candidate Mehdi Karoubi, he was arrested at his Tehran home on 16 June and spent 161 days in detention.

Another journalist, **Ahmad Zeydabadi**, was sentenced today to five years in prison



*Sasan Aghaei*



*Ahmad Zeydabadi*



*Mahsa Amrabadi & Masoud Bastani*



*Bahman Ahmadi Amoui*

followed by exile on the northeastern city of Gonabad. At the same time, the amount of bail for a provision release was increased to 350 million toman (260,000 euros).

Bastani, Norbakhsh, Foroshani, Abtahi and Zeydabadi were all convicted in the course of the Stalinist-style political trials that have been taking place in Tehran since August. Their lawyers were not allowed to see them or examine the prosecution case files and they were represented in court by lawyers appointed by the prosecutor-general who are linked to the intelligence services. During these sham trials, they were also forced to read out confessions that had been extracted under duress.

The authorities in Tehran's Evin prison have not been providing any information about detainees to their families or lawyers since the 12 June presidential election.

Journalists continue to be harassed while in prison. They can be interrogated at any time. New charges can be brought against them. They can be denied family visits for no clear reason. They can be put in solitary confinement for one wrong word, and they can be denied medical treatment.

Reporters Without Borders was recently told about the particularly desperate plight of **Mehdi Hossinzadeh**, a detained journalist who, according to his family, has been tortured. The authorities have said nothing about his case since his arrest on 31 July.

Jila Baniyaghoob, a journalist who was held from 20 June to 19 August, says she is very worried about her husband, fellow journalist **Bahaman Ahmadi Amoei**, who was arrested the same day as she was and is still being held.

After spending more than 65 days in solitary confinement in Evin prison, he was transferred to a wing with other inmates. But then, after just a week in cell 350, he was put back in solitary confinement, in section 209 of the prison.

"I saw him last Monday," Baniyaghoob told Reporters Without Borders. "He was very ill with fever. We are very worried by the lack of medical care. More than five months have gone by since Bahaman's arrest, and his lawyer has still not been able to see him or have access to his case file."

More news on next pg—>

## Widespread student demonstrations in Orumie



The tragic death of students due to university negligence led to widespread protests this week. According to the University of Orumie three students of the Technical College of the University died in the university dorms on 8 October 2009 from suffocation following a gas leak.

Then on Monday 16 November (25 Aban) Ehsan Etebar, a physics student at the University was thrown out of a fourth floor dormitory window after a gas explosion. He fell on electric wires and died on Wednesday morning at Imam hospital due to the severity of injuries sustained - 50 percent burns and a spinal fracture. The students reacted by staging demonstrations on Wednesday and Thursday demanding the dismissal of the authorities responsible for failure to address the dangers of their accommodation.

After news of Ehsan's death spread, a number of his classmates rushed to the hospital to be with his family. After several hours, Sedghi, President of Orumie University accompanied by Akbari, responsible for the University dormitories arrived with several university guards in tow.

Without offering any condolences to Ehsan's family, Sedghi said: "These things happen" causing upset to Ehsan's brother and leading to a severe physical fight. Security forces attacked the students with batons and even arrested one of them. The atmosphere in the university dorms is now very tense. Arrangements have been made for a mass demonstration on Saturday at 12:30pm in front of the university agricultural building.

## Disciplinary Expulsion and Denial of Education for students of Abadan's Sanat-e-Naft University

With the start of the academic year and the return of Gholamreza Rashed, Head of Sanat-e-Naft university from his trip touring the country, a disciplinary committee meeting with the support of Basij. According to *Amir Kabir* news agency, in an illegal act, the supreme leader's representative, a relatively moderate character, was stopped from attending the meeting. His presence may have resulted in the issuing of less severe verdicts against the students.

The following heavy verdicts were issued against six students during this meeting: Mostafa Ahookhosh, member and activist of the Islamic Association, suspended from education for one semester and prohibited from using university facilities in all school years.

Payam Peikari, expelled from university. Khosrow Moosavand, prohibited from earning school degree.

Hojjat Arabi, suspended from school for one semester.

Sahand Bakhtiarpoor, suspended from school for one semester.

Amin Nikzadeh, suspended from school for two semesters

The president of the university tore all the appeal documents relating to less severe verdicts and insisted on these heavy charges against the student activists.

Prior to this, during August of last year in an unusual act, the entrances of the university were closed and any students attempting to leave were inspected by disciplinary forces. The student activists were arrested by Intelligence Ministry agents after managing to leave the university. Hossein Rahimi and Amin Nikzadeh were arrested this way.



## Contradictory Statements on Rape

The execution of four charged with "rape" has taken place after fresh news of rape; the gang rapes of a woman by six men in the Tehran province of Ghyamdasht in Tehran and the rape of a woman by 3 men in Lavasan. Following the release of this news Sadegh Larijani, Head of the Judiciary said: "Delays in dealing with evil people, rapists and aggressors should not give these people a comfort zone. The Judicial system must act quick and with accuracy". He also added: "The judiciary system must attempt to execute law orders and build a secure society for citizens without fearing the arguments and atmosphere created by those opposing execution." But following this statement Ahmad Roozbahani, Chief of Moral Security Police denied the rape cases and insisted that "The news reported with regard to the rape cases in Ghyamdasht differs from the truth. In these conditions rapists must be sentenced to death, however in reviewing the case further we might achieve other results which could change the fate of these people". Roozbahani described the arrest and crimes of these six people differently: "What has been reported is not true and I would not want to repeat the same mistake as the judge in reporting this news; therefore, I will explain further once I study the case". Indicating the social security plan of the last three years he claims: "The numbers of rape has decreased, but are more tragic which has worried us".

When Ministry of Intelligence officers became aware that student activists are not leaving the university, they were summoned to the disciplinary committee, ending in the arrest of five more students; Sajad Taherzadeh, Mostafa Monfared, Hassan Karimi, Sahand Bakhtiarpoor and Payam Peikari. These students were detained illegally. One other student activist, Moosavand was able to escape from university. The reason given by officials for the arrest of these students is the deliberate setting on fire of a Basij car suspiciously at night. According to *Amir Kabir* news agency, with the cooperation of Revolutionary Guard the father of Moosavand was kidnapped at Tehran's market to get Moosavand to surrender at the beginning of August. The kidnapping ended after Moosavand was arrested. After days in detention the students were released on bail. During this time Mostafa Ahookhosh and Saeed Shojaeezadeh were also summoned to information ministry.

More news on next pg —>

## Vahed Bus Union issue statement in support of Haft Tappeh detainees



Once again we are witnessing the imprisonment of five workers of this land. Fereydoun Nikufard, Jalil Ahmadi, Ghorban Alipour, Ali Nejati and Mohammad Heydari Mehr, trade union worker activists who have been sent to prison for six months based on the judgments of Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Dezful and confirmed by Branch 13 of the Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz. Union workers of Tehran and Suburbs Buses condemns their prison sentences and the repeated oppression of these workers who were fighting for their basic rights. Union workers of Tehran and Suburbs Buses believe in the innocence of the people above and two of their fellowship; Ebrahim Madadi and Mansour Osanloo and demand the unconditional freedom of all imprisoned workers.

In hope of worldwide spread of peace and justice,

Union workers

Tehran and Suburbs Buses

A b a n 1 3 8 8

## Statement from the Socialist Students of Iran

**I**n condemnation of the execution of Ehsan Fattahian who gave his life in the path of freedom, and in support of other political activists in danger of execution:

Execution is an organized crime that the most modern of regimes use to their own benefit and no doubt dictatorships of all kinds of are the most criminals minds that have used execution for the suppression and intimidation of opposition protesters. The Islamic capitalist regime is by far the most repressive regime that history has seen, that has always used execution as a tool for it's stabilization and maintenance. It has used this method as the only way to deal with outrageous predicted crimes as if its inhumane laws are not enough, but always more than the repression of opposition political and social – so it has been outrageously used that during the 60's Now oppressive Islamic regime is at a point that can not go back or forward has and it's for this obvious reason that they have resumed the organized crime of execution and in this way they have taken the supremacy Globe from the worst regimes whom are their competitors.

Capitalist Islam by executing Ehsan Fattahian as fighters of freedom and equality showed their extent of fear from anti-dictatorship movement and also showed they have no redemption about this most deceitful act.

Now other fighters like Shirko Moarefi are in Iran's prisons awaiting execution issued by the regime's unjust courts.

It is clear that the most important task now is for each individual component of the modern movement in the struggle against dicta-



torship and for freedom and equality to form a campaign in support of imprisoned political activists and not allow the repressive and murderous to progress fiercely and take the best children of this land to the slaughterhouse.

Socialist Students condemn the death penalty in any circumstance and particularly express their disgust of this ruling against political prisoners. We announce our defense of any movement and campaign against the death penalty and defy the ignorance, apathy and silence of any anti-dictatorship movements, calling it an inexcusable act of disguise for the government. Now the most urgent task of all socialist freedom fighters against labor activists, students, women and all social movements and organized crime is to stop the execution process and fight against this accelerated organized crime. Long live the Iranian people leading the movement against dictatorship,

Long live freedom,

Long live equality,

Long live socialism!

Socialist Students of Iran's Universities

## Sharif University of Technology Alumni Decry Arrests

Over 150 Sharif University of Technology alumni have written a letter protesting the arrest and detention of Hojat Sharifi, his wife Nafiseh Zare Kohan and other student activists.

Nafiseh Zare Kohan, journalist, was arrested on Nov. 4th in Tehran. She called home some hours after her arrest but she didn't know where she was being detained. Hojat Sharifi, Nafiseh Zare's husband, is in the same predicament; he also called home and yet is unaware of the

whereabouts of the location he has been transferred to.

In their letter, Sharif alumni have decried the current situation of the country and condemned the wave of arrests that has followed Iran's June presidential elections. The letter states that the ruling establishment, instead of responding to questions raised by peaceful protesters, has used the security apparatus to silence the protests using all available means: arrests of political activists, journalists, cultural figures and many innocent people; violently attacking the protesters; holding show trials, etc. The alumni have demanded that the government release their friends and all other student and political activists unconditionally.

## Iran frees top reformist on \$500,000 bail

Iran on Tuesday released on bail prominent reformist Mohammad Atrianfar who has been convicted in connection with street protests after June's disputed presidential election, Tehran's prosecutor said. Another reformist, Ali Tajarian, has meanwhile been sentenced to six years in jail plus 74 lashes, ILNA news agency reported. "Mohammad Atrianfar has been temporarily released following payment of five billion rials (500,000 dollars) bail af-

ter he was tried and sentenced," prosecutor Abbas Jafari Doulatatabadi told the official IRNA news agency. Atrianfar's lawyer, Hossein Alizadeh Tabatabai, confirmed his client was being released on bail of 500,000 dollars.

Neither Alizadeh Tabatabai nor Jafari Doulatatabadi gave details, but ILNA said Atrianfar had been sentenced to a six-year jail term.

## Permanent Revolution's Interview with an Iranian revolutionary Marxist on the present and lessons from the past

By Anahita Hosseini

**T**he new century, just as the previous one is an era of wars and revolutions. Capitalism is undergoing a severe crisis and there are many conflicts and wars. While there is ethnic conflict, imperialistic intervention and wars, the struggle for freedom and equality by the proletariat continues. Throughout the world from Nepal to Iran this wave of struggle with the bourgeoisie system continues however in all instances there is a problem of leadership. All experience of struggle illustrates the need for a world communist party.

Iran with its revolutionary traditions and political youth is an important area for all revolutionists. But for us, the Turkish and Kurdish communists the struggle in Iran is more illuminating as the possible refractions and revolutionary movements in Iran could be a signal for a greater movement in the Middle-East. Moreover our geographical and cultural proximity with Iran facilitates the formation of possible bonds within the revolutionary movements.

As an example of such a bond, we met with an Iranian revolutionary Marxist comrade **Anahita Hosseini**, while we were on a campaign for the Workers Way newspaper in Ankara. Comrade Anahita later told us that she came towards us as soon as she saw our red flag. Anahita is an active participant of a socialist student organization in one of the universities in Tehran. She took part in the latest movement and in the protest at which a woman was killed in front of the cameras. In an environment where many of her friends were arrested, Anahita was obliged to leave Iran for some time. We think it would be valuable for the Turkish proletariat and young people to read an interview with a Iranian Revolutionist who has a deep knowledge

and experience of recent events.

**From the start of this interview we would like to indicate that we respectfully commemorate countless honorable martyrs who have fallen in the struggle of Iranian youth and working class for freedom and equality. Their memory survives in Permanent Revolution movement's struggle.**

**While the big protests that began after election fraud were discussed widely all around the world, the question was who these protesters were and what their purpose is. It was widely claimed that protesters are of the well-to-do middle classers, such that it is now common knowledge that northern Tehran is the area with an intense concentration of middle class inhabitants. Labouring this this point, the mass media tried to represent these demonstrations as a so called "colored revolution". Based on the same point, some Stalinist petty bourgeois groups accused demonstrators of being supporters of this colored revolution, since they assume Ahmedinejad to be anti-imperialist and progressive. One example of this is Chavez, who declared full support to Ahmadinejad. What do you think about this issue? Where do working class and poor people stand in protests? For example, we have heard that the bus drivers' union has been actively participating in the protests and gone on supportive strikes.**

Actually, there is no coloured revolution on the scene in Iran. Iran should not be confused with former eastern-block countries. Both the structure and tradition of Iran and ideology of the protesters is different from other colored revolutions. Firstly, the Iranian people have bitterly witnessed the massacre carried out by USA in Iraq. Moreover people like Moussavi and Khatami are a part of the



Anahita Hosseini

Mullah Regime in Iran. Mousavi used green in his election campaign, but a little known fact is that all four candidates chose a color to symbolize their candidacy. e.g. Ahmedinejad used red and Rezaei used blue. Ahmedinejad and Khamenei blamed USA and Britain in a defensive reflex and tried to undermine events. It was very clear what they were trying to do. Anyway it's understandable.

Western mass media maintains that Ahmedinejad is mostly voted for by poor people. This is not really true. It is true that Ahmedinejad is widely supported by peasants that form one third of the population, because the demand for change rises from the cities of Iran, as in most cases in history. Villages are still influenced by conservatism. Moreover, Ahmedinejad has implemented populist practices for peasants like agricultural support. This was effective for Ahmedinejad's support among peasants. But in the case of poor people in cities, Ahmedinejad has mostly lost his support among these people; Ahmedinejad competed with Rafsanjani in the last election. Rafsanjani is the richest person in Iran and explicitly known as a thief. This was an important reason for the poor people to support Ahmedinejad. But Moussavi has the image of an honest poli-

tician in personality and assets. Had there been no cheating in the election, it would have been clear that Ahmedinejad's votes decreased significantly in the south of Tehran.

Regarding the class composition of demonstrations; naturally we cannot claim recent events to be a working class movement. Likewise, it would be wrong to consider these events as the act of rich Iranians. Actually "people" can stand for a true definition of the protesters. It was not just the northern part but all the streets of Tehran were potential demonstration areas. In fact the northern part was the first area to stop demonstrating when the approach of security forces became violent. Attendees were generally young. In Iran, students carry weight in social opposition. And the socialists succeeded in becoming an explicit tendency in student opposition. The union named *Şirkete Vahed* is a respected and opponent union. They also supported demonstrations. Furthermore Khodro automotive workers have shown explicit support. But the strike attempts were limited to isolated acts. Workers in opposition thought they could not stop entire and individually boycotted work on the days called for strike action. Of course this is not an effective method of struggle.

The basic problem of the working class is lack of organization. There is no organization they can trust. Unfortunately we have a great problem of vanguard organization and workers are negatively affected by this situation.

Regarding Chavez; Chavez puts on Basij uniforms when he comes to Iran. He has completely lost his prestige among Iranian leftists. There is great anger in Iran against the oppressive structure of the Mullah Regime. It is clear: Leftist tradition and memories are still vivid and a new generation of socialist youth is growing in Iran. Our aim is to take the movement in an anti-capitalist direction and achieve a revolutionary breakthrough for the working class. Our abilities and efforts will determine the result.

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**A photo that we used in our website has become popular all around the world. In the photo a middle-aged man who has a green stripe is showing his tattoo of Che Guevara and star to photographers. Does this mean that socialists or socialist ideas have an explicit effect on protests or is this man just an exceptional personality?**

No, this man is not an exception. Despite being a minority, there were socialists or people influenced by socialist ideals at the protests. But this is clear and explicit: the will for change, the will to get rid of the oppression of the Mullah Regime is common. The masses are much more radical than Moussavi. They cannot limit themselves to Moussavi's stance. On the other hand, the movement has no certain agenda. Reformist expectations are quite common. But socialists can ignore the protests blaming people for not having socialist aims. Socialists have to be interpreters of the way freedom can be achieved.

**This year is the 30th anniversary of the revolution in Iran. It has been known that Iranian leftists were very effective in overthrowing the Shah and they supported Khomeini as a dramatic mistake. However, general public opinion is limited to this information.**

**Could you please give us some information about the Iranian left in the past and present to better understand the class struggle in Iran? What did they do in the past and what did they leave behind to affect today? What were the roles of leftist groups such as the *Tudeh*, *Fedayan*, and *Mujahedin* in this process and what are their positions today? How did the *Worker-Communist Party of Iran* arise? The Turkish public is not very informed on this but which we know that it was the most effective organization after the Khomeini period? What was its role? What is it doing today?**

We should first state that the *Mujahedin* are not considered to be leftist in Iran. This move-

ment was named *Islamic Left* in the '70s, but today it is perceived as an organization that has a dominant Islamic side, that is why they are not liked by Iranian leftists. They are also not liked by the Iranian public because of their position in the Iran-Iraq war, supporting Iraq. Put simply, we can co-operate with social democrats for a cause but we definitely do not co-operate with the *Mujahedin*. If we talk about Iran's left, its origins are about 100 years old corresponding to the period of Constitutional Reform in Iran. However, the first significant party was the *Tudeh*, which also conveys aristocratic elements. It is an organization that follows *SSCB*-Moscow supporting politics. It was a very effective in the 1940s with many members; what is more, it managed a wider state of organizing people in the military than one can imagine. They



could have established a revolution had they wanted. They had the power to prevent the coup against Mosaddeq in 1953. However, the *Tudeh* leadership did not take any action and stayed silent.

The Commitment to a Two Stage Theory in the revolutionary program was linking Iranian revolutionaries by defining the democratic or anti-imperialist struggle as a first stage. Of course, we cannot analyze *Tudeh* as a separate organization from *SSCB*. In those days, before the 1950s, there was no any phobia of communism, thus a strong organization was created. Conditions were suitable for everything, but the *Tudeh* prepared its own end by

not standing against the coup and it could never regain its power. In contrast to betraying leaders who were killed by the Shah's regime and revealed party secrets, many members of *Tudeh* such as the Armenian revolutionary Vartan Salahanyan are still remembered with respect.

It is impossible to call the *Tudeh*'s actions after the overthrow of the Shah anything than betrayal. Almost all factions of the Iranian left supported Khomeini, but none was as submissive and kowtowing as the *Tudeh*. For instance the *Tudeh* suggested the idea of founding the Sepah, which is the biggest executioner of today's regime. Furthermore, the *Tudeh* was the one that denounced the members of groups that were struggling against Khomeini to the executioners of Khomeini. Today, all these facts are known by all leftists.

The *Tudeh* party is now considered to be a social democrat party.

**It is better to understand this situation more deeply. After the overthrow of the Shah, all leftists supported Khomeini. The betrayal of the *Tudeh* is really striking and their turn also came. How could this have possibly happened?**

The power that was struggling and being repressed in the Shah's period was that of revolutionaries. They were bringing the anti-imperialist struggle forward as the main issue. The idea of a socialist revolution in Iran was even not mentioned. Independence and democracy were the main lines of struggle.

When Khomeini came to Iran with indirect support from the West and *SSCB*, leftists accepted Khomeini as an anti-imperialist progressive person and supported him. It is sad but true. Anyway Khomeini could not target leftists in the early days. He was giving the impression of a pluralistic environment; and this embittered the illusions. In fact, Khomeini was not in a position to attack leftists immediately, but he did not hesitate with executions when conditions became suitable. Other leftist groups struggled against Khomeini even if it was too late, but the *Tudeh* just betrayed. It was very disgraceful.

**Let us continue with the other leftist groups.**

After 1982, the Islamic regime began slaughtering leftists. Although the first destructive campaigns against the *Mujahedin* were met with resistance, it was too late to do anything. If we look into the *Fedayan*, it is a group that has a tradition of armed struggle. They have many martyrs in the armed struggle against the Shah's regime. Also today, *Fedayan* are widely respected. Their comrades are known to be ethical, responsible and honest. After the revolution, they were separated into many factions:

*Fedayan Minority*, *Fedayan Majority*, *Dehgani* group etc. The *Dehgani* group was a guerrilla group that fought in Palestine. However, the *Majority* group is establishing relations with *Tudeh* and their names have been known to combine. After the revolution, an organization was founded called *Worker's Road*. The roots of today's *Worker-Communist Party of Iran* end with this organization; and the followers of Mansour Hekmat came from that group, too. Mansour Hekmat, a long-haired, guitar playing student, lived in the USA during the revolution and became a Marxist. His theoretical workings made this group gain power in Iran and caused the failure of other groups at the same time. His supporters are called *Hekmatists*.

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**What is the state of the left in Iran? What do you think about the organizations' perspectives, programs and ways of positioning themselves?**

There are many leftist groups in Iran containing Revolutionary Marxists, Maoists, *Fedayan*, *Tudeh* and youth organizations; but most of their leaders are in Europe, especially in Germany, England and Finland. The left made significant progress with the movement that started years ago. Before that, there was no concrete action for struggle and opposition. The Khatami period was a bit more permissive, so the left had a chance to develop. Of course Khatami had to be permissive to satisfy a social demand, and establish some changes however little. Today, we can say that, class consciousness is rising, conflicts are being revealed and awareness is increasing.

**We define Mansour Hekmat to be a centralist. What are his theoretical remarks?**

He is defending the theories of socialism in one country and permanent revolution at the same time. He has a populist method. He is very straight on some issues, for example he does not defend Stalin. He defends the rightness of Lenin and Trotsky on what was experienced in Kronstadt. However, he oddly claims that Iran can become the only communist country in the world. Another important subject is that he flouts the conventional practices of Iran's left and declares his style of leftism to be modern. After his actions in the name of being modern, other

leftists in Iran began to think that *Hekmatists* weaken Iran's left. The view of Hekmat on Israel is also disagreeable. He defends the state of Israel's internationalist stand against anti-semitism which is one of the major areas that serves the Iranian Mullah regime in defining and legalizing itself. His respect for liberalism, his insulations and disrespectful behavior towards past revolutionaries in the name of being modern are to be noted. Today, the *Worker-Communist Party* of Iran is fractionized into three parts: *HKK*, *HKK/Hekmatist* and *Union of Communists*. *HKK* and *HKK/Hekmatist* have broadcasting channels in Europe. *HKK* broadcasts 24 hours a day and is financially supported by Israel. They defend the idea that attracting attention on their channel is really important and to do that they put out entertaining programs that even include porn shows. The *HKK/Hekmatist* fraction broadcasts one hour a day and fills this time with intensive propaganda. There are differences in the arguments that they support. *HKK/Hekmatist* defends the need for a democratic revolution phase whereas *HKK* emphasizes the need to establish socialist revolution directly.

**What is the current state of other groups?**

The *Fedayan Majority* group defines itself as social democrat and, as I expressed, they are being mentioned together with *Tudeh*. *Fedayan Minority* contains respected, nostalgic young people who are not developed in theory, but active in practice.

The remnants of *Tudeh* who are predominantly elderly, can be evaluated as social democrats and nationalists. There is also a group known as *Iraj Azarin*. It resembles a movement, not a party and generally includes lots of people defining themselves as "Marxist", "leftist". They are not very effective, but are gaining significant influence among the youth and recruit new members. They both accept the heritage of Hekmat and criticize his concept of the party. Their growth results from the weakness of the Hekmatists. It is not wrong to say that Hekmatists will soon resolve. Within Trotskyist organizations, an Iranian militant section has a small number of members and works well. This group consists of reliable professional revolutionaries. This group has a group-centric understanding. It is a well-organized, disciplinary group that supports Maziar Razi. Although Razi is an important theoretician, he doesn't focus on Iranian issues, but international problems. That's why he cannot establish strong connections with Iranian youth and students. There is also a Trotskyist organization, that has little consideration for legality and is mostly organized in Iran and Azerbaijan. It's not possible to provide more information about them.

**When thinking about the Iranian left today, we emphasize the importance of the leadership problem.**

I also think that one of the most important questions in Iran is the lack of a political organiza-

tion that provides leadership for people. It is really hard to be a revolutionary in Iran. That's why, a leadership, trusted by people can lead the struggle and make difference. Although the student movement and organization is very lively, the lack of leadership persists. The problem is certainly one of leadership.

**What should we expect in Iran in the near future and mid-term? Where will Iran go?**

Demonstrations will not stop. They will continue in different ways and means. For instance, there will be memorial demonstrations for those killed, according to Islamic tradition on the 7th and 40th days following a martyr's death. This played a major role in the process of the Shah's overthrow in the 1970s. In Iran, everyone wants freedom. Mayday and 8 March, World Women Workers' Day, have become traditional days for demonstrations in Iran. The left especially is very active in the strong demonstrations 8 March.

During Khatami's administration we were able to achieve these successes. The issue is not Ahmadinejad, Khatami or Moussavi. Our strength is important. I want to emphasize that what we have achieved was not given to us by reformers, but taken by our struggle.

**Continued on next pg—>**

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**THE BRIDGE**

J o u r n a l

The regime had to provide them for us, it was forced by us to do that. People will be different after the election and the ensuing massacre. At the same time, the Islamic regime has never been so weak. In the television debates, representatives of the regime insult to one another in front of society. This would never have happened in the past. In the demonstrations, people with reformist ideas radicalized. Workers, youth and women demand an organization they can trust. This is the main point.

**The film *Persepolis*, had considerable interest in Turkey especially in political circles. It shed light on what happened in Iran. Did the film have implications on Iranian workers and youth? How do you evaluate the film?**

*Persepolis* was very realistic and emotional. Iranians, including me, liked this film very much. Of course as you know, it is not possible to watch the film in the cinemas like in Turkey. However, it was watched and liked by a large majority. The success of the film depends on the intimate representation of reality. For instance the Iran-Iraq war, remembered by us as childhood memory, is shown skillfully. Again, the film displays successfully how Iranian immigrants perceive the West and the kind of problems they face. The oppression of women under the Islamic regime in Iran is also presented in a realistic way.

**In the second half of the film, we expect the hero to become political and revolutionary like her uncle. However, this would be surrealist.**

Not becoming revolutionary for the film's hero was very normal. The hero represents a generation that is ten years older than us. At that time, anything other than this was not realistic in Iran. If the story was formed as you expected, the scenario would have to break with reality and that would have been in contradiction to the spirit of the film.

**Our final question is related to the new generation. A student organization with socialist slogans in Tehran University appeared six years ago for the first time with significant development since then. Now you are in a period of oppression. Many comrades have been arrested; most of the people released had to go abroad. Did socialist students and Marxist culture in general take root inside the Iranian youth and students? Will the new generations politicize and collect themselves under the red flag of socialism?**

Certainly, Marxism is rooted in Iranian youth. Already, there are socialist students active in demonstrations in Iran. Socialism for the youth opposition is first and foremost an alternative. Since this alternative achieves its reality, it will attract and gather new activists within Iranian youth under its flag. Moreover, as you know, Iran has thousands of martyrs. The memories of these thousands of martyrs have an effect on young generations. There are many examples aside from this. There are also activists in socialist opposition with fathers who are among the most prominent figures in the Islamic regime. The opposition comprises very disparate segments of society.

**Thank you.**

I thank you. Source: bolsevik.org

## Ayatollah Khamenei Urges Measures to Counter Enemy's Soft War

**T**he Leader of the Islamic Revolution warns that hostile countries are trying to create a conflict-ridden atmosphere in Iran with their 'divisive policies'. "Attempts to create an atmosphere of distrust and disunity in the country will benefit no one," said Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in an address to Basij forces on Wednesday.



Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the importance of "national vigilance" in order to confront the soft war waged by the enemy. "The enemy has put soft war on its agenda concerning the fact that the arrogance faced failure in confronting the Islamic establishment during the first decade after the Islamic Revolution," said Ayatollah

"Therefore, those who take their cue from the enemy and try to confront the principles of the Islamic Republic and the constitution should know that their efforts will [fail]," he added. The Leader, however, cautioned that opposition figures, who question the outcome of the June 12 elections, should not be branded as monafeq (seditionist). Monafeq is usually re-



Khamenei



ferred to the members of the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) which has masterminded a torrent of terrorist operations inside Iran and Iraq over the past three decades. "Not all people are seditionists or against the Rule of the Just Juris-

"Presently the fight against the enemy's soft war is our main priority," added the Leader. The Leader went on to elaborate on the enemy's soft war and said, "The enemy tries to use a mixture of cultural means and advanced communication equipment to spread lies and rumors and cause doubt and difference among the people." As an example, the Leader pointed to the post-election crisis in June, saying, "The enemy sought to drive a wedge between the people and the government but, thanks to the vigilance and alertness of the nation, failed to achieve its goal."

From pg 3 (Noam Chomsky on Anarchism, Marxism & Hope for the Future)...

**CHOMSKY:** The introduction to Guerin's book that you mentioned opens with a quote from an anarchist sympathiser a century ago, who says that *anarchism has a broad back, and endures anything*. One major element has been what has traditionally been called 'libertarian socialism'. I've tried to explain there and elsewhere what I mean by that, stressing that it's hardly original; I'm taking the ideas from leading figures in the anarchist movement whom I quote, and who rather consistently describe themselves as socialists, while harshly condemning the 'new class' of radical intellectuals who seek to attain state power in the course of popular struggle and to become the vicious *Red bureaucracy* of which Bakunin warned; what's often called 'socialism'. I rather agree with Rudolf Rocker's perception that these (quite central) tendencies in anarchism draw from the best of Enlightenment and classical liberal thought, well beyond what he described. In fact, as I've tried to show they contrast sharply with Marxist-Leninist doctrine and practice, the 'libertarian' doctrines that are fashionable in the US and UK particularly, and other contemporary ideologies, all of which seem to me to reduce to advocacy of one or another form of illegitimate authority, quite often real tyranny.

**CHOMSKY:** No coincidence at all. The tendencies in anarchism that I've always found most persuasive seek a highly organised society, integrating many different kinds of structures (workplace, community, and manifold other forms of voluntary association), but controlled by participants, not by those in a position to give orders (except, again, when authority can be justified, as is sometimes the case, in specific contingencies).

## Democracy

**RBR:** Anarchists often expend a great deal of effort at building up

grassroots democracy. Indeed they are often accused of *taking democracy to extremes*. Yet, despite this, many anarchists would not readily identify democracy as a central component of anarchist philosophy. Anarchists often describe their politics as being about 'socialism' or being about 'the individual' - they are less likely to say that anarchism is about democracy. Would you agree that democratic ideas are a central feature of anarchism?

**CHOMSKY:** Criticism of 'democracy' among anarchists has often been criticism of parliamentary democracy, as it has arisen within societies with deeply repressive features. Take the US, which has been as free as any, since its origins. American democracy was founded on the principle, stressed by James Madison in the Constitutional Convention in 1787, that the primary function of government is *to protect the minority of the opulent from the majority*. Thus he warned that in England, the only quasi-democratic model of the day, if the general population were allowed a say in public affairs, they would implement agrarian reform or other atrocities, and that the American system must be carefully crafted to avoid such crimes against *the rights of property*, which must be defended (in fact, must prevail). Parliamentary democracy within this framework does merit sharp criticism by genuine libertarians, and I've left out many other features that are hardly subtle - slavery, to mention just one, or the wage slavery that was bitterly condemned by working people who had never heard of anarchism or communism right through the 19th century, and beyond.

## Leninism

**RBR:** The importance of grassroots democracy to any meaningful change in society would seem to be self evident. Yet the left has been ambiguous about this in the past. I'm speaking generally, of social democracy, but also of Bolshevism - traditions on the left that would seem to have more in common with elitist thinking than with strict democratic practice. Lenin, to use a well-known example, was

sceptical that workers could develop anything more than *trade union consciousness* - by which, I assume, he meant that workers could not see far beyond their immediate predicament. Similarly, the Fabian socialist, Beatrice Webb, who was very influential in the Labour Party in England, had the view that workers were only interested in *horse racing odds!* Where does this elitism originate and what is it doing on the left?

**CHOMSKY:** I'm afraid it's hard for me to answer this. If the left is understood to include 'Bolshevism,' then I would flatly dissociate myself from the left. Lenin was one of the greatest enemies of socialism, in my opinion, for reasons I've discussed. The idea that workers are only interested in horse-racing is an absurdity that cannot withstand even a superficial look at labour history or the lively and independent working class press that flourished in many places, including the manufacturing towns of New England not many miles from where I'm writing - not to speak of the inspiring record of the courageous struggles of persecuted and oppressed people throughout history, until this very moment. Take the most miserable corner of this hemisphere, Haiti, regarded by the European conquerors as a paradise and the source of no small part of Europe's wealth, now devastated, perhaps beyond recovery. In the past few years, under conditions so miserable that few people in the rich countries can imagine them, peasants and slum-dwellers constructed a popular democratic movement based on grassroots organisations that surpasses just about anything I know of elsewhere; only deeply committed commissars could fail to collapse with ridicule when they hear the solemn pronouncements of American intellectuals and political leaders about how the US has to teach Haitians the lessons of democracy. Their achievements were so substantial and frightening to the powerful that they had to be subjected to yet another dose of vicious terror, with considerably more US support than is publicly acknowledged, and they still have not surrendered.

Are they interested only in horse-racing?

I'd suggest some lines I've occasionally quoted from Rousseau: *when I see multitudes of entirely naked savages scorn European voluptuousness and endure hunger, fire, the sword, and death to preserve only their independence, I feel that it does not behoove slaves to reason about freedom.*

**RBR:** Speaking generally again, your own work - *Detering Democracy*, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, etc. - has dealt consistently with the role and prevalence of elitist ideas in societies such as our own. You have argued that within 'Western' (or parliamentary) democracy there is a deep antagonism to any real role or input from the mass of people, lest it threaten the uneven distribution in wealth which favours the rich. Your work is quite convincing here, but, this aside, some have been shocked by your assertions. For instance, you compare the politics of President John F. Kennedy with Lenin, more or less equating the two. This, I might add, has shocked supporters of both camps! Can you elaborate a little on the validity of the comparison?

**CHOMSKY:** I haven't actually equated the doctrines of the liberal intellectuals of the Kennedy administration with Leninists, but I have noted striking points of similarity - rather as predicted by Bakunin a century earlier in his perceptive commentary on the *new class*. For example, I quoted passages from McNamara on the need to enhance managerial control if we are to be truly *free*, and about how the *undermanagement* that is *the real threat to democracy* is an assault against reason itself. Change a few words in these passages, and we have standard Leninist doctrine. I've argued that the roots are rather deep, in both cases. Without further clarification about what people find *shocking*, I can't comment further. The comparisons are specific, and I think both proper and properly qualified. If not, that's an error, and I'd be interested to be enlightened about it.

[Continued on next pg]

From pg 14 (Noam Chomsky on Anarchism, Marxism & Hope for the Future)..

## Marxism

**RBR:** Specifically, Leninism refers to a form of marxism that developed with V.I. Lenin. Are you implicitly distinguishing the works of Marx from the particular criticism you have of Lenin when you use the term 'Leninism'? Do you see a continuity between Marx's views and Lenin's later practices?

**CHOMSKY:** Bakunin's warnings about the *Red bureaucracy* that would institute *the worst of all despotic governments* were long before Lenin, and were directed against the followers of Mr. Marx. There were, in fact, followers of many different kinds; Pannekoek, Luxembour, Mattick and others are very far from Lenin, and their views often converge with elements of anarcho-syndicalism. Korsch and others wrote sympathetically of the anarchist revolution in Spain, in fact. There are continuities from Marx to Lenin, but there are also continuities to Marxists who were harshly critical of Lenin and Bolshevism. Teodor Shanin's work in the past years on Marx's later attitudes towards peasant revolution is also relevant here. I'm far from being a Marx scholar, and wouldn't venture any serious judgement on which of these continuities reflects the 'real Marx,' if there even can be an answer to that question.

**RBR:** Recently, we obtained a copy of your own Notes on Anarchism (re-published last year by Discussion Bulletin in the USA). In this you mention the views of the *early Marx*, in particular his development of the idea of alienation under capitalism. Do you generally agree with this division in Marx's life and work - a young, more libertarian socialist but, in later years, a firm authoritarian?

**CHOMSKY:** The early Marx draws extensively from the milieu in which he lived, and one finds many similarities to the thinking that animated classical liberalism, aspects of the Enlightenment and French and German Romanticism. Again, I'm not enough of a Marx scholar to pretend to an authoritative judgement. My impression, for what it is worth, is that the early

Marx was very much a figure of the late Enlightenment, and the later Marx was a highly authoritarian activist, and a critical analyst of capitalism, who had little to say about socialist alternatives. But those are impressions.

**RBR:** From my understanding, the core part of your overall view is informed by your concept of human nature. In the past the idea of human nature was seen, perhaps, as something regressive, even limiting. For instance, the unchanging aspect of human nature is often used as an argument for why things can't be changed fundamentally in the direction of anarchism. You take a different view? Why?

**CHOMSKY:** The core part of anyone's point of view is some concept of human nature, however it may be remote from awareness or lack articulation. At least, that is true of people who consider themselves moral agents, not monsters. Monsters aside, whether a person who advocates reform or revolution, or stability or return to earlier stages, or simply cultivating one's own garden, takes stand on the grounds that it is 'good for people.' But that judgement is based on some conception of human nature, which a reasonable person will try to make as clear as possible, if only so that it can be evaluated. So in this respect I'm no different from anyone else.

You're right that human nature has been seen as something 'regressive,' but that must be the result of profound confusion. Is my granddaughter no different from a rock, a salamander, a chicken, a monkey? A person who dismisses this absurdity as absurd recognises that there is a distinctive human nature. We are left only with the question of what it is - a highly nontrivial and fascinating question, with enormous scientific interest and human significance. We know a fair amount about certain aspects of it - not those of major human significance. Beyond that, we are left with our hopes and wishes, intuitions and speculations. There is nothing *regressive* about the fact that a human embryo is so constrained that it does not grow wings, or that its visual system cannot function in the manner of an insect, or that it lacks the homing instinct of pigeons. The same factors that constrain the organism's devel-

opment also enable it to attain a rich, complex, and highly articulated structure, similar in fundamental ways to conspecifics, with rich and remarkable capacities. An organism that lacked such determinative intrinsic structure, which of course radically limits the paths of development, would be some kind of amoeboid creature, to be pitied (even if it could survive somehow). The scope and limits of development are logically related.

Take language, one of the few distinctive human capacities about which much is known. We have very strong reasons to believe that all possible human languages are very similar; a Martian scientist observing humans might conclude that there is just a single language, with minor variants. The reason is that the particular aspect of human nature that underlies the growth of language allows very restricted options. Is this limiting? Of course. Is it liberating? Also of course. It is these very restrictions that make it possible for a rich and intricate system of expression of thought to develop in similar ways on the basis of very rudimentary, scattered, and varied experience.

What about the matter of biologically-determined human differences? That these exist is surely true, and a cause for joy, not fear or regret. Life among clones would not be worth living, and a sane person will only rejoice that others have abilities that they do not share. That should be elementary. What is commonly believed about these matters is strange indeed, in my opinion.

Is human nature, whatever it is, conducive to the development of anarchist forms of life or a barrier to them? We do not know enough to answer, one way or the other. These are matters for experimentation and discovery, not empty pronouncements.

## The future

**RBR:** To begin finishing off, I'd like to ask you briefly about some current issues on the left. I don't know if the situation is similar in the USA but here, with the fall of the Soviet Union, a certain demoralisation has set in on the left. It isn't so much that people were dear supporters of what existed in the Soviet Union,

but rather it's a general feeling that with the demise of the Soviet Union the idea of socialism has also been dragged down. Have you come across this type of demoralisation? What's your response to it?

**CHOMSKY:** My response to the end of Soviet tyranny was similar to my reaction to the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini. In all cases, it is a victory for the human spirit. It should have been particularly welcome to socialists, since a great enemy of socialism had at last collapsed. Like you, I was intrigued to see how people - including people who had considered themselves anti-Stalinist and anti-Leninist - were demoralised by the collapse of the tyranny. What it reveals is that they were more deeply committed to Leninism than they believed.

There are, however, other reasons to be concerned about the elimination of this brutal and tyrannical system, which was as much *socialist* as it was *democratic* (recall that it claimed to be both, and that the latter claim was ridiculed in the West, while the former was eagerly accepted, as a weapon against socialism - one of the many examples of the service of Western intellectuals to power). One reason has to do with the nature of the Cold War. In my view, it was in significant measure a special case of the 'North-South conflict,' to use the current euphemism for Europe's conquest of much of the world. Eastern Europe had been the original 'third world,' and the Cold War from 1917 had no slight resemblance to the reaction of attempts by other parts of the third world to pursue an independent course, though in this case differences of scale gave the conflict a life of its own. For this reason, it was only reasonable to expect the region to return pretty much to its earlier status: parts of the West, like the Czech Republic or Western Poland, could be expected to rejoin it, while others revert to the traditional service role, the ex-Nomenklatura becoming the standard third world elite (with the approval of Western state-corporate power, which generally prefers them to alternatives). That was not a pretty prospect, and it has led to immense suffering.

[Continued on pg 20]

All that has ever happened before this moment is irrelevant  
By Azarin Sadeg

## My Evening With Orhan Pamuk

Orhan Pamuk walked onto the stage and the excitement of hearing him read from his



new book consumed my breathing, reaching inside my veins, my stomach, my eyes, and I felt enchanted by his tall silhouette and the shine in his silver hair. I couldn't decide which one of his little gestures was the most charming; his subtle smile as he glanced at the audience, or his obvious difficulty in pronouncing some words? In the end, I was particularly captivated by his inquisitive eyes, as if he could still look at the world with amazement.

I was sitting right in front of him, trying to hide my restlessness, trying to focus on what he was reading, wondering if I should have laughed out loud like some of the other voices in the crowd. I envied these women who could sound so confident, so carefree, and noisy, only enjoying his text, not on the verge of having a heart attack like me. Then it was time for his conversation with "the moderator". (Don't you dislike this term as much as I do? So let's call him TM.)

After the first question was asked, Orhan Pamuk (OP) began talking, mostly like a conversation with himself. But TM didn't give up. His fidgety hands and back and forth glances at his notes were the signs of his efforts to open up a dialogue, and

drive it toward a certain zone in his mind.

OP talked about love and how the women in Turkey smiled at him after his latest novel, *The Museum of Innocence* was first out - a love story with too many scenes about virginity and sex - but he wondered why, conversely, the men appeared distant and uncomfortable. He added that this work had been compared to a modern *Leili and Majnoon*, but he said that no one should simplify it and the reader should know that his novel is also about many other things. Then Pamuk changed the subject and said how nervous he was about the real museum opening in Turkey and he revealed his own obsession with small museums and their intimacy and his fascination with objects (as a trigger to evoke a hidden memory). We learned that he had actually gathered - like Kemal his protagonist - all kinds of insignificant objects to create his own personal museum, but no one should expect this place to be like the Louvre or the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

As he was talking about Istanbul and describing people and places of his youth, I kept thinking that he should be somehow obsessed with his own memories. But don't all his books have this same theme in common? This deep nostalgia for a black and white Istanbul of the '50s and '60s: "I see the tourists going to Istanbul and coming back complaining to me that the city has nothing to do with my melancholic descriptions," he said. "But I have to say that while Istanbul has become westernized compared to the Istanbul of my books, all these western cities have become even more westernized." And the hall exploded with laughter.

OP looked pleased and TM uncomfortable, checking his watch.

His last remark was about the notion of exile. He said that since teaching at Columbia, he hears academia talking about diaspora, expanding it to the size of the whole world. "But as much as the statistics says, only 3 percent of people living in ex-

ile. The rest of the people still live in their homes. So nobody should be surprised that I'm writing for this majority. I am this kind of person. I like to stay in the same city, to live in the same house, to sit in the same room, gazing at the same view," he said. Again, everyone laughed.

When it was time for questions, I managed to get in line leaving my seat to clamber over knees, legs and purses, but there were a few already waiting behind the microphones, even more motivated than me. They asked him about politics, Islam, the veiled suicidal girls, even psychology. When I was only short of two people standing between me and my question, TM announced that time was almost up and the next two questions would be the last ones of the night. OP looked at both sides of the hall, counting the people standing in line and said that he'd be willing to answer all the questions, but they should be brief. And the next two were really brief. Yet, as my turn came and I reached the microphone, TM rubbed his hands, saying, "OK, Thank you Mr Pamuk for your time!"

There would be now be a "book signing session in the hallway," and got up.

OP turned toward me, shrugged and raised his arms in the air, indicating that he didn't approve of what had just happened. At that moment, I was pretty angry and disappointed. I could feel the gush of fear at the back of my mind, teasing me, telling me that I was going to fail again. After all, this week had been pretty hectic, with too many rejections. Like everyone else, I rushed outside. The panic took hold of me as I realized that I wasn't fast enough. The book signing queue for OP was overcrowded, and endless. I hated myself feeling so little at the sight of so many elderly - way faster than myself - already standing in line. I got to the end of line and took all my OP books out, plus my Pamuk story. Betty (my friend and another devoted OP fan) joined me. As we were talking, someone tapped on my shoulder. I looked

back. It was a Japanese girl I didn't know. "I recognize you," she said. "You couldn't ask your question. What was it?" Another woman next to her leaned forward: "So unfortunate that the time was up and TM had to cut you," she said. I was humbled that everyone had sympathized with my pain.

So as we stepped forward, I talked at length about my passion for literature and for Pamuk and revealed my question. Everyone around us agreed that it was a great question and expressed their interest to listen to OP's answer. The line moved slowly, but I wished it could have moved slower, so the joy of anticipation could have lasted longer. All wishes don't come true, but some do. The great moment I was waiting (as if I had waited for it all my life) arrived. I was finally right there, in front of the greatest writer of our time, the man whose books have changed my life forever. He seemed triumphant, behind a wall made of serenity.

As soon as he saw me, his face lit up. "I'm sorry you couldn't ask your question," he said with a genuine smile. "It was TM who didn't let me." Then he stared at my copy of *The Black Book* (a totally worn out copy that I've read so many times) and frowned teasingly, "What have you done to my book?" he asked, but watching my reaction, laughed. "Actually, it's good." I knelt down to be at the same level as his eyes. My injured knee hurt like hell, but it was a sweet hell. I didn't care. "I'm your biggest fan," I said. "I'm also a writer and I've written something just for you," pushing my story forward on the table. He looked at the title. "Wow," he said and hurried to grab my pages. I wanted to cry in happiness. Even Orhan Pamuk couldn't resist his curiosity to find out more about a title like *Becoming Orhan Pamuk!*

[Continued on next pg]

## From previous pg...

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I was surprised by the urgency in her request. "Please hurry," she said. "There's a Turkish TV crew outside. They're looking for someone who has read Pamuk. But so far they haven't found anyone in the audience. So I told them about you. I'm sure you can answer to all their questions." I sighed, and thought I shouldn't miss this opportunity of talking about my all time favorite subject: Orhan Pamuk! So I agreed and walked toward the big sculpture by the fountain to find the Turkish crew guy who was gentle and polite. "Am I the only one here who has read Pamuk?" I asked, and he nodded. I was the only one who was brave enough to talk about it, I was told. While waiting, we talked about OP and his works. I asked him why the Turks didn't like him as much as the rest of the world. He was a bit hesitant but finally opened up. "He's an orientalist." Of course, we got involved in a discussion on the meaning of an orientalist.

The other crew member suggested we should move to the other side of the yard, where

Orhan Pamuk (still signing the books) would be visible in the background. The interviewer – a gorgeous girl – asked me about my reasons for being an OP fan, and I just felt totally comfortable answering this question and all the questions that followed. I think the interview lasted about six or seven minutes, more or less. I'm not sure.

After thanking the Turkish crew, I turned to catch a final glimpse of my favorite author, and realized that the book signing line had disappeared, but Pamuk was still there, taking



pictures with fans. I couldn't help but run inside the building, asking him to take a picture with me too.

You can't understand my joy when he accepted. My only problem? I had no camera. But my dear friend, Betty, came to my rescue with her iPhone. I moved next to him, my shoulder almost touching his. As we were posing for the camera and while Betty was trying to figure out how her phone works, I whispered to him: "Did you know that the Turkish TV just interviewed me?" He glanced quickly at me, looking surprised. "Why you? What were you talking about?" he asked. "YOU," I replied, pointing at the people around us. "Out there, there was nobody else who could talk about you," I said. OP raised his eyebrows. "Why didn't they ask ME?" he asked.

I knew he was frustrated, willing to talk more about himself, about his life and his marvelous novels, describing a new image of Istanbul that no one has ever imagined, taking everyone with him to the depth of Bosphorus, or talking about the necessity of

writing novels, even answering my question and all the questions that nobody has asked him yet. "I'm sure they'll be coming for you too," I said. "Don't worry."

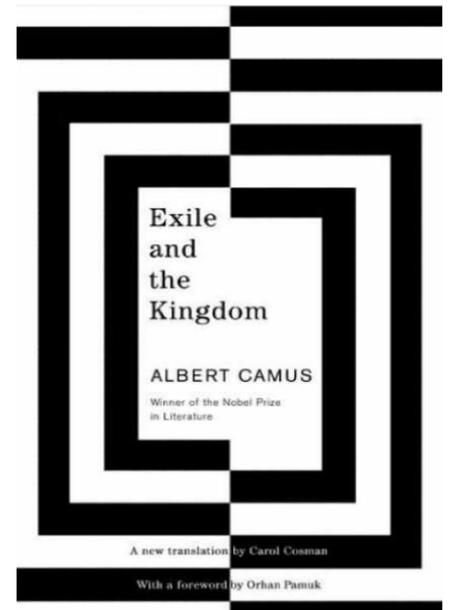
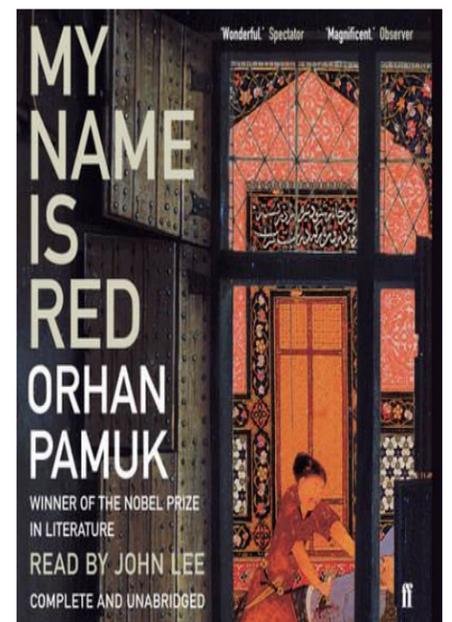
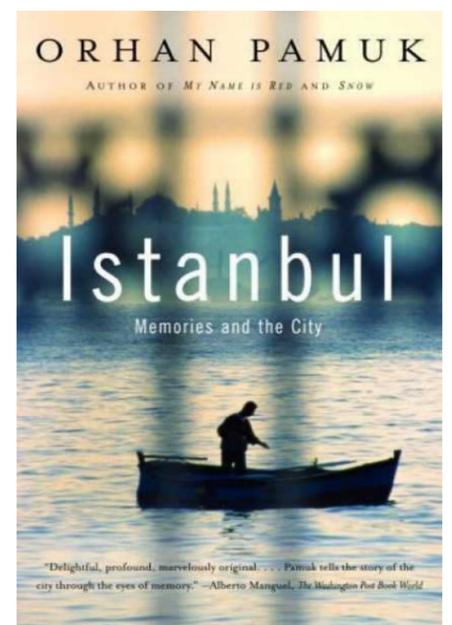
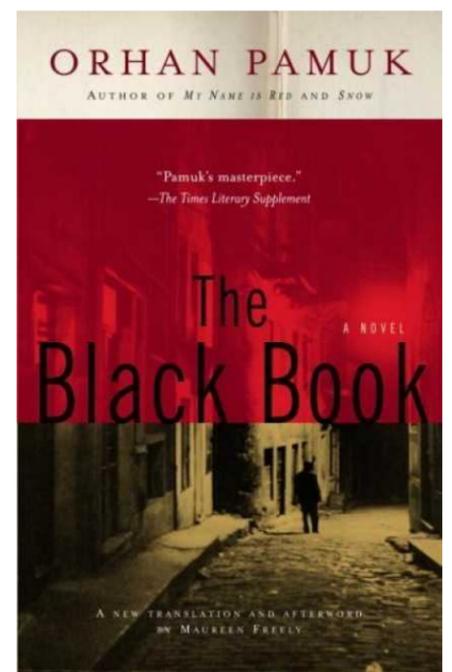
At this point, we froze and Betty took a blurry picture from us.

We left as Orhan was walking to the Turkish crewman and preparing to stand in front of the camera where a blinding light would to shine over him. My knee didn't hurt anymore. On the way back, after I dropped Betty home, I kept thinking that I should send a lovely thank you note to TM, because if it wasn't for his cutting my question, OP wouldn't have noticed or remembered me, he wouldn't have been nicer to me, he wouldn't have accepted to read my story, the Japanese girl wouldn't have recognized me or talked to me, the Turkish crew wouldn't have interviewed me and I wouldn't have appeared in the same programme with my favorite writer, I wouldn't have taken that blurry picture, and I wouldn't have had that absurd conversation.

Oh TM! I'll always be grateful to you, even if OP would probably never send me a message telling me to keep up the good work, or that I might have to give up on my dreams because everyone isn't made for his kind of eternity, or even telling me nothing. Nothing. Just a letter from him, so I can start my own private museum; my museum of innocence.

How can I thank you enough, dear TM? How can I ever? As soon as I got home, I dropped on the nearest chair, took out my copy of *The Museum of Innocence* with excitement and opened it to the first page, and read the first sentence, "It was the happiest moment of my life, though I didn't know it."

*The English translation of 'The Museum of Innocence' by Pamuk's long time collaborator Maureen Freely was published last month by Alfred A. Knopf.*



By Dr Nastaran Adiberad

**T**he intensification of violence against defenseless people on 13 Aban

(November 4) proves once again that violence has become an ingrained tactic of the Iranian regime. A five month long battle between the Iranian people and the government has forced the ruling faction to turn to frenzied violence. This violence stems primarily from the danger that threatens the regime's interests and uncontested authority. Although people still tolerate this violence, the fire under the ashes can turn into a conflagration because people also have sufficient justification to take up violence. Unlike the ninth government, which only senses the danger to its power and interests, Iranian people are enraged by threats, feeling of insecurity, endangerment of their lives and properties, disregard for their human and decision-making rights, insults, lies, ridicule, rape and unfounded accusations.

If we consider the phenomenon of rage from the perspective of experts in the behavioral sciences, they divide the sources of rage into five categories. They believe the following are the root causes of rage in individuals:

1-Endangerment of power: this happens when one feels vulnerable and impotent by the actions or words of others. The violence that results from the fear of losing power is the most common cause of rage.

2-Threat to security and wellbeing: beatings or different kinds of threats (such as "I will beat you," "I will throw you out") are all considered a menace to a person's safety and wellbeing. They can arouse uncontrollable rage and set in motion catastrophic incidents.

3-Danger to self-sufficiency: this kind of rage occurs when a person feels a loss of control over his life. He feels that he does not receive recognition from others and is gripped by a constant sense of inadequacy.

4-Assault on self-confidence: the need to feel appreciated and important is the basis for activities that lead to growth, fame,



and popularity. Therefore, insult, criticism, invective, ridicule, defamation and other similar conducts will prompt extreme rage.

5-Violation of a human being's sanctity and heartfelt beliefs: when the personal beliefs and convictions of an individual are violated by others, his private sanctity is under assault and he harbors rage and hatred for violators. From a scientific point of view, both the government and the movement are on the brink of erupting into violence. No doubt, violence will benefit one side while harming the other side. Therefore, the main question at this point is "what will be the reaction of each of the two sides under the present sensitive circumstances"? Psychologists believe that individuals behave in three different ways when they are confronted with the situations that give rise to rage:

1-Lack of self-assertion: this reduces the individual to passivity in such a way that others easily trample on his emotions and rights. The individuals who cling to this passive attitude are hesitant and their calm appearance hides a restless personality. They recoil from problems and, without considering their own emotions, agree with others. They fear to express their opinions, underestimate themselves and lack self-confidence. The aim of this type of individ-

ual is to make others happy at any price and by shunning from any kind of conflict. The suppressed rage of this type of individual may lead to blood pressure or depression or cause other morbid reactions, such as disconcertedness or aggressiveness. In this situation, the rage can be deflected inward and generate self-destructive behavior such as depression, suicide, and addiction.

2-Aggression: aggression manifests itself through threats and violation of rights of others. The peculiarities of this type are: cutting off others before their speech is finished, speaking loudly and aggressively, being scornful, expressing one's opinions in a harsh and intense manner, feeling superiority over others and annoying others to preempt being annoyed by them. To achieve his goal, the aggressive person sometimes goes as far as to commit violence without thinking about his own interests. He utilizes any means to force the other to retreat or surrender.

3-Self-assertion: this involves the assertion of one's rights without encroaching on the rights of others. The peculiarities of this type are: responding spontaneously and creatively to all situations in a friendly but decisive manner, mentioning important issues, expressing one's emotions and opinions,

valuing oneself and refusing to inflict injury on either oneself or others. A self-assertive individual adheres to justice for all sides of a relationship. Expressing oneself is usually the most proper response. The people who express themselves have more control over their lives, are often satisfied with their relationships, and frequently achieve their goals. Besides, people trust and respect such a person because they view him as firm and decisive in his word and deed.

Therefore, if we examine the incidents of the last five months after the birth of the Green Movement, we will notice that people, despite the presence of factors that could easily ignite violence, have expressed their dissatisfaction only through a non-violent approach. This reaction is different from the behavior of the protesters in the last 30 years especially that of young people. A look at the high rate of depression, emotional problems, addiction, suicide, and silent dissatisfaction in the last 30 years indicates that people, through a passive approach, had deflected their rage and irritation inward and, by surrendering to self-destruction, had created a depressed society. But the tenth presidential election was the first opportunity for people to express their resentment in a dignified and unflinching way. The presence of people on the streets, their cries and the display of their passion and excitement during the election, as they thronged to vote against the hardliners, clearly signified their determination to express their discontentment through non-violent means. Therefore, we must note that the people's decision to voice their dissent and restrain their rage, instead of turning to violence, was an effective behavioral transformation.

[Continued on next pg]

**From previous pg...**

In contrast, the totalitarian faction, enraged by the threat to its power and interests, has tried to silence people through aggression, repression, torture, kidnapping and other barbaric methods. The escalation of violence, which became quite apparent on November 4, signaled the regime's decision to drag people into a violent encounter. This may have been a prelude to an unequal battle that could wipe out the protesters and the Green Movement and restore the situation that existed before the presidential election.

Now the question is who wishes to replace the people's peaceful demonstrations with naked violence. Which party benefits from violence and massacres? Undoubtedly, the military generals, who have been trained for war and violence and look for a chance to elevate their positions, will be the chief victors of this unequal struggle. Have we ever asked ourselves why the repressive faction concocts implausible lies about the murder of the Basijis? Are these not lies designed to justify the use of violence by the regime? Appearing as the victim of the recent incidents will only give the totalitarians the excuse they need to intensify their violence. And who will be the real victor of this unequal clash between a people who have sought their human rights through rational and non-violent means and a block of power that relies on force, deception, and money? A look at the countries that are torn by civil war warns us that we cannot take the path through blood and fire in order to reach justice, freedom, and equality. The secret of the movement's victory is the broad participation of various segments of society and the joining of all victims of injustice with it. Violence and retaliation can only create skirmishes between small groups of people as others become indifferent or are reduced to silent and dissatisfied observers.

- **The Triumph of Reason over Rage**

How can we keep society immune from violence as the strug-

gle surges ahead? From a psychological viewpoint, what prevents society from slipping into violence in the current condition is the sway of rationality and logic over the movement's body. Logic conquers rage and keeps the movement away from violent actions.

To manage and control current volatile conditions, we require a cold and solid logic. The five month long struggle of the Green Movement demonstrates that the people's logic has succeeded in curbing the regime's murderous rage to a certain extent. In contrast, the movement has steered the protests toward non-violence. Although the regime has tried to provoke people, the protesters have responded by containing the crisis; their success in taking the initiative has reduced the number of the victims.

This is a great victory for the Green Movement.

We should keep in mind that the movement that Iranian people brought into being five months ago is the manifestation of a mature and logical rage against the oppression and inequality that has been tolerated for 30 years. The key to this movement's victory is its calm, creative, and non-violent struggle, precisely as it has been conducted so far. Only in this way can the Green Movement gain the support of all segments of society; it can broaden its base only if the cost of participation is minimal.

Abstaining from violence can produce this condition. Although some people think that this approach will prolong the struggle, who can guarantee that the use of violence will hasten its course? On the other hand, the opposing faction plans to crush the people's resistance by provoking them into violence because it knows that a long conflict can exhaust and dissipate its forces. It is not possible to uproot the consequences of 30 years of silence and inward rage in a few months. At the same time, the seizure of power through violence can lead to another kind of dictatorship, albeit in the name of democracy and not religion.

**From pg 1...**

Mohamad Heidari Mehr, in prison so that the Capitalists with less hassle can take the life out of these workers. Wishful thinking. We don't doubt that Ali and his colleagues will continue the struggle against oppressive capitalists and expose the role of their servants from inside prison. They will continue their struggle from a prison full of victims of the capitalist system and once again join our ranks outside with more valuable experience, to continue the struggle against oppression. We workers together with our wives and children stand aside Ali's wife and children and those of his four co-workers. In condemning this inhumane and anti-worker act, we seek their unconditional release and return to work.

Ali and his fellows are of the industrial proletariat fighters of Xusestan. They are of the same as the industrial oil heroes, the main force behind the fall of the Pahlavi regime and the apostles of those for whom tens of millions of people shouted slogans: "Our oil workers, our ardent leaders". Since the day Ali and his colleagues formed their organization, they have been bombarded with employer conspiracies and pressure from intelligence and judicial agents so that the working classes of Iran aren't afforded confidence to breathe let alone defend the trampled rights of Haft Tappeh's workers. But these conspiracies did not bend their determination by any measure, instead they continued their pursuit for the absolute rights of their fellow working class with more determination than ever. Ali strived for the workers against the capitalists with pen and sword (the latter peacefully by marching) until the very last moments of his freedom.

At the heart of the conflict that exists in society, the capitalists are cooking up a salty soup for us workers and our families. They have withheld milk from millions of young, pe and paper from millions of children, healthcare from hundreds of thousands of our sick. They won't even give us our hand to mouth wages. They now want to ensure our deprivation with the removal of subsidies, pay rises and bonuses. They know that we will tirelessly strive to hurl this soup down their guts. They take Ali and other Alis from us to weaken this forward moving struggle. But Alis are engaged in the struggle from inside the prisons and we outside will intensify our efforts to fill their places. The imprisonment of representative workers of Haft Tappeh not only cannot intimidate other Haft Tappeh workers, but will ensure that Haft Tappeh workers will return this service by fellow workers in prison and support them in every way possible.

Our duty as workers is to support the families of these dear prisoners and help them in any way we can.

We believe that workers in every part of the world, worker organizations and liberal individuals everywhere, will not leave the families of these prisoners alone but will support them materially and spiritually.

Najibeh Salehzadeh and Mahmoud Salehi

From pg 15 (Noam Chomsky on Anarchism, Marxism & Hope for the Future)..

are suffused with extreme hypocrisy, in my opinion.

### Capitalism



Another reason for concern has to do with the matter of deterrence and non-alignment. Grotesque as the Soviet empire was, its very existence offered a certain space for non-alignment, and for perfectly cynical reasons, it sometimes provided assistance to victims of Western attack. Those options are gone, and the South is suffering the consequences. A third reason has to do with what the business press calls *the pampered Western workers* with their *luxurious lifestyles*. With much of Eastern Europe returning to the fold, owners and managers have powerful new weapons against the working classes and the poor at home. GM and VW can not only transfer production to Mexico and Brazil (or at least threaten to, which often amounts to the same thing), but also to Poland and Hungary, where they can find skilled and trained workers at a fraction of the cost. They are gloating about it, understandably, given the guiding values.

We can learn a lot about what the Cold War (or any other conflict) was about by looking at who is cheering and who is unhappy after it ends. By that criterion, the victors in the Cold War include Western elites and the ex-Nomenklatura, now rich beyond their wildest dreams, and the losers include a substantial part of the population of the East along with working people and the poor in the West, as well as popular sectors in the South that have sought an independent path. Such ideas tend to arouse near hysteria among Western intellectuals, when they can even perceive them, which is rare. That's easy to show. It's also understandable. The observations are correct, and subversive of power and privilege; hence hysteria. In general, the reactions of an honest person to the end of the Cold War will be more complex than just pleasure over the collapse of a brutal tyranny, and prevailing reactions

**RBR:** In many ways the left today finds itself back at its original starting point in the last century. Like then, it now faces a form of capitalism that is in the ascendancy. There would seem to be greater 'consensus' today, more than at any other time in history, that capitalism is the only valid form of economic organisation possible, this despite the fact that wealth inequality is widening.

Against this backdrop, one could argue that the left is unsure of how to go forward. How do you look at the current period? Is it a question of 'back to basics'? Should the effort now be towards bringing out the libertarian tradition in socialism and towards stressing democratic ideas?

**CHOMSKY:** This is mostly propaganda, in my opinion. What is called

'capitalism' is basically a system of corporate mercantilism, with huge and largely unaccountable private tyrannies exercising vast control over the economy, political systems, and social and cultural life, operating in close co-operation with powerful states that intervene massively in the domestic economy and international society. That is dramatically true of the United States, contrary to much illusion. The rich and privileged are no more willing to face market discipline than they have been in the past, though they consider it just fine for the general population. Merely to cite a few illustrations, the Reagan administration, which revelled in free market rhetoric, also boasted to the business community that it was the most protectionist in post-war US history - actually more than all others combined. Newt Gingrich, who leads the current crusade, represents a superrich district that receives more federal subsidies than any other suburban region in the country, outside of the federal system itself. The 'conservatives' who are calling for an end to school lunches for hungry children are also demanding an increase in the budget for the Pentagon, which was established in the late 1940s in its current form because - as the business press was kind enough to tell us - high tech industry cannot survive in a *pure, competitive, unsubsidized, 'free enterprise' economy*, and the government must be its *saviour*. Without the *saviour*, Gingrich's constituents would be poor working people (if they were lucky). There would be no computers, electronics generally, aviation industry, metallurgy, automation, etc., etc., right down the list. Anarchists, of all people, should not be taken in by these traditional frauds.

More than ever, libertarian socialist ideas are relevant, and the population is very much open to them. Despite a huge mass of

corporate propaganda, outside of educated circles, people still maintain pretty much their traditional attitudes. In the US, for example, more than 80% of the population regard the economic system as *inherently unfair* and the political system as a fraud, which serves the *special interests*, not *the people*. Overwhelming majorities think working people have too little voice in public affairs (the same is true in England), that the government has the responsibility of assisting people in need, that spending for education and health should take precedence over budget-cutting and tax cuts, that the current Republican proposals that are sailing through Congress benefit the rich and harm the general population, and so on. Intellectuals may tell a different story, but it's not all that difficult to find out the facts.

**RBR:** To a point anarchist ideas have been vindicated by the collapse of the Soviet Union - the predictions of Bakunin have proven to be correct. Do you think that anarchists should take heart from this general development and from the perceptiveness of Bakunin's analysis? Should anarchists look to the period ahead with greater confidence in their ideas and history?

**CHOMSKY:** I think - at least hope - that the answer is implicit in the above. I think the current era has ominous portent, and signs of great hope. Which result ensues depends on what we make of the opportunities.

**RBR:** Lastly, Noam, a different sort of question. We have a pint of Guinness on order for you here. When are you going to come and drink it?

**CHOMSKY:** Keep the Guinness ready. I hope it won't be too long. Less jocularly, I'd be there tomorrow if we could. We (my wife came along with me, unusual for these constant trips) had a marvellous time in Ireland, and would love to come back. Why don't we? Won't bore you with the sordid details, but demands are extraordinary, and mounting - a reflection of the conditions I've been trying to describe.

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It's Monday, 18 Aban (9 November), I come home tired from school. My mind is totally occupied with children, their problems, their issues. It seems that every year family problems and consequently children's problems are getting worse. In an attempt to change the course of my thoughts I decided to start reading the newspaper. I'm immediately drawn to the article "Rise in child kidnappings in the south of Tehran – Barefoot with syringes and blood". I begin reading. Suddenly I feel a cold sweat all over my body. It is impossible to relax and concentrate on what I am reading. I have to repeat the same sentence several times. Especially as I read the interview with the mother of one of these children. I feel absolutely terrified and at the same time helpless. The article brings tears to my eyes. I repeat the sentences in my mind several times, "Here at least two children go missing every month".

Is there no one responsible to ask why children should go missing in one of the southern areas of Tehran? There is no one to even look for these children, indicating that these children are often never found. If they are found they are no longer a child anymore and have grown up overnight, each with a catalogue of terrible experiences at such an early stage in life. Has anyone asked where these children might be? Is there anyone to think that these children who've been kidnapped, lost, are missing or any other word that may describe their condition more respectfully, when found are no longer normal. In fact they are a pulp of a child. According to a mother's description, they are chained up in the house. Children who are harassed in this way will normally lose their human identity and before long, it is these children who will go on the streets and seek out other victims. For those who aren't found, there's the possibility that their body parts have been sold or that they've been forced into other lucrative business... Tehran has many different faces. Faces that are contrasting. You will see different

## Our Barefoot Children



things depending on which train station you emerge from. In Tehran you can easily find the most stylish apartments and luxurious houses. You will find houses that you would need to pay 150 million Tomans to rent or as deposit alone for the house. You will also find houses that have the most stylish swimming pools for private use; they often have several bedrooms, each with a private WC and bathroom. In the same city you can easily find houses that resemble an animal hut rather than a house. Wealth and poverty wall to wall next to each other. If you visit Tehran's bazaar you will quickly see vast wealth. In the tight and narrow streets of the bazaar you will see the most expensive cars passing by. Yet at the same time in the streets of Nasser Khossro, Molavi, directly behind the Bazaar, addiction and poverty exist behind the door of every single house. Children's lives are at great risk, "children who wander in the alley ways and have only learnt to exchange their lives for a piece of bread". It is in these allies that you can actually see the cause of all the misery when wealth and poverty stand together. There is no sign of social justice. Have any of the people who have been elected by the government to look after these children ever searched to find out where these children may be or actually tried to put a stop to kidnapping in these cities or found any solutions at all?

Many years ago, I had a very wise teacher, she taught us social, in other words the social sciences. One day she told us a story by Aziz Nesin, the Turkish comedy script-writer. The story was about a man who saw someone murdering another. He ran to get the police, so he could stop what was happening. Every officer he came to made excuses and wouldn't go with him to the scene. One said he wasn't on duty; another said he was on another call, and so on. The man finally lost patience and control and began shouting "What sort of country is this?". All of a sudden about ten officers surrounded him and arrested the guy for acting against national security in opposition to the government and for shouting slogans against the government. Of recent this story has crossed my mind several times. In parts of this city, people who are tired of injustice take to the streets and scream, often they don't even scream and remain silent in protest. Nevertheless there are still thousands of secret police and officers present who beat people with the first thing they find in their hands and arrest them. In other parts of this city crimes take place that are the cause and result of the same injustice. On 13 Aban, a woman was gang raped in Varamin, and just a couple of hours away in another part of the city children are kidnapped... It's good to have a look at the papers now and again just to get a small idea of what is going on around us.

When approaching certain events such as Qods day or Student events...special alerts are announced and all the military and law enforcements will be on standby; they have never put any such measure in place in order to find kidnapped children. There has never been a status declaration to find the gangs who distribute crystal, crack and heroin.

No one in the country is paying attention to the main solution. No one is thinking that if injustice was stopped and eradicated, if social wealth was shared fairly among people, if oppression and discrimination was dealt with, if... if... that people would not need to pour onto the streets to shout about their pain. There would be no need for our parents to leave their children in alleyways out of poverty. Indeed, which security ruins the government and the regime: ignoring injustice and those who don't receive the most basic of human rights, or crying out to draw attention to the injustice? The capitalist media has also forgotten these children. Not even international human rights organizations are noticing these children. Seriously how can this be? Here is the article I refer to in full, as it appeared in *Etemad* newspaper on Monday 18 Aban 1388.

*'Rise in kidnappings in the southern cities of Tehran Barefoot with syringes and blood' By Fahimeh Khazar Heydary*

*A corner of the city is made colourful with children's theatres and happiness, in another corner it's children's week. Newspapers report children making chains of peace with their innocent hands. The kite festival has made Tehran beautiful, temporarily. The academic year has just begun and the national nutrition committee talks of the nourishment of the ringing of the "milk bell" at schools and we all say we are happy.*

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We are all happy because last year nearly 3000 children books have been published and thank god we are equipped with a festival of creative children. We have achieved our mission all alone with the weight on our shoulders. We are all fine and the world is a place that will soon be forgotten. However not too far, not so near, somewhere around here, here maybe, right in front of our citizen's eyes, in the middle of the commercial hub of the capital, is where children perish pitiless in the crossing wind. Here every day is the same. Even during the happy times of National Children's Day, their share was to be crushed under the heavy steps of life and that's it. Here days mean nothing but irreparable shame.

We haven't come far. We haven't even left the capital and its brightly lit nights and deflective highway curves. We have only been thrown from one of the most crowded train carriages to one of the stations in southern Tehran, and life suddenly looks very different. Is it really only a few stops between the big city festivals and the astringent taste of the lives of these children?

Is there a single person here to ask why the children in one of the southern inner cities of Tehran have gone missing for months one after the other with no one to look for them. At last they are never found or even if they are found they are not a child anymore, they have grown up with the hardships of life and have gained experiences through difficult times in the early stages of their lives. Has anyone ever searched for these children? Does anyone ask why these children that are kidnapped, lost, missing or any other word that you might want to describe them by which might be more respectful, when found, are no longer a normal child. In fact they are a pulp of a child?

"Here, at least two children go missing every month, and almost every time we get no result even when searching for

them' Majid, a member of the board of directors of the Organisation for the Protection of Children's Rights tells us this shocking news, "There has never been a proper decision made to stop this situation in this area". It seems those responsible for children's affairs and budgets, prefer to ignore such an important issue. They think it will be fixed as time goes by or forgotten after a while.

These days, living in Tehran does not allow people to feel sorry for one another or help each other in difficult times, as everyone is busy with their own lives. Iranians say "Bani adam



azaye yekdigarand", this means that people who live in one country are somehow related to each other, or in other words they are in need of each other's help. Considering this, if one part of society is experiencing difficult times, then this will definitely have an effect on and involve other parts of that society too. But then it seems even this part isn't even important to us. Not only for us, for institutions responsible. However between the deadlock of the zig-zag and narrow of these allies, it is about ten years that a light is always on, and men and women who were the founders of the children's home, are working hard to change the direction of the winds that are effecting the lives of children in the area.

Majid is one the oldest members of the home, a hardworking volunteer who has worked

with the deprived children of the south for almost ten years. He knows many different people and has many different stories to tell. He talks about children who used to be in the care of the home but have been kidnapped and have never been found again. He talks about other children who were found but were no longer the same child.

Barefoot with syringe and blood

Children love to go out; but leaving the home means exposure to a dangerous world. It means all the syringes which are covered in blood. Syringes

which have been left on the streets by the addicts after use. You walk, but under each step you take there are plenty of syringes that are infected and dangerous. Young children play barefoot on the streets among the syringes with sharp needles. There is no one around to stop them. Not their addicted parents who sit at home using drugs, nor the local council who is responsible for collecting the rubbish off the streets. Majid says: "These syringes have become a natural feature of this region and no one has a solution for this. Such that we are too scared to run a test for Hepatitis among people. I am absolutely sure that this disease is quite common among the children in these areas." In the distance between the houses of Menvar and Sita Akbari, perhaps believing that it would stop intrigue and corruption, the council decided to use

a clearing to build a park and a green area. But criminals are still roaming the area. In this park, there are many addicts who sit and inject themselves without having to run away from anyone. Drug dealers carry on with their business. The park is a great place for the young generation who are not motivated and are unemployed. It's also a fantastic place to forget about happiness.

The damaged will damage There are certain areas like this in the city that the government pay's no attention to. These inner cities are filled with people who are disturbed and damaged, and you know well that if a person has suffered like that then they would want to disturb others too as they have not seen anything else in their lives. Majid talks about the southern cities, about children who've talked to him in the past ten years and whose pain he feels deeply. Majid and his colleagues started their work in the same park which is used today as a place for making drug deals. They began by teaching children and doing different exercises with them. Before long they realized that apart from teaching and exercise these children are in need of psychological and emotional counseling as well as decent nutrition.

"This was the reason we decided to rent a place in this area", Majid explains, "and with the help of the previous area's council we managed to set up the house of children. Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our initiative. We lost our previous place for various reasons, however we have again with the help of the council managed to rent a new place and will soon celebrate the this milestone with the children." Majid explains that abandoning education is one of the most common social phenomena in this region and that schools are empty, while the number of school age children is much greater in this area than other inner cities.

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Majid talks about the corruption in the neighbourhood and he feels sorry for those children who were once part of their program but are now familiar faces in the park: "Roma and Afghans are violently in charge of the drug gangs in the area and as children grow up day by day, they get stuck in their sink-hole more and more. When you walk in the streets, apart from the syringes there are other heart breaking scenes to witness such as the dead bodies of animals covered in blood. It's obvious that their veins have been cut with a knife.

Throughout these years, the children's home has been in search of children who have gone missing. Sadly the number of success stories are few. Fighting against kidnapping in such a vast area is not an easy job that can be carried out by a small number of volunteers. It calls for not only the people in charge but all members of society to pay attention to this heart breaking situation. Majid says that abandoning these children and banishing them from society makes the situation very dangerous for them: "Our society needs to pay more attention to these children. This is everyone's issue. We cannot say that this is not our problem because these children have been born into low income families who just brought children into their lives without having to raise them and just leave them on the streets. I don't think it's correct to think that way. This way of thinking needs to change. The child who stands behind the red lights and sells mah-jong was not necessarily born a beggar. In fact these are more like disabilities from poverty. Both children and their families are severely damaged and the severity of their condition is critical."

"The problem of addiction in the alley ways has roots in most houses of this neighbourhood. Poverty and corruption, all types of social harm can befall this region and thus the incidence of child kidnapping phe-

nomenon is not unlikely in such a situation."

Majid reflects on the past ten years in this area: "The amount of cases reported to us in the past ten years is very high and I have to say we are more concerned about the cases which have been reported recently. Even now if you walk around the streets in the area you will find on the walls hand written



notes of parents who report the kidnapping of their child. The only thing we can do with our limited powers and facilities is for example search for the children. We visit welfare centres and police stations in order to report the loss of the children. The truth is that the number of people responsible for all these issues is very limited and therefore such important situations are not even considered or dealt with. There have been cases where parents who know about us have actually come to us when their child was kidnapped even if the child was not in our care, and we have done our to help them. There have been many situations where the child was not even found and no one actually knew what terrible things had happened to the child."

Farhad Moradi, child rights activist, and another volunteer of the children's home provides a more economic analysis of the problem of child kidnapping in the region. In his opinion this part of the economic cycle in the region is known as the criminal economy and it's much wider than we realize, therefore it cannot be dealt with easily or without responsible government agencies. Moradi

explains: "Major and often hidden economy in this region's economy is in such criminal gangs dealing with drugs or gangs causing corruption and even gangs selling organs. The gangs often use children for the displacement of drugs. The area has a major player and many subsets, and the final subsets are the children who are kidnapped. These children are

used to displace drugs around the city. Unfortunately custodian institutions around the city are not paying attention to such an important issue, therefore many angles of this matter remain hidden. As far as we're concerned, we have not seen the government authorities come up with solutions for this problem or find out the cause of kidnapping in this area. As well as dealing with this major problem here, we are also trying to overcome the problems of almost 300 families with the help of our volunteers". There is nothing to say. Your central slogan can be justice. Social justice is more important than anything else. You do have a right, but is it not best if we at least stick to our own mottoes? In realizing a justice, should the honourable members of the government travel to south, north, east and west of the country by plane? Do we have to travel to more remote areas? These may also be the questions of the children who have been kidnapped and returned home as addicts. These are the questions that are lying on the floors, right next to the syringes which are covered in blood and have remained unanswered.

What ideas have they come up with in response to the question for the life crises of these children?

Majid pours clean water on our hands; the needs of these children cannot be covered by the welfare system. Welfare is a middle class organization. Relevant ministries should be responsible for this level of crises and problems. If the biggest factor of the extent of corruption and addiction and child abuse and kidnapping in this region is poverty and unemployment and lack of education, well we in our country have large ministries for these social problems who have the available budget in order to put the work on a correct path.

Until a father who abuses a child has job, how are you going to save that child? Welfare can gather these children from the streets and let go of them after a week. This won't fix anything, bearing in mind that even in welfare there have been reports of child abuse, and our concern with the welfare system is when are they going open the doors for social inspections? Often children at home undergo such violence that often child abuse can be one of the most ordinary issues that happen in houses in this area. This is why children run away, however nothing new is expected on the streets but more serious violence. This means if the authorities use their budget in the correct way and carry out their jobs properly, we will not have such problems and there will be no need for so many different organisations to get involved. One of the children was kidnapped and has been found. His mother is sitting in front of us, in the new building of the children's home. In her eyes she has the dream of a simple housewife and in order to keep her children safe she knows no other way but to use violence.

**Did you say you have tied your child up at home?**

Yes I have tied him up, so he can't run away.

**What do you use to tie him?**

A chain.

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**How old is your son?**

14 years old. It's possible that when I get home he's broken the lock or has unlocked the chain. He might even have gone.

**Your son's name was Menvar, is that correct?**

Yes.

**I heard that he was kidnapped previously in the same area.**

Yes, he was kidnapped when he was 10.



**How did you find him?**

We were new to the neighbourhood. I use to be a caretaker at Tehran Pars. Their father used to work too. He was also a caretaker. After five or six months the landlord placed all our belongings in storage and so we were homeless. We used to stay at family or friends houses for short periods of time. They had many children too. I used to tell my children to go to the park during the day and come back in the evening so that they wouldn't make noise in the two rooms that they had. After a while they would come back really late. It was then, that my children turned out like this. They stopped studying. Then we came here to Shoosh and have rented a house. Menvar was kidnapped here.

**How many children do you have?**

Six boys

**Why so many?**

Well it happened (laughs)

**You mean you didn't want to? Don't you feel responsible for this situation?**

Well I am responsible, but what can I do? I only wanted a girl, but it never happened.

**How did they kidnap Menvar?**

I don't know, they use to back late in the evening. His dad used to shout and ask why they come home so late. One night he started to beat Menvar. It was after that

that he never came home at night and suddenly disappeared.

**How did you find him?**

He was found in Mashad. As of then he keeps running away.

**From here to Mashad?**

Well I don't know. Since we came here they go out and never come back at night. They sleep in parks and buses etc.

**Why do you think they prefer to sleep in parks or buses rather than home?**

I don't know, they say if we come home they'll shout at us.

**Do you use violence at home?**

(Silence)



**I investigated and discovered that your husband is violent towards the children. Is this true?**

No, I mean he does want to beat them but I don't allow him. When they sleep out their father gets really angry.

**Where do they get money from when they are out?**

They take care of themselves in the parks. Once the security at the park told me that Menvar is working there and earns 1000 Tomans each day. He also said that Menvar has told them that he has no parents.

**Do they give you anything from what they earn?**

Sometimes Hojat who sells things at the train station brings home a small amount. Menvar and others don't bring anything.

**Does your husband have regular work?**

For almost a year he didn't have a job, but it's about two weeks which he has started to work.

**How much is your rent per month?**

500 Tomans deposit and 130 Tomans each month.

**What do you think Menvar wants that is not available at home?**

When he ran away two years ago and we found him and brought him to the children's home in Shoosh so that they could talk to him, he said that we don't have a TV at home. Well we didn't have one and they used to get bored. But after a while when we managed to buy a small TV he ran away again anyway. His dad even paid

150,000 Tomans and bought a computer so that he would stay home and play with it, but he still ran away.

**Why doesn't he go to school?**

He went for a year, but mentally he could not cope.

**Who decided that he couldn't?**

He used to say he can't study. Among the children only Delavar studied for three years. The others didn't study; it's not even possible for them to study.

**What do you think your life should have been like for Menvar to study instead of being kidnapped and running away from home?**

Well, if one lives in good conditions things would not be like this. It's when there are no possibilities in life that things turn out like this. Our problems started when we moved here.

**What sort of possibilities do you mean? I want to know exactly what you mean.**

How can I talk about it when I don't have it? Now that everything is over.

**So in your opinion everything is over and there is nothing to be done for Menvar?**

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By Amir K.

**F**rom *Khiaban* # 52

More than five months have passed since Khamenei-Ahmadinejad's electoral coup; also five months since the start of the people's movement against the existing situation. Despite the unprecedented killings of the dissidents, despite the imposition of an undeclared martial law on the country, the arrests of thousands of people, suppression of the media, chasing and harassing all social and political activists - in short, despite deploying all the tools of state oppression, the regime has not been able to crush the people's movement. On the other hand, the participation of millions of people in the opposition movement, countless innovations from below, the sacrifices and the amazing persistence of ordinary citizens, and despite the activation of a major part of social capacities for confronting the dictatorship, the movement has still not been able to bring about any tangible results in bringing down the dictatorship and in bringing about a people's governance.

To answer the question, "What is to be done?" it is necessary to start with an analysis of the concrete current situation.

### The Coup

The flame of the current struggle of the people was sparked in reaction to the electoral coup in June. In un-free elections held in the absence of freedom of political parties, lack of freedom of speech and lack of the right of assembly for those outside the regime (i.e.; lack of rights for those not belonging to the regime), a huge segment of the society entered the electoral arena to prevent the re-election of Ahmadinejad and, through voting for two reformist candidates inside the regime, to bring a slight ray of hope upon their abject social, cultural and economic misery. However,

## A Closer Look at the Nature and Destination of People's Movement



Ahmadinejad, who sits atop the military-economic bloc, by using his powers within the system, by relying on the Sepah [Revolutionary Guards] and the Basij, and by gaining the backing of Khamenei, the leader of Islamic Republic, did not abide by the results of the elections and with an utter shamelessness that is familiar to the Iranian people, announced himself the winner with 63% of the votes. Then, he answered the millions-strong protests in the streets with bullets and further limiting the media, misinformation, suppression of political activists, mass killing of street protesters, torture and rape of the detained demonstrators, etc., in an attempt to impose yet another grave-like silence upon the society. The fact that the people's movement took to the streets in reaction to an electoral coup inadvertently means it also had some connection to the electoral campaigns of the candidates. We cannot claim that all the anger and the rage of the people is on account of their support for Moussavi, nor can we claim that there is no relation at all between the people and the electoral campaigns of that segment of the regime that has come under attack.

### Reformists' Strategic Mistakes

We cannot see Ahmadinejad's electoral coup and close our eyes

to the fatal mistakes of reformism. Although reformism guarantees only the interests of a segment of the ruling class, regime's reformists have tried to present their discourse as possessing historical legitimacy and not class-based. The reformists consider their ideas and strategies as having arisen from historical experiences and as the intellectual achievement of the contemporary world. It is interesting that even after the Ahmadinejad coup, the reformists have taken the offensive and, for example, they can be heard saying, "This movement belongs to us, and the people and positions that voted for the boycott of the elections have no right to participate in this movement." Until now, they have been running away from any social accountability, especially regarding their strategic mistakes which have led to the current situation, and they are still propagating their pre-coup illusions.

The reality, however, is that, what we can perhaps call an Iranian reformism is a collection of thoughts and ideas that are brimming with dogmas and ossifications that have rendered reformism blind in the face of complicated and dynamic social realities. One of the most important of these dogmas is limiting political activities to ballots and voting. Reformism has always defined politics as the ballot-

driven competition. But even there, they have never been consistent defenders of the right of other political and social forces to take part in elections, and even during the period when they themselves held the government and the parliament, political parties or organizations critical or opposed to them were not allowed to be socially present in free and fair elections. But their speechifying and playing with words has no limits. The reformists have always defined themselves by distinguishing themselves from radical historical politics. In their view, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro should have defeated Batista in an electoral fight, but since they chose a different way, they brought about the death of numerous people, and the result has been a country that, in reformists' estimation, is more backward and undemocratic compared to the U.S. (have you ever heard Cuba compared to, say, Guatemala?). Or else, their vast campaign in numerous media against Hamid Ashraf and the Fedayeen-e Khalq guerrillas tries to show that armed struggle in the 1960s and 70s was insufficient, anti-humanistic, anti-democratic and anti-social and the internal logic of that form of struggle has led to the threat against social freedoms in the aftermath of the 1978-79 revolution. (It is not clear at all why Khomeini's form of struggle, which was a combination of western media coverage, over-excessive deception, tendency toward rule by committee, as opposed to mass organizations, and on and on, had no impact nor any influence on the shape and structures of this dictatorship, and all kinds of other why's can be found for it!).

[Continued on pg 27]

**I**n honor of the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre of Forouhars, Niloofar Baizaie has brought their murder to the stage with a simple language. The play has been welcomed by many compatriots in different cities.

**Ms. Baizaie, what inspired you to bring the way Forouhar's were murdered to the stage? What role did Ms. Parastoo Forouhar played in inspiring you and creating this scenario?**



*Niloofar Baizaie*

I was deeply affected when the chain murders happened, as were the majority of people in Iran. I witnessed the tragic murders of intellectuals in our society who had great potential in influencing our cultural and political behavior. However, the thought of creating a play with this regard had not taken shape in my mind yet. The idea of the play came to me years later especially when I started to follow the survivors of the family. Following the Forouhars and their daughter, Parastoo Forouhar. She was not only following up on the murder case of her parents, but was also active in following up and seeking justice in the cases of those killed in chain murders. Along with her art works she became active in her social life and started to follow a mission that was no longer something related to her or her family but a mission relating to the entire society. I was inspired by her presence.

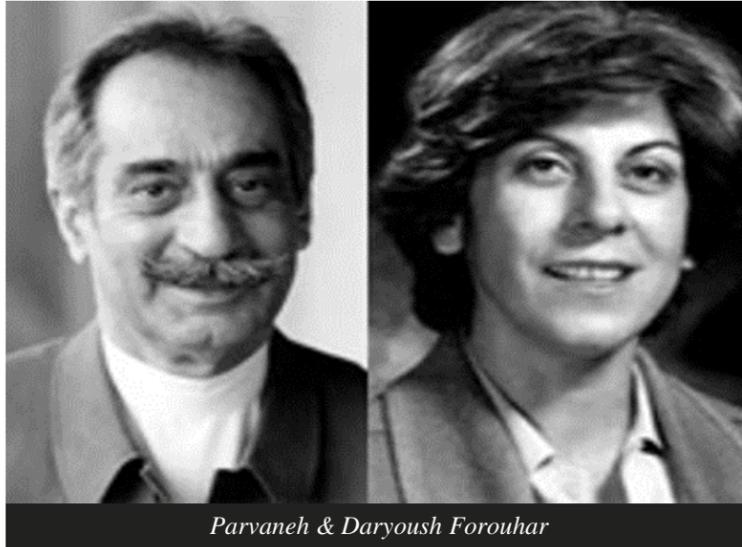
The Forouhars were a couple, man and wife both active in politics. In our political history we haven't witnessed as sharp a presence of many female in political fields as Parvaneh Forouhar. Especially as there were other aspects to her personality, she was also a poet! We used her poems in our play. Basically the presence of this couple and the influence they could have had, and their savage murder by the Intelligence Ministry, affected me so much that I came to a point suddenly where I thought I must bring this incident to the stage. I talked with Parastoo Forouhar and explained to her that I would need all the documents and evidence that she had in order to write the scenario. She provided me with all the documents wholeheartedly. I visited Parastoo's house for six months where she provided me with all the documents, pictures and manuscripts she had collected about the Forouhars.

**In any given time and after the play was staged in different cities and coun-**

## **Y. Safaie's Interview with Niloofar Baizaie on the threshold of the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre of Parvaneh and Dariush Forouhar**

**tries, what was the feeling and views of the audience as well as yours?**

When I work in theater my main purpose is to be able to present a subject that can establish a connection with the audience and is able to make the audience think about the subject deeply. I don't want to raise emotions only, I don't want to create a sense of sympathy because these senses are a human's personal feelings and however respectable, last for moments only. This could be a good point on its own, but in theater I don't like to play with audience's feelings. This sense can be stimulated because this disaster is very terrible. I was struggling with the question of how could anyone possibly be able to stab someone 24 times with a knife? What amount of belief and ideology could close the mind of someone to think that the crime he or she commits is justified? There are two perspectives, that of the murderers and of the victim. I've tried to present all of this in my work.



*Parvaneh & Dariush Forouhar*

**And what kind of reactions have you had?**

I've witnessed various reactions and I believe that these different reactions are very important. Part of our audience consists of those who know nothing or very little about this incident. The reactions expressed prove if they have gained more information and are more familiar with the depth of the tragedy. There were also some that don't think they've gained any more information. Some audiences have told me that this work has a wonderful balance between creation and stimulation of sense and thinking, while bringing unknown aspects and subtleties even to those who didn't know much about it. What's important is to not be passive towards a play. It is important to discuss and exchange ideas between the audiences of what they have received from a play. In question and answer sessions after each play, I have tried to create an at-

mosphere of open discussion and dialogue with the audiences between themselves, which has been very positive so far.

**So you can say your work has been successful.**

Others can judge if it's been successful or not, I can't talk about my own work. But I've seen many positive signs. I can say that most people have liked the play.

**Ms. Baizaie, please tell our readers if you are thinking of publishing your works and especially your last work, especially for those in Iran?**

We haven't done it yet. However, as we've received many messages and requests with regard to this work from Iran; we have posted about 3-4 minutes of the play on YouTube. Iranians inside of Iran are aware of the play and would like to see it. I hope for an opportunity to take the film to Iran so more people can see it.

**Does this mean there are preparations to publishing your work on DVD?**

Yes... Yes

**Are there any preparations to publish your previous works?**

We might post short parts of my previous works on YouTube. Many of them have been recorded poorly and a good quality is very important to me. A play must be seen live. Personally I don't like the idea of

filming plays. Nevertheless, since many don't have the ability to attend the plays we thought it would be a good idea to publish them as films for more people to have access.

**Are you preparing for your next project after this?**

At this time we are continuing with staging this work until mid- next year. I have many different projects that I need to review and choose based on my availability. I prefer not to talk about them until I'm certain about them. During the past 15 years I've staged a play once a year and considering the difficult situation of working outside of Iran it's even surprising to myself.

**Thank you very much Ms. Baizaie**

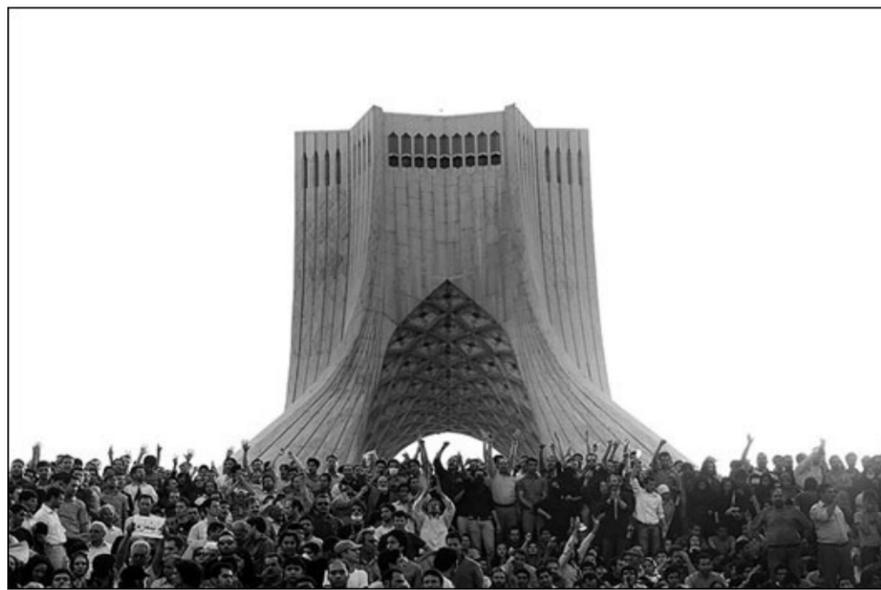
From pg 25(**A Closer Look at the Nature and Destination of People's Movement**)...

This dogma of reformism as relates to the ballot box was an important factor in the rise of fascism in Iran. While a definite military-economic mafia was busy gobbling up the most important sources of wealth and power in the country, for the reformists the only way of fighting against this was seen as the ballot box. While social movements such as the students and workers movements had understood the necessity of fighting fascism in the streets, the reformists, faced with the mass killing of students in 2007 and the workers on the May Day [this year], remained passive observers (and of course happy to see the elimination of radical forces, who could truly bring a fundamental challenge to the reformist discourse as well as to the material interests of the capitalist classes in Iran). However, the reformists remained blind to the reality that Ahmadinejad's fascism no longer needed to play along with the charade of the ballot box. In fact, in any country where fascism has come to power, it has done so through the ballot box (just like the 2005 elections in Iran), but it has never allowed the possibility of being voted out. Reading contemporary history is not difficult but reformist intelligentsia reads only its favorite paragraphs and memorizes those.

#### **Why must the coup be defeated?**

Some believe, from a liberal position, that the term 'coup' is meaningless here. Islamic Republic has always been a coup regime, in which people have never had a real role in any of the elections. This regime uses the people only to put a stamp of legitimacy on its own selections. Others too, from a socialist position, believe that the political system in Iran is a capitalist one, and remained the same before and after the 2009 elections, from the point of view of workers and the productive classes. They believe that the term 'coup' is merely the propaganda of the regime's reformists, who are being eliminated from the political and economic control of the society, and in this way are trying to involve the whole society in a fight that's only to their own

benefit. Each of these arguments illustrates some realities of social life under the domination of Islamic Republic. But neither considers the reality in its complex totality. Hitler's Germany was a capitalist country. The Weimar Republic was also capitalist. Different political formations, all of which can be classified as capitalist, have different direct impacts on the society and the dominated classes in the society. In 1981, Khomeini and the Islamic Republican Party organized a political coup to eliminate Baniadr; this, however, was a coup that was internal to the ruling structure. Baniadr was not the representative of the workers



and the productive forces in the society. He was a hotheaded supporter of Islamic rule (from his own view) and had an active role in the suppression of progressive movements in Kurdistan and other regions in Iran. However, this coup had a fatal impact on the whole society, and on socialist and communist social political movements.

The current coup, too, in the event of its consolidation and victory, will not merely lead to the elimination of a part of the ruling class. Ahmadinejad, who just like Khomeini, has no fear of mass slaughter of dissident people, will shape another murderous era in the Iranian contemporary history. The total destruction of social life, extreme exploitation by a ruling class that has become excessively militarized and claims to be God's representative on earth, widespread purges in the universities and places of work, mobilization of collective resources for private gain, and on and on, may not have an impact on a theoretician sitting in a safe corner far away,

but it will have a direct impact on the majority of people and their daily lives. People who have entered the arena to defeat the coup and are organizing themselves have real and earthly interests in preventing this dark era, whose impact will include [down to even] their choice of clothing, to their social relations, to their income and benefits, to their right of speech, right of education, right to work even and numerous other matters. The very recent actions [by the government] show us the future horizon. The transfer of social resources to companies under the control of the Sepah [Revolutionary Guards] (in real-

ity, under the control of the power to shoot at people, and also the sources of wealth in the hands of a limited echelon of the powerful), the assault on science and university, widespread suspension of the right to education [of dissident students], numerous prisons for social activists, further suppression of media, deepening of spying in the most private spheres, assuming absolutist powers by the state, widespread tracking down of social activists even in Europe countries and ...

Yes, the eliminated faction of the ruling system is definitely seeking to channel this movement into its own material interests. Even the U.S and numerous other world powers are seeking their material interests and are looking to benefit from this movement for their own gain. However, it is irresponsible to use these facts as excuses to close our eyes on the abject and widespread misery that the coup regime will bring to the people. In the same way that imperialism or the different factions of the regime will not take a holiday in

the pursuit of their material interests, the people too struggle for their future and social life. The laboring forces of social production will not exit this fight since their life and future do not allow for such a choice. What is necessary is an all-encompassing political fight against the forces that aim to channel all these struggles and sacrifices into their own corrupt, minority interests. Displaying delight at the defeat of the people against the coup shows the historical stupidity of these political forces. When Franco emerged victorious from the Spanish Civil War, he continued his dictatorship for four decades. Hitler and Mussolini did not lose power but as a result of a world war, and the intervention of foreign forces. Anybody who is concerned about the society cannot pull him/herself out of this arena. Especially when the fight against the coup is not an attempt at restoring an Islamic Republic.

#### **The Coup and the Islamic Republic**

There is no doubt that, for those who used to belong to the minority benefiting from the Islamic Republic, returning to the good old days is an intense wish and desire. The defenders of returning to the previous Islamic Republic, which certainly include Moussavi, base their main argument on the idea that this recent electoral coup, by turning its back on the people's vote, has turned the Islamic Republic into an Islamic Regime. Consequently, defeating the coup means returning to the Islamic Republic and this movement is a movement for Islamic Republic; nothing more and nothing less.

Such a view may hold true for some coup's; for example, a coup in which an armed group militarily captures the parliament and the presidential palace and suspends the constitution and establishes a new government. In this situation, fighting against the coup means fighting to restore the government and the legal system that existed before the coup. But the current reality in Iran is something else. Ahmadinejad's electoral coup does not follow such a model.

**[Continued on next pg]**

### From previous pg...

Such a view may hold true for some coup's; for example, a coup in which an armed group militarily captures the parliament and the presidential palace and suspends the constitution and establishes a new government. In this situation, fighting against the coup means fighting to restore the government and the legal system that existed before the coup. But the current reality in Iran is something else. Ahmadinejad's electoral coup does not follow such a model. All the legal institutions of the Islamic Republic have sanctioned his fraud, and he enjoys the support of the parliament, the judiciary and also the supreme leader. All the crimes that he has committed are based on the contradictions that exist in the constitution of the Islamic Republic. Isn't torture forbidden? Of course it is. But suspension [of law] is allowed. Were not the people's assemblies to protest the election results legal and their military suppression illegal? Of course not. Assembling and protesting are allowed unless they interfere with Islamic principles, and the law has deputized certain institutions to look into such matters, and all those legal institutions (not I or you) believe that such gathering interfere with Islamic principles. Ahmadinejad has not carried out a coup against a ruling system, but has used the system's capabilities to his own benefit and that of the group he represents. In fact, this is a corrupt, class-based, anti-human system, which is reliant on expropriating the people's right of self-determination and on putting this right in the hands of 'God's representatives', a system based on class oppression, ethnic oppression, the oppression of the capital city against the provinces, and gender and sexual oppression. As a result, people are not fighting the coup or the dictatorship in order to restore the system that existed prior to June 12. Even the motivation of a huge segment of the people in participating in those elections was based on wanting change, which itself was based on a mistaken idea that such a change could be pursued from within the capabilities of the existing political system (Islamic Republic). The people who have brought to this movement all their cleverness and innovations in order to overthrow Ahmadinejad's coup,

do not share those dreams, such as spun by the Moussavi's, of returning to some Islamic Republic. It is true that in that [former] Islamic Republic Moussavi was the prime minister, Karroubi was the parliamentary speaker, Khatami was the president, Sane'ee the attorney general and numerous others of this circle were among the rulers, but the people, the ordinary citizens who are carrying the struggle forward, in that very Islamic Republic, were threatened, were exploited, insulted, imprisoned, their voices suppressed, their organizations not allowed to be active, and on and on ...

### A Mass and Pluralist Movement

Since fascism assaults the entirety of the society, the response to it too is all encompassing. In the current movement in Iran nearly all social classes have been mobilized. Some try to define this movement as a movement of the middle class of Tehran. Their most significant evidence is that most of the people's protests take place in Tehran and in areas to the north of Azadi St. and Enghelaab St. Those who defend this line of thinking have particular political objectives for this observation of theirs. They are attempting to define the movement in their own image: a middle class that, under the leadership of the regime's reformists, wants a mild opening in the country's political space, and would like to have some guarantees from the regime regarding making a living and accumulating wealth, and being able to open up shop and get rich through the work of others - but of course, to their own mind, through their own good education and cleverness - and driving a nice car, reading the reformist newspapers, and enjoying Tahmineh Milani and Mohsen Makhmalbaaf films.

In this image, the working class monster is completely missing from the picture. The fight is merely between this particular [middle] class and a coalition of uneducated provincials, shantytown dwellers, religiously minded country folk and fat revolutionary guards, whose political representative is Ahmadinejad. Proponents of this line of thought are passionate supporters of capitalism, who, in a disappointing manner, are not capable of understanding the necessities of capital-

ism in Iran. They have their eyes on some utopia that can be brought about by a more modern cleric like Khatami and a suited engineer with such magnificent manners as Mousavi, who will take hold of the wheels navigating the Iranian capitalist state with the aid of the western states, and who will create a Las Vegas on the shores of the Persian Gulf and a Europe on the slopes of the Alborz Mountain.

The problem for these educated fanatics of capitalism is that they replace reality with their own dreams and fantasies. The increasing militarization of the society is not a consequence of the rush by the Basijis from Shahr-e Ray to Vanak. The militarization of the society and the increasing suffocation springs from the necessities of capitalist development in societies like Iran. Neoliberalism means 'deregulation'. Why? Because regulations and laws get in the way of capital accumulation. 'Law', 'Freedom of speech and organization', 'people's intervention in determining their own fate' for a capitalist - which, in order to remain in the global competition, needs increasing exploitation of the labor force - can only lead to eventual death. The real solution for capitalism and the bazaar (market) in Iran is Ahmadinejad. The similarities between the behavior and the workings [of state] in Iran and those of China and Russia have their roots in that reality.

Some - by showing that there supposedly existed a communist tendency in the Islamic Republic that has become more apparent with Ahmadinejad, and by pointing to the communist history in Russia and the current claims to communism by China - have tried to connect the similarities between the three countries, in violating human rights and freedom of speech, to communism; in contradistinction to the liberalism of western Europeans and of the reformists. But it will suffice to think a little deeper to see that capitalism and the market have been ruling China and Russia for years, and it is exactly the tendency in these countries for remaining and competing on the global scene that is necessitating a murderous political structure to dominate those countries. Iran, for its capitalistic survival, needs 'lack of laws', 'deregulation', oppression and Sepah, if it wants to remain a re-

gional power. The other capitalist alternative is the equivalent of an absolute disintegration of Iran as a society, and the formation of fiefdoms of opened up spaces for the looting of the global capitalism.

However, if we step away from the illusory images of these intellectuals of the Iranian middle class, a more realistic knowledge and understanding of the current movement can be gained. Fascism is the assault against the entire life and the world of social existence. Consequently, all the layers of society react to it. The resistance against fascism will always involve different parts of the society, from layers in upper classes, to office workers, to the youth, the working classes, rural populations, the unemployed, the retired and ... A look at the class base of those killed in the course of the street protests will prove this reality as evident: Men and women, from the youth who has come to Tehran from Lorestan villages to do manual labor to the factory worker, the engineer, university student, student of philosophy, high school students, the middle aged. The higher level of mobilization in Tehran, and particular areas of it too can be explained very easily. The current phase in the fight against the dictatorship is a non-violent movement that seeks to pursue its political demands through street protests. In small cities and towns, the possibility of presence in overt demonstrations can lead directly to being identified. Tehran, however, is a mega-city and the 'anonymity' of people is a particular characteristic of big cities. Identification of the protesters, especially in huge demonstrations, is virtually impossible; in particular, in areas that do not have a traditional or neighborhood-like structure. Therefore, the more modern areas of Tehran become the places of gathering for the entirety of society.

In the next installment of this article, issues of leadership, relation between fighting for freedom and fighting for social equality (socialism), and the issue of alternatives to the Islamic Republic will be discussed.

Source:

Revolutionaryflowerpot.blogspot.com

Comedy Central's Daily Show brings its brand of satire to Tehran

According to a recent poll by *Time Magazine* - most Americans watch "funny" news versus "real" news because they find it to be more honest and revealing. *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, a satirical news program, broadcasts on the Comedy Central network in the United States. Two weeks before the Iranian elections in June, *The Daily Show* sent a reporter and producer to Iran to get the funny truth about the country. After almost a year of planning - Jason Jones, *The Daily Show's* senior foreign correspondent, and Tim Greenberg, his intrepid producer, traveled to Iran before the Iranian elections. They did what no other fake news show has ever done - covered Iran by actually going there. They came back with a series of reports.

"We were just trying to break some of the stereotypes that existed up to that point. Which was it's a terrifying place, the people all hate us, they're all terrorists, we don't have anything in common with the people of Iran," Greenberg said. "And so we were trying to break some of those stereotypes. Then subsequently, we did see that..." "Subsequently, we couldn't break them because they were all true. Which was tough, Jones said. "We lied a lot."

"The thing that surprised me the most was that people very quickly seemed to understand our humor. Because we do a lot of things, where we're going out, we're asking people ridiculous questions. They have no idea what we're talking about, sometimes it can seem a little offensive. You know? But as quickly if not more so, the Iranian people sort of understood where we were coming from," Greenberg said. "At some point understood the joke, and were happy to sort of be a part of it." "Well I get some criticism here from Americans on behalf of Iranians - coming up to me saying, 'How dare you make fun of them like that!' and I'm like... 'Well, I wasn't really making fun of them, I was kind of being ironic.' And she's like, 'I know, I get that - they don't.' 'Well you're kind of proving our point just there that you think they're stupid...."

## American Comedy Show Finds Lots of Laughs in Iran

STUPID," Jones said.

"Right, which was the opposite - [the Iranian] people got it better than Americans," Greenberg said. "So if they get it better than Americans do, given the language barrier, I think it just goes to show that they're much more sophisticated people than Americans might like to think. "I assured my producer Tim



Greenberg that as long as he was with me, there was nothing to fear," Jones said. "We've been talking about going to Iran for about a year. And it was a fascinating country to us. We wanted to sort of break down a few barriers.

"America knows very little about what goes on in Iran. So when we first landed, we were a little nervous about what to expect," Greenberg said.

"After every single interview and every meeting we had there was a tea session. And they would be offended if you did not sit down for tea. And we had jam packed day, so we had 4 or 5 interviews in a day after which tea was served for everything. And the crew during the day would also want to break for tea. And I was like, 'I can't drink anymore tea. I'm sorry. My teeth are stained. And I've already wet myself,' Jones explained.

"Cause I do not go into Iranian public bathrooms. I know it drains out apparently better when you squat. But I don't like it, I like to stand." "While their focus was on comedy and politics, Jason and Tim also had some moments in which they encountered the kindness and hospitality of Iranians.

"I had just spent this great evening with this family. And they were exactly like an American family. Same customs, same sort of sense of family. And then at the end, we kind of all went for a walk and went to this playground - where it was the most bucolic, beautiful scene you've ever seen," Jones said. "There was a father actually teaching his kid

how to walk. There was a woman in full chador on a see-saw with a little girl. And it was this brilliant moment, where tears came to my eyes. When I hear the war drum to bomb these people, I go, 'You're out of your mind. What is your problem? Why on earth would you think these people are out to get you? Because they're really just about something that we're about - which is having a safe, happy, prosperous life.'"

The total election fall out was a shock to Tim and Jason. They found it challenging taking a comedic approach during a serious and worrisome time. "What we're equipped to do primarily is comedy; yes, there's content at the heart of it. But this definitely crossed over the line into some things that were not so funny," Greenberg says, "Events just sort of spun beyond our control. It was a little uncomfortable to suddenly be in a very serious place and still try to do comedy. When we went out there, you know everything looked like it was going to be a little bit easier."

Despite years of isolation between Iran and America, a comedy program was able to break some stereotypes by showing Iranians in a gracious, comedic, intelligent light. This duo is also hoping to send a message to all Iranians - particularly the ones they met during their trip. "Thank you for being such gracious hosts. Thanks for opening your homes and your libraries, your schools and coffee shops and letting me in - and letting me do anything. It was truly some of the most accommodating people I've ever met in my life, over there. And I hope everyone stays safe. And I hope things work out cause clearly right now it's a terrible time," Jones said.



Several hundred joined a rally in London's Hyde Park organised by One Law for All to show their opposition to Sharia and religious-based laws in Britain and elsewhere and to demand universal rights and secularism. At the rally, over 20 speakers and performers exposed the discriminatory and brutal nature of religious laws. They included Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain's Asad Abbas; International Humanist and Ethical Union's Roy Brown; Secularist Ismail Einashe; Philosopher AC Grayling; Southall Black Sisters' Rahila Gupta; MP Evan Harris; Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq's Houzan Mahmoud; Lawyer Rony Miah; Campaigner Maryam Namazie; British Humanist Association's Naomi Phillips; European Humanist Federation's David Pollock; National Secular Society's Terry Sanderson; Activist Muriel Seltman; Equal Rights Now's Sohaila Sharifi; Organisation for the Defence of Secularism and Civil Rights in Iraq's Issam Shukri; Iran Solidarity's Bahar Milani; Human Rights Campaigner Peter Tatchell; National Secular Society's Keith Porteous Wood and the rally's Master of Ceremonies, Iranian Secular Society's Fariborz Pooya.

The rally heard from people with direct experiences of Sharia law, including Iranian-born activist Sohaila Sharifi and Somali-born secularist Ismail Einashe. Einashe spoke of his cousin who had been forced to remain in a violent marriage by the sham courts here in Britain. He said: 'I wanted to tell you my cousin's story to highlight that whatever the pro-Sharia lobby say, we know that there are women out there being abused, and sadly all too-often too afraid to come forward. The only 'choice' my cousin was given, was either to be separated from her children or remain in a violent marriage. She chose to stay in the marriage for the sake of her children... I don't think this is a 'choice' – how can it be?'

Maryam Namazie, the One Law for All Spokesperson, also gave several examples of the legal compulsion involved in the decisions of the Muslim Arbitration Tribunals and Sharia Councils, particularly with regards forced marriages, divorce and child custody. She went on to say that it

## Successful rally against Sharia law in UK – 21 Nov 2009



was scandalous that countless women were relegated to kangaroo courts with lesser rights here in Britain and elsewhere.

Campaigner Peter Tatchell said: 'Sharia law is a form of religious dogma and tyranny. It is homophobic, sexist and anti-democratic.' Terry Sanderson of the National Secular Society went on to say that: 'Sharia law does not develop, it is fixed and immutable, but its interpretation is unpredictable, unregulated and subject to the whims and prejudices of individual practitioners.'

Many of the speakers spoke of the brutalities of Sharia in other countries. Issam Shukri from Iraq told the rally how Islamic militias linked to the cleric and MP Muqtada al-Sadr had executed dozens of women who they deemed to be improperly dressed because they were not fully covered head-to-toe in Iraq. Examples were also given of rights violations under Sharia in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Sudan, Somalia and elsewhere. Activist Muriel Seltman condemned the cultural relativism that allows for religious laws to go unchallenged. She said: 'What can be more racist than laying down different standards for different people in different societies? This is what is racist not the criticism of barbaric practices.'

Many speakers criticised the right of religion to special status to undermine fundamental human rights. David Pollock of the European Humanist Federation said: 'Sharia courts seek to provide a parallel legal system... Arguments for Sharia law are based on the concept of group rights. And group rights are inherently hostile to human rights.' MP Evan Harris condemned the government for giving privileged advisory status on policy and legislation to often unrepresentative faith leaders. Lawyer Rony Miah said: 'Having separate systems of law for different commu-

nities are no different from separate faith schools; it will only lead to a fragmenting of communities – not cohesion.'

Rahila Gupta of Southall Black Sisters added: 'accommodating alternative systems of justice is not about choice or tolerance in a pluralistic society; it is not about Muslim women's autonomy. These demands emerge from fundamentalist politics however they are dressed up.'

Roy Brown of the International Humanist and Ethical Union spoke about how Islamic states are behind the demand for more religious laws and the banning of any criticism of Islam. He said: 'Sharia law [in Britain] is but a small part of a worldwide campaign to replace international law with Islamic law... The acceptance of Sharia law for the settlement of family disputes in Britain is just one small part of a global problem.'

Maryam Namazie said that Sharia courts and councils were extensions of the political Islamic movement – not the demand of Muslims or those labelled as such – and resistance to it was global as well. She told the crowd: 'Sharia adversely affects the rights, lives and freedoms of countless human beings across the world. Opposing Sharia law is a crucial step in defending universal equal rights and secularism, and showing real solidarity with people living under and resisting Sharia.' Fariborz Pooya added that 'people living under Sharia law are the first victims and at the same time the first line of resistance against it and must be defended.'

Writer AC Grayling went on to say: 'The principle of one law for all, with everyone equal before the law, is a vital one for a genuine democracy. The One Law For All campaign is doing an urgently needed job of protecting those who, hidden behind the veil of Sharia or other reli-

gious 'courts', risk injustice, abuse, and deprivation of rights.' During the rally, Bahar Milani and Richard Francis of Iran Solidarity led an act against child executions. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the only state that continues to execute minors. At least 130 juveniles are on death row in Iran, including for homosexuality, apostasy, sex outside of marriage and involvement in school or street fights that have resulted in murder.

Throughout the event, there were performances from poets AK47, Lilith and Christine from the Anti-Injustice Movement and Selina Jusljam from Yorkshire as well as musician Fari B and singer/songwriter David Fisher. On the day, many others took part in simultaneous acts of solidarity with the rally and its demands in 23 countries across the globe, namely Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, France, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. In Serbia and Montenegro, Women in Black held a number of film events in support of women's rights in Afghanistan. In Baghdad, 500 leaflets were distributed in defence of secularism and universal rights. In Canada, several acts took place, including a rally and a column written in a local paper. The Secular Humanist League of Brazil, The Peace and Freedom Party of San Francisco and the Brussels Humanist Society amongst others issued press releases and an artist in the Netherlands contributed their artwork to the campaign. In Ibadan, Nigeria, leaflets saying 'no to faith-based laws' were distributed on the streets and at markets. In Pakistan, those trying to take part in an act were brutally beaten.