What sort of solidarity do workers in Iran need?

Why we cannot politically support the day of action on March 6

Supporters of Hands Off the People of Iran will be taking part in the day of action on March 6 to highlight the plight of Iranian trade unionists currently languishing in the prisons of the regime (Ossanloo, Salehi and many others). However, we draw the line at politically endorsing these protests.

The groups centrally involved in organising this mobilisation (the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)) are deeply compromised politically. They are more or less silent on the role of imperialism in the region and - in truth - are junior partners in implementing the reactionary agendas of the US and its allies.

The official leaflets to mobilise for this day of action focus almost exclusively on opposition to the theocratic regime. But the Iranian working class is facing two enemies - both the Ahmadinejad regime and the biggest enemy of it and the world’s working class, imperialism.

The negative impact that the pressure of US-led imperialism has already exerted on the Iranian working class does not merit a mention in the publicity material of the IFT and ITUC. The looming threat of war and sanctions have cost the jobs of thousands of Iranian workers - and those that protest to defend their conditions against the anti-democratic attacks of the theocratic regime are branded as “traitors” or “dupes of imperialism”. Iranian workers are struggling daily against the Islamic Republic’s attacks - privatisations, casualisations, systematic non-payment of wages and attacks on effectively organised trade unions that stand up to this vicious exploitation.

Yet, in this, the theocracy is just enthusiastically enforcing neo-liberal economic policies dictated by the World Bank and the IMF! No wonder there is no enthusiasm amongst the working class and radical movements of Iran for regime change ‘George Bush style’. Not only do they have the grinding experience of what this already means for their daily struggle to live, they have only to glance at the nearby hell that imperialism has fashioned in Iraq to understand that the chance for genuine democracy and social change must come from their own struggles, not from reactionary self-appointed ‘saviours’. Organisations such as IFT or ITUC that are silent on imperialism - and those on the left that uncritically tail them - effectively provide a left cover for the war plans of Bush.

Hopi has a totally different approach to solidarity. We are clear moribund capitalism - imperialism - has no answers either for the people of Iran or anywhere else on the globe. We want direct links of support between the working class in Iran and internationally that are ideologically, politically and materially totally independent of either imperialism or the theocratic regime. In today’s world, democracy and progressive social change comes from struggles only from below - whether in the Middle East, in Europe or in the United States itself.

Below is the motion on workers in Iran passed at the Hopi launch conference plus our model trade union resolution.
If you oppose the war plans of the imperialists - but support the struggle for an Iran free of the oppressive clerical regime - join us! Individuals: £10 or £5 unwaged (organisations see website).

Please return to address above

Name ____________________________________________
Organisation/union ____________________________________________
Mobile phone ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________

Email ____________________________________________

Our campaign demands:

- No to imperialist war! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US/UK troops from Iraq and all the Gulf region!
- No to any imperialist intervention. The immediate and unconditional end to sanctions on Iran!
- No to the theocratic regime!
- Opposition to Israeli expansionism and aggression!
- Support to all working class and progressive struggles in Iran against poverty and repression!
- Support for socialism, democracy and workers’ control in Iran!
- For a nuclear-free Middle East as a step towards a nuclear-free world!

If you oppose the war plans of the imperialists - but support the struggle for an Iran free of the oppressive clerical regime - join us! Individuals: £10 or £5 unwaged (organisations see website).

Supporters include:
- Diane Abbott Labour MP
- John McDonnell Labour MP
- Peter Tatchell OutRage
- Caroline Lucas Green Party MEP
- Tommy Sheridan Solidarity
- Ken Loach filmmaker
- John Pilger journalist
- Naomi Klein writer and activist
- Dr Hilary Rose scientist
- Haifa Zangana writer
- Clr Rania Khan Respect
- Clr Lufta Begum Respect
- Iranian Workers Bulletin
- Workers Left Unity - Iran
- Communist Party of Great Britain
- Green Party
- Organization of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar)
- Communist Students

Signed: ____________________________ On behalf of: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________