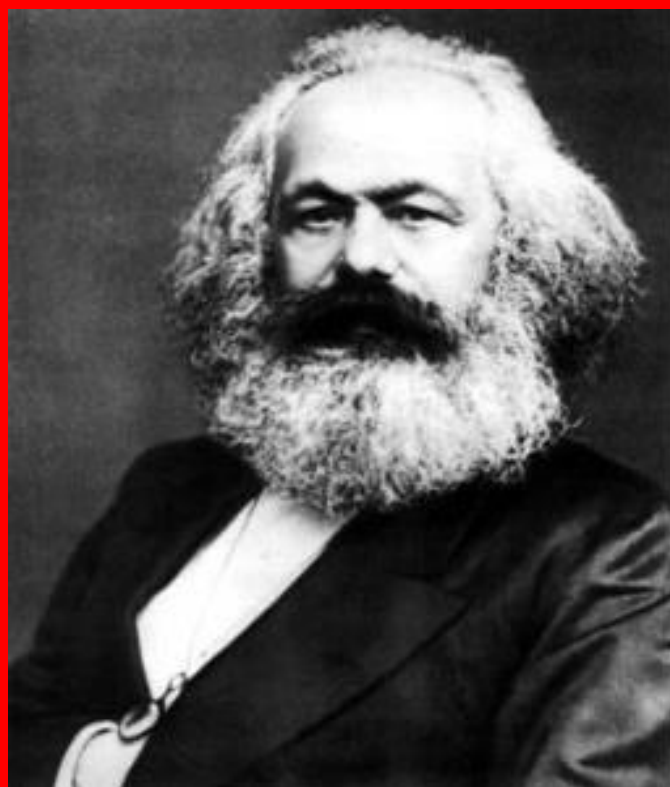


# **Worker Communism**

## **Radical Conscience of the Left of Capital**

**(Part 9)**



**In defense of Marxism**

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## **Background to the faction of worker communism**

We have discussed in detail in the preceding section that the roots of worker communism should not be traced back to communist left but to Stalinism-Maoism. None of those who has claimed or are claiming that worker communism is rooted in the communist left or that worker communism is influenced by the communist left is capable of concretely demonstrating this root and influence; rather, they only offer some of the heterogeneous generalizations. None of the “critics” of worker communism, who claim that it is influenced by the communist left, is able to show how it emerged from the basic foundations of the communist left, from internationalism, from world revolution, from the anti-Marxist thesis of socialism in a country. It has been influenced by the rejection of trade unions as institutions of capital, the rejection of national movements as infantry forces in imperialist strife, the rejection of a united front, the belief in direct communist work, and so on. Demonstrate and prove this effectiveness in the theory and practice of worker communism. Such claims first of all show a lack of seriousness of the part of those making them.

The formation of a political tendency is a reflection of the historical situation which intellectually produces it. We return to this issue in the formation of Marxism as a theory of workers’ emancipation. In Section Six, we examined the need for the formation of revolutionary Marxism (the term that ideologists of worker communism put into their ideology before the transformation to worker communism) stemmed from the reconstruction of Line 3. Postponing the crisis of Line 3, through its restoration under the name of revolutionary Marxism (a restoration of Stalinism-Maoism), gave revolutionary Marxist scholars the opportunity to declare that “revolutionary Marxism”, with its expensive and crystallized backing in the Communist Party of Iran, will this time be the driving force behind the successful revolution of the future. They wrote:

“This tremendous support, thanks to the conscious proletariat and its Communist Party ahead of this movement, could be the starting point and the driving force for the coming successful revolution.” [1] [Our translation]

The Iran-Iraq War and the role of Komala as part of the infantry in Iraqi imperialist politics enabled the activities of Komala and the so-called Communist Party. The end of the Iran-Iraq War and military activity by the Iranian opposition based in Iraq and their commitment to military inactivity imposed new conditions on the Iranian Communist Party. The majority force of the party under the title of Komala, who were stripped of their social status, had by now founded a campsite. It was not possible to continue this situation in the long run.

On the other hand, the migration of much of the party leadership to Western countries, and the opportunity to get acquainted with European currents and Western life, made it necessary for some of these leaders to reconsider their views. Part of the main body of activists of the Unity of Communist Militants (UCM), who had now assumed leadership of the Communist Party, were former students in Western countries. Before returning to Iran at the end of 1978, Mansoor Hekmat was a doctoral student and fluent in English. Certainly, mastering the

English language and living in England gave him the opportunity to study the views of others which could be used in the reconstruction of the ideology of revolutionary Marxism which was now in crisis and in discovering an alternative to worker communism. The opinions of others did not take the form of a systematic influence; rather, they were reflected in the way in which the heterogeneous opinions of Mansoor Hekmat were restored or updated.

Given the metabolism of Communist Party, its future and, most importantly, the fate of its force which led to its isolated campsite status, party leaders were forced to adapt to the new conditions. A former leader of Komala and worker communism says:

“The main focus of the dispute between the Executive Committee and Mansoor Hekmat was about arrangements for the leadership of Komala, its combat force, camps and, in general, its continued operations in all areas of Komala’s activities after the end of the Iran-Iraq War ... Transferring the political organization and the main centre of Komala’s leadership to Europe was intended to remove this centrality from the hands of the Ba’athist regime. The project was completed by reducing the number of camps, transferring children, the elderly and the injured from the war with the Islamic Republic to Europe, transforming residential camps into camps for Komala’s military forces, which had several combat units and some leadership inside Iran... If the political centre of Komala was elsewhere, units and camps based on the border would have more security and the continuity of Komala would be guaranteed.”[2] [Our translation]

Since the Second Congress of the Iranian Communist Party, “revolutionary Marxism” has shown signs of crisis, and these can be seen in Mansoor Hekmat’s inaugural address to the Second Congress and its related issues. Finally, with the serious onset of the crisis of “revolutionary Marxism”, the same leaders declared that it was a temporary intellectual and political framework for the two struggling traditions of workers’ socialism and non-workers’ left radicalism. Another circus and another show should be implemented. The necessity to overcome the crisis of “revolutionary Marxism”, the alienation of the working class from the Communist Party, the inefficiency of the so-called Communist Party, the dilemmas arising from the Iran-Iraq War ceasefire, the dilemma of people living in camps and their social status etc. created the background to the emergence of the ideology of worker communism: in other words, the crisis of revolutionary Marxism, and how it came about, raised the need for an alternative to worker communism.

The Third Congress of the Iranian Communist Party was held in January 1988. At that congress, Mansoor Hekmat referred to worker communism. In the process, part of the party leadership (Mansoor Hekmat, Iraj Azarin, Reza Moghaddam) formed the centre of worker communism in order to advance its foundations. In turn, the 15th Plenum of the Communist Party adopted the following two decrees in order to achieve the goals of the centre of worker communism:

- Agreement over Komala’s activity in the cities
- Facilitate workers’ membership of the Iranian Communist Party

Agreement over Komala's activity in the cities was supposed to be a response to the new conditions and the adaptation of the main force of the party, namely, Komala, to the new political situation. Mansoor Hekmat understood the new situation and tried to oust Komala, who represented the party's main force, as an isolated camp that posed numerous threats to the other camps and to adapt to the post-ceasefire conditions following the Iran-Iraq war. In other words, he sought to transfer the leadership and centrality of Komala to Europe and reduce the burden on the camps and the ability of Komala to operate in the cities as a political force.

In the process of continuing the disillusion of the Iranian Communist Party and also to silence some circles and activists inside the country, the willingness inside Iran to support the Party was in practice meaningless, while correspondence and others communications were minimized as well. On the other hand, due to the camp status of Komala after the end of the war, the activities in this area achieved nothing. In such circumstances, the party proposed the facilitation of workers' membership of the Iranian Communist Party, which had more internal traction. Accordingly, any worker who identified himself or herself with the common goals of the party was considered a member of the party, even though he or she was not able to express it publicly. The party's argument was that, because of suppression, workers would not be able to join the party. Further, if this suppression was to be lifted one day, workers would rush to the party, as was the case with the social democratic parties in Europe. The social democratic concept of the party, both in revolutionary Marxism and in worker communism, is not our focus here.

The formation of factions has been one of the necessary and well-known tools within the communist movement. We clearly explained the issue of factionalism from the Marxist perspective in Section Six. Usually, a faction comprising a minority within a revolutionary organization, while the official policy and position of the relevant current is transitioning to a counter-revolutionary position, defends the proletarian position against the official policy of the related current in order to save the revolutionary organization.

Meanwhile, the opposite was true for the faction of worker communism: activists in this faction occupied leadership positions on the main committees and organs of the organization, which were the main determinants of party politics. But the same leaders claimed that, despite their instructions being formalized as a supreme organ of the party, in the later process of implementation, something else came out. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“For a long time between the Second and Third Congresses, I was the Secretary of the Central Committee and, with comrades Reza Moghaddam and Behrouz Milani, we were the party's Executive Committee. So, what was later called ‘worker communism’ was actually at the head of the party. During this time, it became clear to us that the machine we were officially in command of was in fact moving towards a different mechanism. All our actions and instructions as the supreme organ of the party were officially endorsed. Then, in the process of action, something else emerged.” [3] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat with typical demagoguery says that the machine that he had been steering was being operated by another mechanism. Due to his political charlatanism, the crisis of his failed ideology, thrown on the shoulders of others, failed to take responsibility for the failure of this ideology. By updating the heterogeneous positions of Line 3 and aggregating forces into the Iranian Communist Party, the ideology of “revolutionary Marxism” is now in crisis. The ideologist of the left of capital does not say what he said a few years ago about this aggregation (the Iranian Communist Party) and the counter-revolutionary ideology of “revolutionary Marxism”. If Mansoor Hekmat pretends he has Alzheimer’s, then historical memory is alive. At one time, this aggregation (the Iranian Communist Party) defeated bourgeois and petit bourgeois illusions and revisionist ideas with the ideology of “revolutionary Marxism” while raising the independent banner of the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In a statement, the founding congress of the Anti-Communist Party wrote:

“The Iranian Communist Party is formed in the wake of the victorious struggles of revolutionary Marxism against the bourgeois and petit bourgeois illusions and revisionist ideas that had engulfed the Iranian left movement. Revolutionary Marxism ... raised with strength the independent banner of the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The formation and rapid growth of revolutionary Marxism in Iran were the political and organizational reflection of the objective presence of the Iranian working class at the scene of the revolution: the class that needed its revolutionary theory and its leading political organization to advance and liberate itself; the class that, at the same time, with its active involvement in the revolutionary struggle, had provided the material conditions conducive to transforming this revolutionary theory into a social material force and the political and organizational strengthening of its leading forces and organizations.” [4] [Our translation]

The undeniable fact is that the “Communist Party” was neither a party, even in a bourgeois sense, nor a communist one. Once, Mansoor Hekmat indulged in demagoguery when the same party strongly raised the independent banner of the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but then he declared that party was not responsive to the priorities of worker socialism. However, with that aggregation breaking down because of its intrinsic and internal contradictions, Hekmat smartly burdened that aggregation further with the meaning of political tendencies. The task of strengthening and promoting a new ideology, namely, worker communism, was delegated to the centre of worker communism. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“The centre was a collective whose goal was to strengthen worker communism, both inside and outside the party. The focus was primarily on explaining our differences with other tendencies ... This party with its current status was not responsive to the needs and priorities of worker socialism. We thought we should start again if necessary. The centre was the result on this assessment.” [5] [Our translation]

Party leaders and officials who were in command of the party stated that the party’s performance was not in line with the orders of these leaders. First, the party leadership formed the centre of worker communism, then the same leaders, who made up the majority of the

party's leadership and cadres, metamorphosized the centre into the faction of worker communism, in order to intervene in the fate of the party. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“The faction is, in a sense, a continuation of the work of the centre. In the centre, we have come to the conclusion that we must actively participate in the fate of the party ... The faction of worker communism was constituted as a means to facilitate our active organizational involvement in the fate of the Communist Party.” [6] [Our translation]

As mentioned before, a minority in the revolutionary organization, in defence of its proletarian positions while being against the official organizational policy of pursuing counter-revolutionary positions, created the faction. In relation to worker communism, they not only occupied leadership roles on the main committees and organs of the organization, which were the main determinants of party politics; they also claimed to represent about 85% of the party's force. So, you can't give into this show, this political concept of factionalism. The fact is that Mansoor Hekmat, as a political charlatan, was trying to present a new alternative to the crisis of revolutionary Marxism, known as “worker communism”, albeit with a radical turn of phrase and apparently with left positions. It was in this context that, according to their own literature, the left were referred to as supporters of worker communism and of Kurdish nationalism within the Iranian Communist Party. A former leader of Komala and the Communist Party writes:

“Flagmen of the right wing had no place on the main committees and organs of this communist organization. Following those two political famous lines, left and right in Komala and the Iranian Communist Party lined up against each other. The great majority (about 85%) of the left were under the leadership of the faction of worker communism, who were opposed to nationalism and its supporters on the left. The left practically took over at the helm of the Komala organization.” [7] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat had chosen the main members of the worker communist faction not on the basis of these individuals' positions which defended the same “faction of worker communists”; rather, he relied on the backwardness of bourgeois tradition as well as political self-interests, even if the same person did not believe these positions. Hekmat was familiar with shifting positions and displacements in the bourgeois tradition and he had grasped that tradition. He would gather forces and eventually assemble the princely “tribal heads” so that the tribe members would follow them. One of these tribes was the Modaressi tribe. One of the former leaders of worker communism, a disciple and platonic lover of Hekmat, who is currently experiencing a period of isolation, writes:

“Koorosh Modaressi, during this period, was one of those who initially associated themselves with the nationalist and right-wing leadership ... Koorosh Modaressi persisted with his right-wing position until he went to Europe to attend the 16th Plenum and met with Mansoor Hekmat. Koorosh Modaressi did not adopt this position because of his nationalism; he was among the dissatisfied leftists who opposed the worker communist movement under the leadership of Komala and the party [who] were selected as the main members of the faction of



worker communism ... Mansoor Hekmat was gathering power ... while all the documents and texts of that period were written by him, while faction members [of worker communism] put their signatures at the foot of these documents. None of the three other members of the faction wrote or published any entries that approved of the factions.” [8] [Our translation]

The faction of worker communism was formed in August 1988 to transform the foundations of worker communism into the foundations of the party. In turn, with the approval of the Central Committee of the Iranian Communist Party, a four-person politburo (Mansoor Hekmat, Iraj Azarin, Koorosh Modaressi and Reza Moghaddam) practically took over the party leadership. It is important to note that the worker communist faction had four members; now, the same four founding members of the politburo, in other words, the faction, were the party leadership. Mansoor Hekmat discusses the helm of the party being taken over by the faction as follows:

“If you want to form your own party without giving up the party you have, without wanting to abandon all that has been achieved with this party, then you are setting up a faction. It is necessary in the Iranian Communist Party to take over the helm of the party by this process.” [9] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat regarded the Communist Party as a machine for organizing and powerfully propagating for its own purposes; he never intended to abandon the Communist Party. The party was to be conquered by the faction’s goals and by its activists. Hekmat explains the reasons for this:

“I do not forsake a party that is already there; and, even now, it is a relatively powerful organizing and propaganda machine, even in comparison with radical labour organizations in Europe and the US. It can be a very effective tool in our effective involvement in the socialist labour movement, both in Iran and in the rest of the world. In my opinion, an Iranian communist and worker who wants to have a material and tangible impact on the world of his or her time cannot renounce the Iranian Communist Party.” [10] [Our translation]

On the one hand, the implementation of the decisions and policies of the leaders within the party faced difficulties; on the other hand, the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq and the subsequent Gulf War and changing regional conditions posed serious problems to the faction of labour communism. The labour communist faction did not intend to split, but sought to conquer the party during the Fourth Congress, with a clear 15% of outsiders from their ranks, and become a monopoly party, believing that 85% were in favour of worker communism. Even the timing of this settlement had been marked, namely, the date of the Fourth Congress. We put this issue aside for now, other than to state that the prohibition of the right to build a tendency and a faction within a political current became both a convention and a norm after the defeat of the October Revolution, and that the attempt by Stalinist counter-revolutionaries to silence any opposition and create a monotheistic party characterizes Stalinism. On the conquest of the party and the refinement of other tendencies during the Fourth Congress, Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“I have said before that the communist party of Iran (CPI) is a multi-base party which, in our view, must be turned into a single-base party of worker socialism in Iran. This means struggling to set the other tendencies in the party aside even if they may agree with all the resolutions and statements of the worker left in the party... We want the CPI to be the party of the worker socialism of Iran; we want it to close its "radical left" chapter altogether. The CPI should become a single-base and a single-trend party. Its programme, leadership, traditions, cadres, preoccupations, daily practice, and so on, should totally reflect such a position in society... The fate of the various tendencies in the party should be decided by the time of the Fourth Congress. The Congress itself is an occasion when we want the victory of worker socialism in the Communist Party of Iran to become official - with its programme, leadership and everything else.”[11] [Our translation]

The lack of capacity and efficiency in the faction and among its supporters and, most importantly, the developments in the region, meant that the course of events did not go as Mansoor Hekmat had predicted. In other words, the necessary conditions and the necessary power to conquer the party did not come as Mansoor Hekmat had hoped:

“The faction, which was supposed to unite itself, to implement policies of worker communism throughout the party, in its four-month activity, found little opportunity to align the various aspects of the party’s activities with the policies of worker communism or adapt to the US invasion of Iraq and the events in Iraqi Kurdistan, which also exposed differences ... Rahman Hosseinzadeh, who was a member of the Komala Leadership Committee at the time, made at least three speeches in defence of the benefits of the American war for Iraqi Kurdistan in the Komala camps.” [12] [Our translation]

The first Gulf War and its aftermath for Iraqi Kurdistan, whose main force in the party, named Komala, had been captured in Iraqi Kurdish camps, virtually eliminated the possibility of a party conquest. Mansoor Hekmat knew that, in the context of the post-Gulf War conditions and rising Kurdish nationalism, in an armed encampment in Northern Iraq, the most sensible approach was withdrawing forces, not conquest. Any unconsidered collisions could have led to a bloodbath at an armed camp in Northern Iraq. With the disappearance of the party’s conquest scenario from within, the faction of worker communism practically lost its meaning. Under these new conditions, for Mansoor Hekmat, the withdrawal of his supporters from the party in the camp in Iraqi Kurdistan was on the agenda. Most of them left for Europe and North America in 1991 through Turkey, later forming the body of worker communism. About the troubles experienced by his supporters who are trapped in the camp, Mansoor Hekmat says:

“My main concern is the question of the Kurdistan organisation. If we didn't have military camp, radios and etc, if some of our best comrades were not living there, I would not have considered this transition process necessary... But the situation of comrades in Kurdistan, exactly because of their contractual and unconventional social conditions is an important issue which needs attention.”[13]

Mansoor Hekmat, who once sought to determine the fate of other tendencies at the Fourth Congress by forcing them to proclaim the victory of worker socialism, faced new conditions. Given the military space of the camp and the conditions of Iraqi Kurdistan, recommending individual separations was the wisest way in which he could avoid group divisions and, worse still, purging the party of other tendencies. As a political manoeuvre, he describes the conditions that had been created for him to “leave the scene very calmly” rather than purge the party:

“Meanwhile I don't believe purging is constructive. If we were to do this, there is a big market for throwing mud at communists "who purge other lines." I cannot fight this propaganda...If we were to purge some and they would seek help from the society which sympathises with them and would try to overthrow communism in this miniature corner of the world. I will calmly leave the scene in front of them. The route to confront these tendencies is not organisational, but social. Thus, leaving is a right historical decision.”[14]

It is said that a liar has poor memory. So, was the party to be conquered during the Fourth Congress and become a monotheistic and single-base party, which would purge itself of outsiders. Individual resignations and the non-conquest of the party from within created conditions for Mansoor Hekmat to argue, with his trademark political charlatanism, that the question of worker communism is not a question of purging the most backward trends from within the communist party, but of regarding worker communism as the socialist movement of the global worker. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“The discussion of worker communism was not a discussion of purging the most backward tendencies from within the party. This debate is not even fundamentally addressed to the party as a given organization. We want to give the socialist labour movement a political and intellectual framework, even beyond Iran. Our counterparts in society are the main bourgeois tendencies that pose real obstacles to the communism of the working class.” [15] [Our translation]

In light of this brief explanation of the background to the formation of the worker communist faction and the process of eliminating its existential necessity, the central question that arises is, what at all is worker communism?

## **What is worker communism?**

We have repeated many times that a political tendency does not emerge from the sky. Even for religions, the material conditions for their emergence were already available, as in the case of the Abrahamic religions; otherwise, they would have remained small sects. The formation of a political tendency is a reflection of the historical situation which intellectually produces it. The question is, what historical conditions produced worker communism? Before examining worker communism, let us first discuss the historical conditions of the formation of Marxism (communism), which is actually a reflection of particular historical conditions.

The concept of communism goes back to ancient Greece, where communism depicted a myth or a utopian view of a society in which private ownership had no meaning and the people in society lived happily and peacefully. In modern times, it is possible to refer to the Levellers as the first communist movement. The Levellers were an egalitarian movement of stubborn 17th-century communists in Britain who sought to distribute society's wealth equally among its members. This movement was cruelly suppressed by the Democratic Republic of Cromwell. Another who speaks of the utopia of communism is Etienne Cabet, who, in his book *The Voyage to Icaria*, depicts an idealistic society in which communist relations prevail. There is no talk of private ownership or corruption, or crime having no meaning, while there is full equality between men and women [16]. The characteristic of all these communists was that they were idealists, a material force and a social class (the proletariat) with no historical task to undertake. How did the material conditions for the rise of a social class and consequently scientific communism come about?

Since the 16th century, when capitalism began to flourish, the concept of communism has been put forward in different forms. With the invention of the steam engine, which, in turn, influenced the whole of industry, the Industrial Revolution gained momentum. The Industrial Revolution which started in England in the early 18th century quickly spread to other European countries: on the one hand, the means of production was concentrated in the hands of a particular minority in society, namely, capitalists; on the other hand, this led to the formation of a new social class called the proletariat.

With the expansion of capitalism, a large part of the peasantry were taken from their lands and turned into proletarians. The working conditions were more terrible than today and workers had to work from 60 to 72 hours per week in factories. With the industrial revolution and the evolution of capitalism in England, advanced machines replaced simple tools in the industrial sector, especially the textile industry. The use of advanced machines led to mass unemployment. The workers saw the machines as being responsible for their misery, regarded them with anger and hatred, and objected to their existence. It was in this context that workers began to destroy machines in the period 1811-1812 as part of the Luddite Movement. For a short time, the Luddite Movement was so strong that the bourgeoisie was scared and the British state pushed for its bloody repression. At a collective trial in the English city of York in 1812, a large number of activists belonging to this movement were sentenced to death, exile or imprisonment. Subsequently, laws were adopted whereby any damage to machinery would result in heavy punishment and even execution. A major thinker on the proletariat has described this functioning of the proletariat as a product of the birth of the working class:

”At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operative of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.”[17]

Several rebellions occurred in the 1830s and 1840s. A social class was protesting at its exploitation, while a revolutionary spirit was pervading society. Although the radical elements in these movements called themselves “communists”, their communism was a mixture of imaginative aspiration and heroic action. The passage of time and the experiences of the struggle have revealed the ineffectiveness of such thoughts and pursuits. The struggle to improve living conditions required a revolutionary perspective.

In the face of all sorts of socialism (petit bourgeois socialism, utopian socialism, bourgeois socialism), which marked the genesis of the working class, the material background to communism (Marxism) was provided. This required the emergence of a new social class, the proletariat, in order to present the theory of its conditions of liberation, namely, communism. The distinguishing feature of communism (Marxism) from utopian, petit bourgeois or bourgeois forms of socialism and so on was formed around basic socialist debates. These notions, which are the foundations of communism, were at the core of the working class (not the working mass), in the sense of social revolution, in the concept of capitalist system, in the dictatorship of the proletariat (transition from capitalism to socialism), and in the global sense of communism (socialism), among other factors.

The publication of economic texts, *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The Holy Family*, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* and other debates indicated that a particular type of theory of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat was emerging. The publication of *The Poverty of Philosophy* was the culmination of the formation of Marxism (communism), written as a critique of the petit bourgeois socialism of French anarchist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. In this book, Marx exposed the philosophical and economic foundations of Proudhon’s contradictory fantasies and instead described the historical growth of the capitalist mode of production. Marx dialectically criticized the benefactor thinkers who sought to eliminate the negative aspects of capitalism within the framework of capitalism while keeping wage labour, in line with utopian socialists who demand the continuation of wage slavery. Marx revealed the baselessness of such fantasies and clearly showed that they did not embody an understanding of the growth of capitalism. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, he critiqued the idealistic and metaphysical worldview of Proudhon from a materialist perspective. This book represented a complete break with the young Hegelians. Unlike the young Hegelians, in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx fully explains the role of productive forces in the evolution of society, the relations between productive forces, means of production and their interactions, and the dialectical relationship between labour and capital in capitalist society. Above all, the class struggle in its evolutionary process will replace capitalist productive relations with higher productive relations, namely, socialist productive relations.

The publication of the manifesto reflected the emergence of the workers as a social class. This class, coupled with the theoretical coherence of communism, chose to fight the barbaric capitalist system as well as offer an alternative to capitalism, the socialist mode of production. The publication of *The Communist Manifesto* reflected the emergence of the working class as a social class: a class that, with its theoretical coherence, presented its theory of the struggle against the capitalist barbaric system as well as its alternative to capitalism. With this

publication, Marxism also became the theory of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat. Marxism expressed the maturity of the emergence of the working class as a social class in the development of society; rather than riots or insurrections, it offered a political programme and a call for social revolution, as its historical mission, in order to end the capitalist system by its replacement with the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, followed by the move to a classless communist society. For communists, socialism and communism have the same meaning and represent a society in which the mode of production is socialist, while the difference between socialism and communism lies in distribution. Communism is not a religion with predetermined dogmatic principles but is fluid and enriched by the experiences of class struggle.

Although, for communists, socialism and communism have the same concepts, in the history of the labour movement, the most radical and progressive part of the working class has always associated itself with communism. In such a context, the thinkers of the working class did not hesitate when they chose to name their defining platform as *The Communist Manifesto*. Engels, in the preface to the 1890 German edition of the manifesto, says:

”Nevertheless, when it appeared, we could not have called it a socialist manifesto. In 1847, two kinds of people were considered socialists. On the one hand were the adherents of the various utopian systems, notably the Owenites in England and the Fourierists in France, both of whom, at that date, had already dwindled to mere sects gradually dying out. On the other, the manifold types of social quacks who wanted to eliminate social abuses through their various universal panaceas and all kinds of patch-work, without hurting capital and profit in the least. In both cases, people who stood outside the labour movement and who looked for support rather to the “educated” classes. The section of the working class, however, which demanded a radical reconstruction of society, convinced that mere political revolutions were not enough, then called itself Communist. It was still a rough-hewn, only instinctive and frequently somewhat crude communism. Yet, it was powerful enough to bring into being two systems of utopian communism – in France, the “Icarian” communists of Cabet, and in Germany that of Weitling. Socialism in 1847 signified a bourgeois movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, quite respectable, whereas communism was the very opposite. And since we were very decidedly of the opinion as early as then that “the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the working class itself,” [from the General Rules of the International] we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us to repudiate it.”[18]

For the first time in human history, a class was formed, capable of carrying out a communist revolution to end all human exploitation. This social class is the only social class in human history that is both exploited and revolutionary, and again the only social class that cannot liberate itself unless it liberates the whole of humanity. Marxism declared that the working class was a class against capital; but it is not yet a class for itself, and must become a class for itself. Marxism considers the evolutionary process of history and the development of capitalism to be the precondition of a socialist society. Capitalism must grow and concentrate its productive forces while simultaneously creating its own gravedigger, the proletariat.

However, it was only the Paris proletariat that entered the revolution of 1848 with its clear class demands. Meanwhile, 23 years later, in 1871, it organized the first proletarian revolution in history, known as the Paris Commune. Although the revolution of the proletariat was bludgeoned to death in 1848 and in 1871, if it had not been slaughtered, it would not have been possible to establish socialism. As capitalism had not yet entered the era of imperialism, the era of its decadence was still in its flourishing state. Engels says in this regard:

“Everywhere that revolution was the work of the working class; it was the latter that built the barricades and paid with its lifeblood. Only the Paris workers, in overthrowing the government, had the very definite intention of overthrowing the bourgeois regime. But conscious though they were of the fatal antagonism existing between their own class and the bourgeoisie, still, neither the economic progress of the country nor the intellectual development of the mass of French workers had as yet reached the stage which would have made a social reconstruction possible. In the final analysis, therefore, the fruits of the revolution were reaped by the capitalist class.”[19]

We believe that it was the proletariat who were able to establish Marx as a communist thinker, not that Marx himself invented communism for the working class. Without the rise of the working class as a social class, Marx could only have been a historical genius like thousands of other historical geniuses; better still, we can say that communism is the product of the rise of the working class as a social class in recent centuries. Without the proletariat, communism would only be a myth.

This communism found itself in the League of Communists, the First International, the left wing of the Second International, the Third International, and in particular the left wing of the Third International, and the factions that took on the big task of defending the communist and proletarian positions against the degeneration of the Third International. Today, the communist left is the only real defender of Marx’s proletarian and communist positions.

Let us now examine the rise of worker communism. As we have explained, the rise of the working class as a social class led to Marxism as its theory of emancipation, but the opposite is true for “worker communism”. In other words, “worker communism” is the mental secretion of a political activist and an ideologue of the left of capital in response to an aspect of his own political life. Here, we could be talking about Mansoor Hekmat’s daily ineffectual practice in his belief in the fate of the workers of his generation. As he says:

“The discussion of worker communism is the result of more than three years of my own reflection on this aspect of my political life and the political activity that I consider myself to be a part of ... Honestly, the first thing that convinced me that there are still important and new questions to be answered was that I had embraced communism as an ideal of workers, and spent six or seven years of my active practice as a cadre of the Iranian communist movement, and I saw that my daily practice had no impact on the fate of the working generation that is living with me, as well as my course. It is contemporaneous with me.” [20] [Our translation]

So, Mansoor Hekmat came to the conclusion that his political life had no effect on the working-class generation that ran alongside; well, that's up to him. But, in the real world, as an ideologist of peripheral capital, he played an important role in consolidating bourgeois positions. When workers became cannon fodder in the imperialist Iran-Iraq War and when workers were slaughtered in Kurdistan in the name of the National Movement, along with revolutionary Marxism, the critique of the left of capital was extinguished by restoring and reconstructed Stalinism-Maoism under the title of communism among the political milieu, with Hekmat playing the biggest role in sliming proletarian ideals and values and so on.

We argued that the rise of the working class as a **social class** raised the necessity for scientific communism (Marxism). But, unlike Marxism, the starting point for worker communism was the response that Mansoor Hekmat himself had received. Apparently, he had discovered a new "elixir" with which to skilfully resolve, albeit temporarily, the crisis of revolutionary Marxism or, more likely, to postpone it again. He succeeded in transmitting the crisis of revolutionary Marxism to worker communism, which then manifested itself in the crisis of worker communism. The crisis and the collapse of worker communism in circles and sects will be examined later. Mansoor Hekmat, on the starting point of the worker communist debate and the necessity for this discussion, goes on:

"Worker communism ... is the answer that I have come up with. This is the starting point of the worker communist debate. Worker communism responds to a real vacuum in the social movement of communism which is quite straightforward and undeniable ... So, the first thing that attracts attention in the study of communism today is the gap between the communism that practically exists at all levels and the communism that Marx intended." [21] [Our translation]

Marx, with his greatness, never claimed that communism was the response he had arrived at. Hekmat, meanwhile, is the ideologue of the left of capital who regards the barbarism of state capitalism in the Eastern bloc as the practical manifestation of communism. What better slimes the name of communism than this? After dragging communism through the mud, he argues that there is a gap between practical forms of communism and Marx's communism and that he has been the saviour seeking to bridge that gap. We explained earlier that Marxism marked the rise of the working class as a **social class**. The basic question that arises is, what social and historical conditions produced worker communism? Worker communism is a product of the activities of Iranian workers in the 1979 revolution as well as the product of land reform in Iran, in which workers became the **main stratum** and not the main class of the exploited. In other words, in spite of internationalist hangers-on, according to the ideologue of worker communism, Mansoor Hekmat, worker communism is a product of the particular conditions of Iran, an issue to which we will return. First, let's look at the essence of Hekmat's remarks regarding the historical context of the formation of worker communism:

"Worker communism is thus the product of the activities of Iranian workers after the 1979 revolution and during the 1979 revolution. It is also valid to claim that it is the product of



‘land reform’. It is a product of the land reform of the 1960s in Iran, during which workers became the main exploited stratum.” [22] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat argues that, because of the 1979 revolution and the intervention of Iranian workers in the revolution, worker communism was able to gather a force around itself, demonstrate the capacity of the working class and show that workers are ready for the struggle. In his opinion, in England, since the revolution has not taken place, the working class has not been able to respond to the bourgeoisie’s attacks. There are 50,000 workers among the UK’s unemployed, and the working class was unable to come to take on the struggle. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“But the real reason that this debate [on worker communism] was able to be won in Iran and kept so many people united in the region, in particular, in Iran and Iraq, is because behind it was a widespread revolution in which the workers took on the [struggle]. In England, the workers work at home. Just yesterday, BMW and Rover put 50,000 people out of work, and these [workers] can’t do anything at all. They can’t do anything except write slogans on the walls of their homes. In the Iranian Revolution, workers took up the [struggle] and it became clear that ‘God himself is a worker’. And it turned out that Muslims were pro-worker. It was found that the workers were the ‘strong leader of the revolution’. The potential and capacity of the working class have emerged.” [23] [Our translation]

The first question is that, if worker communism is the product of the 1979 revolution, instead of the ideology of revolutionary Marxism, why did worker communism not appear from the start? Why did it take 10 years for Mansoor Hekmat to present his seminar in March 1988 as the basic foundations of worker communism? This shows that the liar has a poor memory and that he has forgotten that, in his pamphlet *Our Differences* on the metamorphosis of revolutionary Marxism into worker communism, he stated:

“Let me also add that the distinction between the views of today and the intellectual framework of the past is not something which we have come to understand at once. Today, we recognize that these are different intellectual traditions, but we have not necessarily understood from the outset the theoretical scope and social depth of these differences.” [Our translation]

Another moment of demagoguery from Mansoor Hekmat occurred when he said that, after the land reform, the workers became the main stratum of the exploited, meaning that, before the land reform, the workers were not the main exploited stratum. In other words, according to Mansoor Hekmat, Iranian society was not capitalist before the land reform; rather, it was feudal. To be sure of his point of view, we refer to the programme of the Iranian Communist Party that he had formulated. About that programme, Hekmat writes:

“The land reform of the 1960s had completed the long and slow transformation of the Iranian mode of production from a feudal to a capitalist one.” [24] [Our translation]

Contrary to Mansoor Hekmat's Maoist vision, even before the land reform in Iran, the workers were not the main stratum but **the main class of the exploited**, because the dominant mode of production in Iran was the capitalist mode of production. The reconstruction amid the ruins of World War II created an economic boom throughout the capitalist world. Although Iran suffered very little damage from occupation by the British and the former Soviet Union, it had much potential, especially because of its vast oil resources. At this point, we witnessed the growth of the Iranian oil industry, the modernization of industries and particularly the growth of the manufacturing industry. With the growth of constant capital, the need for variable capital (labour) also increased. The continued accumulation of capital required the release of variable capital from the countryside and the migration of workers to the cities. It was in this context that the capital state facilitated this release under the name of land reform.

Mansoor Hekmat, at the height of speaking delirium, estimated that worker communism could be traced back more than 200 years, stating that, in *The Communist Manifesto*, even Marx referred to this term! The First International, the October Revolution, and even the British miners' strike were examples of worker communism, as he eloquently explains below:

“The context of the emergence of worker communism is that working-class socialism goes back more than 200 years and that even Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto*, refers to this term. Worker communism as a social reality is the conscious movement that is formed within the working class against capital. This struggle has its moments. Many of the moments of this worker communism have been the same as those of the communist movement. The October Revolution is undoubtedly one of those moments which drive this movement. But worker communism is not limited to such realities and developments. As I said, the course of worker communism is an inevitable and permanent one in the 20th century. To this tradition of worker communism, I also add the one-year strike by British miners ... this was worker communism.” [25] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat presented the basics of worker communism not through a text (theoretical, even at the party level) but in a seminar, orally; the seminar was more like a party agitation than a theoretical one. He knew to which collective he was offering the seminar, with disciples knocking their socks off and regarding at such nonsense as an elixir or a miracle that was going to work out in the dream world of the religion of worker communism. This signified such a level of acceptance by such disciples of such ridiculousness that Mansoor Hekmat said that people were gathering around worker communism who didn't know that Lenin is an eating and drinking phenomena and that this was a sign of the success of worker communism, saying:

“Thousands honorable man rounding up to the party that they don't know Lenin is eatable or drinking [phenomena] and Marxists and senior workers in the party should not indicate this as their less esteem but see that their own success.”[26]

Earlier, it was argued that the beginning of the discussion of worker communism was a discussion that Mansoor Hekmat himself had started, who claimed that the revolution of 1979 and land reform had prepared the ground for worker communism. How did Mansoor Hekmat come to worker communism from the revolution of 1979 and the land reform? For the moment, we put aside the contradictions and inconsistencies of Mansoor Hekmat in order to answer this question; the answer that can only be convincing to the apostles of worker communism is as convincing as Christ's ascension before his apostles without explanation. We look at Hekmat's observations in this regard.

“When you looked at the communist movements, they were usually very marginal and without influence. Not only were they not in the government, they were less influential in the political structures of those countries, they had no influence on the protest movements, and, overall, they were in no position at all. This is the first observation that makes a communist think, what is the issue? Communism, whose purpose is to change the world, putting the world on its feet and removing its inversion, in no country, has this position.

The second observation, from an intellectual point of view, about the beginning of the discussion of worker communism is to see the differences, contradictions and gaps between the ideals of communism and the realities that existing communism truly represents in our time.

Communism, as we have mentioned before, is a liberation movement, while the countries that claimed to be socialist and governed by communist parties were not free countries. Communism is a moral and cultural liberation movement, while (existing) communist movements are among the most constrained, ethical and in a sense the most restrictive social movements in their own country. Communists were not a faction of so-called intellectuals and free thinkers in many countries.” [27] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat claims that communist movements were very marginal and without influence. His political charlatanism and his slinging of communism demand several explanations:

First, the ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas, and it is only in the revolutionary situation that this rule breaks down and the ruling ideas become the ideas of the revolutionary class. In the course of World War I, if we exclude the Bolsheviks, the number of those who remained loyal to the proletarian position can hardly be said to have been more than double the number of fingers on a pair of hands.

Secondly, Hekmat uses the past tense of the verb and writes “were”. After starting the discussion on worker communism, were the communist movements that Mansoor Hekmat hoped for no longer marginal but shaped by events or were they influential?

Thirdly, what about communist movements in the government? Communists are not a class; the working class is a class. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the working class through workers' councils, not the dictatorship of communists. Such nonsense

helps the bourgeois propaganda system embody the barbarism embodied in the state capitalism of the former Eastern Bloc, China, Cuba etc. as characteristic of the communist state and call the crimes of capitalism the crimes of communism.

Fourthly, Mansoor Hekmat speaks in a disgusting way about existing forms of communism, as if he has seen the difference and contradiction between the ideals of communism and the communism that really existed with his own insightful eyes. Such observations were observed not only by Hekmat, but also by the pro-Russian and pro-Chinese currents, and their attempt to close the gap over time. So, there is no fundamental difference between Hekmat's observations and the pro-Russian and pro-Chinese currents. Contrary to Hekmat's observations, the communists (internationalists) have been defending communist positions for nearly a century and historically declared the victory of the counter-revolution over the ruins of the October Revolution. Mansoor Hekmat's "authentically existing communism" celebrated its victory on the bones of bloodied communists. The necessity of the communist left, unlike worker communism, not only during the 1979 revolution but also in the defeat of the tide of world revolution, as well as its socio-historical necessity, was determined a century ago to defend communism and Marxism; since then, it has proudly defended proletarian positions.

Fifth, who said that "communism is a liberation movement"? This only serves to muddy communist goals. Communism is not even a movement for justice. The slogan of a socialist society is "to each according to his or her work", which expresses a kind of justice that is inconsistent with the concept of communism and communist society. Thus, in a communist society, equal rights must be transformed into unequal rights in order to apply the communist principle of "From each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her needs".

Now the question is, how does Mansoor Hekmat want to close the gap between ideal communism and communism that really exists? Unlike the pro-Russian and pro-Chinese currents that wanted to gradually eliminate the gap between communism and authentically existing communism, Hekmat, in order to eliminate this gap all together, has called for the social transition of communism. It should be emphasized that discussing society would consequently take forward the social class. The saviour wants to transmit the social benefits of one social class to another. So, what is this social class? Aren't social classes the material forces of social change? Hekmat describes this social transition of communism as if touching precious gold:

"The first thing we came up with in this debate, and I think that is of great theoretical importance, is that we abandoned the discussion of revisionism and anti-revisionism and talked about the social transition of communism. We said that movements in the name of communism, which were activated or isolated or defeated, were essentially other social movements. I'm not saying this because we now need to consider the word 'workman' in terms of identity criteria. But, if we say who was worker-oriented and who was not, then you have failed because you were not worker-oriented. This is our objective observation." [28]  
[Our translation]

This nonsense from Mansoor Hekmat could be music to the ears of his apostles, not only for the communists and the internationalists but also for serious human beings involved in a social class (in our case, the working class) who are the driving force behind social events, it is not the will of even the most revolutionary of individuals.

We discovered the context of the formation of worker communism from the language of its founder, Mansoor Hekmat. Now, another key question concerns the nature of the ideology of worker communism? Mansoor Hekmat replies as below:

“Primarily, worker communism is a social reality ... It is social, it is objective, outside of parties and organizations, even if there is sometimes associated with them. Thus, one meaning of worker communism is the workers’ communist movement or the workers’ communist social movement. It is the struggle in society that can be called worker communism. This worker communism, as an objective phenomenon, is a historical phenomenon and a reality that has been constantly present, which is material and has its own history, historical moments and events, and personalities. Worker communism is also a comprehensive system of thought and a critique of practical manifestations of existing socialism as well as a historical examination of contemporary socialism. Therefore, it is a theoretical-critical movement ... Worker communism is also a party movement that looks to a different party future for communism. Worker communism is a campaign for the creation of communist parties on the basis of these views, programmes and policies. Finally, worker communism is a definite recall to the Iranian Communist Party: the call to adopt a certain attitude and methods of action.” [29] [Our translation]

This long, elaborate quote provides an abstract version of a sort of general description of worker communism. The leader, like a religious authority, provides a playful description of the religion of worker communism. This description, if appealing to the disciples of worker communism, offers nothing new to any other human being seeking a better understanding of worker communism. Mansoor Hekmat, the political charlatan, claims that worker communism is the Marxism of the end of the 20th century, forgetting that the First, Second and Third Internationals even included British miners who were part of worker communism. If we accept Hekmat’s forgetfulness and admit that worker communism is indeed the Marxism of the end of the 20th century, then the question arises, how is Marxism represented in the 20th century by Hekmat? Let’s first look at his description of worker communism:

“Worker communism is Marxism. As a thinking system, it is comprehensive and widespread, because it is the same as Marxism, and is a comprehensive and widespread form of Marxism. In this sense, the worker communist tendency or the worker communist perspective, theoretically, emphasizes the orthodoxy of Marxism and insists on the validity of Marxism; and, the only thing I add here is what worker communism was trying to put it into practice at the end of the 20th century ... That the intellectual apparatus of worker communism was, at the end of the 20th century, Marxism for our time” [30] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat does not specify here how Marxism was represented before 1989, when he first organized the seminar on worker communism. We are only confronted with a claim, without any serious or positive arguments made about the validity of its claim. He claims that worker communism is the only real Marxism of our age. This claim is as valid as the claim of the ascension of the Muslim Prophet or the resurrection of the Christian Messiah. Mansoor Hekmat says:

“My claim is that worker communism is the only real Marxism of our age. I claim that what we are talking about as the anti-revisionist movement of revolutionary Marxism is socially still at another class pole ... so there is a gap between worker communism and the current of ‘revolutionary Marxism’, in the sense that we are talking about anti-revisionist parties. This is a deep gap. It is a deep social gap.” [31] [Our translation]

Apparently, Stalinist historiography diminishes in comparison with the historiography of Mansoor Hekmat, who claims, yes, he only believes that worker communism existed before Marx, that is to say, Marx was a worker communist. Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“But, for us, the debates on worker communism are not debates that have taken place over several days, because worker communism is not my and your creature; it existed before Marx and is a tendency within the working class that considers itself to be Marxist, and separates itself from other tendencies within the working class.” [32] [Our translation]

Hekmat even makes the claim that, if we republish the manifesto, we will name it *The Worker Communism Manifesto*. Given that worker communism has published dozens of worthless books and pamphlets which have carried a heavy price for worker communism, the question arises then as to why not publish a version of *The Communist Manifesto* under the title of *The Worker Communist Manifesto*? Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“If we want to republish *The Communist Manifesto*, I will name it *The Worker Communist Manifesto*. I will explain later that this is a manifesto of worker communism from 130 years ago, and that present-day worker communism of today needs a new explanation and establish a policy for today’s world.” [33] [Our translation]

We have discussed the issue of trade unions in the previous section, but it is necessary to point to an even better depiction of the ideology of worker communism. If Mansoor Hekmat and his apostles, before they repeated the critique of the radical left of capital with regard to trade unions, made a judgement that no one has the right to dismantle the two bricks that workers have set up in their current struggle, then no one would be able to demand the dissolution of unions. Would it be better to dust off the eyes of workers and prevent the independent organization of workers, in the name of Marxism, while, in practice, appearing as a lawyer for the institution of capital? Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“As long as your organization is not a real and available alternative, as long as it is not a real organization available to workers who can handle and answer the same questions, calling out

unions seems to me to be an anti-worker effort ... No one has the right to dismantle the two bricks that workers have put together in their current and predominantly defensive struggle, with such arguments that this is not democratic, or not enough left and radical, and so on. Our attitude towards trade unions cannot be of the same sort as our attitude towards religious or state institutions. No one can demand the dissolution of unions.” [34] [Our translation]

Worker communism echoes the same satire of the left of capital in relation to the economic and social reforms of capitalism, as we have discussed in the previous section. This helps us to better understand the discussion. Worker communism, while attacking the communists, declares that the theory behind “capitalism cannot reform” merely expresses pretensions to revolutionism; otherwise, the characteristic feature of the worker communism of Marx (yes, Marx was also a worker communist!) was the imposition of reforms on the bourgeoisie. Mansoor Hekmat, in his distinction between worker communism and other communists, writes:

“A distinctive feature of worker-communism is the question of the attitude towards economic and social reforms and the economic struggle of the working class...For us, workers' continuous economic struggle to improve their conditions by forcing political and economic reforms upon the bourgeoisie is an inseparable part of working-class struggle and constitutes one of the fundamental premises of this struggle...The statement 'capitalism cannot reform' became a basis for their pretensions to revolutionism...We want both a workers' state and a rise in the minimum wage... In Marx's words, a distinctive feature of worker-communism is that it strives 'to push forward the whole class movement' in all its moments and stages.”[35]

Such eloquent words are not due to a lack of understanding about the evolution of capitalism, as if capitalism had been frozen in time in 1850, but rather due to belonging to the camp of capital. The left wing of capital has defended its interests in the form of Marxism. The Iranian Communist Party once raised the independent flag of the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Further, through the political and organizational reflection of the objective presence of the Iranian working class at the scene of the revolution, albeit alongside the crisis of the ideology of revolutionary Marxism, the Iranian Communist Party and other parties like it have not become an appropriate container for workers' activity. This time, the party that will be built in the future, that of worker communists, will become a workers' party and a suitable container for workers' activity. In the following sections, we will see that, even this party, as its founder claims, is out of synch with worker communism. The question that arises for every serious person concerns which of the radical phrase currents of the left of capital do not refer to “interference in the class struggle”, “workers' combination” etc. in their propaganda? Which of the parliamentary candidates does not have a great say during the election campaign? Mansoor Hekmat writes:

“Let me not spend too much time, only an embodiment of the kind of party and parties that can be referred to as the worker-communist party. In my opinion, for such a party, the social movement, the class movement, and the daily and permanent struggle of the working class against capitalism take precedence. That is to say, the focal point of its formation, the focal

point of its growth, is within the class. Much of its energy is spent there, encompassing all the issues of this struggle. And its activists are the activists of this struggle. Its leaders are well-known leaders in this struggle, no matter how small or big, are involved in pushing back and forth this social struggle. In terms of its combination, it is a workers' party. Includes elements of the working class ... Our party (the Iranian Communist Party) and a hundred other parties like us are not the right place for the activity of workers. But the Worker Communist Party must be a natural and appropriate container for workers' political activity." [36] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat refers to the characteristics of the Worker Communist Party that will be built, mentioning, among other things, the propaganda of the workers' revolution, while even announcing that we have replaced the slogan of the revolutionary republic with that of workers' rule. He writes:

"The Worker Communist Party is the party that speaks of the workers' revolution in its propaganda. It directly calls for the communist revolution. We have taken steps in this direction, putting the slogan of the workers' government in place of the slogan of the revolutionary republic and so on." [37] [Our translation]

First, the radical phrase part of the left of capital, from the Maoists to worker communism, from the Stalinists to the Trotskyists, etc., speak, in their propaganda, of the workers' revolution and the communist revolution. Most are also aware that this is a propaganda issue. Secondly, workers' rule or the workers' state is only a manifestation of the capitalist state in terms of workers. Unlike Mansoor Hekmat, who has just come across the phenomenon of workers' rule, the internationalists exposed the bourgeois nature of such states about a century ago. In the six large executive sessions of the Communist International held between 7 February and 6 March 1926, the communist left spokesman, Amadeo Bordiga, criticized the bourgeois nature of the "workers' state" during large meetings of the Comintern, with courage, prudence and Marxist transparency.

Thirdly, unlike worker communism, the internationalists do not believe in "workers' rule" or a "workers' state" but believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the whole working class through the councils, not party dictatorship, even by the most communist party.

Contrary to internationalist gestures, worker communism was a distinctive campaign within Iranian society and within the Iranian Communist Party. The Gulf War and its effects on the region's conditions and subsequent events forced worker communism activists to carry out the project of worker communism outside the Iranian Communist Party. Mansoor Hekmat says:

"The last thing I need to talk about here is worker communism being a distinctive campaign within Iranian society, within the Iranian left and within the Iranian Communist Party." [38] [Our translation]



The Communist Party finally formed, Hekmat resorted to lies and deceit, claiming that communism is associated with the Worker Communist Party and that no one outside the Worker Communist Party believes in a communist society. Outside of worker communism, no one propagates a socialist and communist society. Mansoor Hekmat addresses his supporters as follows:

“This situation seems to me to have occurred to a certain degree, especially in recent years in Iran. They associate communism with the Worker Communist Party. In a sense, the Communist Party has also become the flag of communism, as an idea, as an alternative and as a kind of society. Outside of us, no one believes that we should bring about a communist society. Given the current state of propaganda, it is not that we should bring about a communist or socialist society, and that is the line taken by worker communism.” [39] [Our translation]

Ideologies of worker communism have attempted to imply that worker communism is an ideology of internal coherence; they consider its sudden emergence as an Abrahamic religion, not a kind of historical phenomenon, but a continuation of Marx’s communism. Radical words, noisy propaganda, controversy, actionism, an emphasis on movement, etc. are characteristic of the radical phrase part of the left of capital. Through our investigations, the statements of those who claim to be the roots of worker communism must be traced back to the communist left or influenced by the communist left, which only indicates that such claims are not serious. Rather, they are allegations that only serve to offer illusions to worker communism.

## **Worker communism and workers’ dilemma**

As noted earlier, in the era of capitalist prosperity, unions were merely an economic formation, as the political struggle was passed onto the party, which, through parliament, would advance the struggle by imposing reforms. With capitalism entering its era of decline, the period of communist revolutions or imperialist wars began. At this juncture, and with the outbreak of World War I, the vast majority of workers’ parties joined the bourgeoisie forever, and the workers were ensnared in imperialist massacres. Only a very small minority, including the Bolsheviks, remained loyal to proletarian positions. The evolution of capitalism and the era of imperialism showed that proletarian organizations could only survive as revolutionary minorities in a non-revolutionary situation, and only in a revolutionary situation where this balance was broken and the workers hurried to the Communist Party. That is why internationalist currents and trends, despite having units in different countries, call themselves currents, trends and so on, not parties.

The worker concept of a party and a current was not based on the algebraic sum of atomized workers in a bourgeois party or in the name of the worker that the current followed; rather, its authenticity was derived from the function, practice and programme of a party or current. The concept of worker is not a sociological discussion, but a class discussion. The key question is

whether a political current, from the point of view of the interests of whichever social class, looks at social events and which social class interests it defends.

Before continuing the discussion, a brief explanation of the attitude and grounds for the emergence of workerism (operaism) is necessary. Workerism is the attitude that emerged in Italy following the “hot autumn” of 1969, which dominated the political milieu in Italy in the early 1970s, then expanded elsewhere. According to this attitude, the contradiction of labour and capital becomes mechanically more important in the production process, and the factory is considered the most important base for class struggle. This attitude was also expressed, and its current defenders argue that the left has nothing to do with the interests of the working class. The defeat of world revolution and the subsequent rise of the counter-revolution, the counter-revolutionary nature of the “communist” parties, the formation of guerrilla movements, the rise of Maoist radicalism, the anti-war movement, and so on, while being irrelevant to the working class and simply used to slime the name of communism, were important factors that set the stage for this attitude. The workerism attitude then expanded rapidly from Italy to other countries. Although not as strong as it used to be, it is still found in the political arena. Of course, the main theorists of this intellectual attitude revised their theories in the wake of the subsequent developments of the 1970s, replacing the concept of “social workers” with “industrial workers”. They also argued that capitalist exploitation takes place on a wider social scale, with social groups such as students or any layer that feels the hegemony of capital being considered to be part of the working class.

In the political milieu of Iran, after the developments of 1979, workerism showed itself in what was known as “Line 5”. The same factors that set the stage for the growth of workerism in Italy somehow set the stage for the formation of Line 5 in the Iranian political milieu. Their character was antithetical to the “intellectuals” and the emphasis on workers’ membership. The two most popular currents in Line 5 in Iran were the Mashvarat (Consultation) and the Red Workers’ Organization of Iran.

The mechanistic and sociological understanding of this current of the proletariat and the working class gives the impression that, the more manual the work, the more radical and revolutionary is the worker. This attitude prevents the proletariat from forming itself as a social class and the formation of the world party, so as to prepare itself for its historical task, the communist revolution.

Worker communism was not influenced by “workerism”; however, it did, or even still does, adopt an upside-down attitude, that is, a social democratic understanding of the working class and party. Mansoor Hekmat claims that worker communism has sought to mass-socialize maximalism and communism since the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks, only in the context of a world class struggle that was becoming more radical every day which, in its way, led to a wave of world revolution that could have resulted in a mass party. The Bolsheviks, after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, could only survive as a weak faction. But Mansoor Hekmat wonders whether the class struggle was or is very defensive at the national or global level about making communism a mass, social force. He writes:

“We are among the few communist organisations since the Bolsheviks who want to become mass parties on the basis of our radicalism and maximalism; indeed to turn maximalism and communism, our communist goals and the idea of communist revolution into a mass and social force; our last word on religion into society's discourse. We believe we must turn this undiluted communism into a mass and social force.”[40]

We continue our research to see how worker communism, after the Bolsheviks, has sought to become a mass party on the basis of our radicalism and maximalism. According to the ideologies of worker communism, social democratic parties and parties like them are considered to be labour parties due to the concentration of atomized workers within them. Mansoor Hekmat, the ideologist of worker communism, says:

“This is your own party and tomorrow you can go to the centre of Tehran, to the party's headquarters, join the party and unite with other party members in your neighbourhood, factory and city; you can take responsibility from that day on. Comrades, we want to give the working class the right to choose communism ... Comrades, victory over the bourgeoisie must be done on their land; we will not win any seats in our congress, we will not gain political power in our camp, so we must go to their land, and we are going to their land. We have to prepare ourselves for this role.” [41] [Our translation]

It may seem at first glance that the ideologists of worker communism have a “mass party” understanding that was prevalent in the boom of capitalism; but the notion of worker communism stems from its class affiliation with the left of capital. Understanding worker communism, on the one hand, is a social democratic understanding of the labour party; on the other hand, as we shall see in the context of gaining political power, it is an adventurous one, which is a hallmark of bourgeois parties. Since Mansoor Hekmat believed that a dictatorship was ruling in Iran and that the workers could not go to the party offices to sign up to worker communism, they facilitated workers' membership of the Iranian Communist Party. After the collapse of worker communism, in all worker communist parties, they adopted the same decree. We read in one account from a worker communist party about workers' membership the following:

“According to our policy of organizing, every worker and labour activist who associates himself with the Hekmatist Party and who is active in the labour movement is considered a member of our party, regardless of whether this can be officially announced for security reasons.” [42] [Our translation]

The leaders of worker communism in their interviews provide a better understanding of how worker communism wants to become a mass movement, based on its radicalism and maximalism. The disproportionate dimension and the lack of a basis coherence in these interviews are not our concern here, but the form of massification from the perspective of worker communism is. We read:

“The party and the worker are two categories and two separate phenomena in the mind of the left who are not communist. From the perspective of Hekmat, the party and the worker are one. None would be without this. The party without the worker, no matter how high its communist dose, is not workerist. And the worker, without his own political party, its struggle will remain at the level of the trade union struggle and, at most, at the level of reform, rather than gaining power ... The other aspect of these currents and parties, which are workerist, concerns the parties’ and workers’ struggle to share power with the bourgeoisie. This current, although workerist, wants the worker to vote for his or her party to enter bourgeois parliaments, in coalition with or in opposition to other bourgeois parties in power. In the name of the worker, and even of communism, he or she seeks reforms for the working class and wants part of the surplus value that the worker produces to be returned to the workers and for capitalism to remain in place ... In Iran, the Tudeh Party was a workers’ party of this type. The European left and social democratic parties had and continue to have the same role.” [43] [Our translation]

More than this, we are talking about demagogues here: while the Tudeh Party of Iran was formed as part of Russian foreign policy in the interests of Russian imperialism and supported by Britain during World War II, it assumes the concept of a workers’ party! European social democratic parties take on workers’ identity because of the number of atomized workers. According to the left of capital, their comrades in powerful positions in European countries are in labour governments. The key question for any truth seeker concerns worker parties of course: from the point of view of worker communism, what reforms are desired for and by the working class? Apparently, the radical phrase wing of the left of capitalism has abandoned its radical phraseology and speaks in the conventional language of the bourgeoisie, and what disgusting talk!

To better understand the positions of the left of the capital, look at the words of its vice leader, Koorosh Modaressi, who, after the death of Mansoor Hekmat, became the leader of worker communism and later resorted to seclusion during the crisis of worker communism. The leader’s delusions and meanderings are not because of his lack of knowledge and history concerning communist positions but his belonging to the political apparatus of the left of capital, as the vice leader’s demagoguery reveals below:

“The left cannot understand, through this method, why, in its time, anarchists, syndicate activity and syndicates who were not communist at all, or perhaps even Bakunin, opposed the communist and Marxist formulas and classified themselves as worker parties, appearing alongside communists in the First International and utopian socialists, real socialists, German socialists etc. in the ranks of the bourgeois and reactionary parties ... Non-communist currents within the working class, far more than left parties, are workers’ party. The workers’ parties in Iran cannot, given their limitations on the horizon and more importantly their public character, nominate themselves as a party. But if naming is not our point of reference, and if the interactions they form in society and in the working class are the reason for their definition, then they are no more or no less party-oriented more than any other left party in society.” [44] [Our translation]

It is a fact that the anarchists and the syndicalists were considered as the labour movement in the First International, and that Bakunin, as long as he was not pursuing anti-worker campaigns, was a member of the International before being later fired. But to say he himself retired as a demagogic leader simply conceals the truth. The anarchists, syndicalists and various socialists had not yet been integrated into state or capital institutions during the First International. The retired leader at the height of his rant claims that the workers' parties in Iran (not the party, but the parties) cannot identify themselves as party due to their horizons and more importantly because of their public nature. Unfortunately, he fails to name which parties were the workers' parties in Iran, but his comrade refers to one of these workers' parties, the Tudeh Party of Iran. He writes:

“The working class of Iran has been deprived of its real worker parties for more than half a century. The only workers' party a few decades ago when was worker, not communist, and the communists did not become workerist after that.” [45] [Our translation]

Finally, one of the worker communist activists claims that no communist party in Iran has been or is a workers' party, that is to say, the parties that were or are working under the name of worker communism were or are not worker and, most importantly, the party institutions and organs did not specify the priority of becoming worker-oriented for the party cadres. The platform of becoming worker-oriented, according him, was never practical and institutionalized. This is how it reads to us:

“My claim is simple: if it was the Labour Party, neither the workers' situation nor our situation would be the way it is now. The dilemma in the relationship between the communist party and the working class in the arena of organizing, neither then nor now, has been practically settled to a conclusive degree. Anyone who thinks we have pursued Mansoor Hekmat's way without becoming worker-oriented must think twice and address the contradictions I have mentioned. It is not possible. Hekmat said it all: you have digested what has been said and this is your situation, that is how it is now!” [46] [Our translation]

Finally, it is admitted that the Worker Communist Party emerged not as a labour party but as an anti-regime party abroad. The party was unable to handle the routine struggles of the working class. Most importantly, it is admitted that Mansoor Hekmat failed to transform his party in his time into a party of worker communists. We will see in the discussion on the collapse of worker communism how “the Marx of our epoch” confessed to this failure. One of Mansoor Hekmat's disciples admits the following:

“Some people think that this development took place with the formation of the Iranian Worker Communist Party. No, the magnificent image of the Iranian Worker Communist Party at the Berlin Conference symbolizes the magnificent activity of a relatively large public party abroad, which appears glorious in its protest of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad. But this glory is absolutely not equal to the power, expertise and skill of the current in organizing the routine struggle of the working class within Iran and in the main focus of power in society ... Mansoor Hekmat never said that our party had become a workers' party. He said we had to be

a workers' party, criticized us night and day, and encouraged and persuaded us to become a workers' party. So, today, it is not difficult to admit that, despite all the additions to Marxism and despite all the achievements in the public sphere of the communist movement in Iran, neither he [Mansoor Hekmat] nor Koorosh Modaressi succeeded in transforming the party of their time into a worker communist party.” [47] [Our translation]

### **To Be Continued**

Issues in the next part:

- Worker communism and the acquisition of political power
- Worker communism and the ideology of the personalities
- Worker communism and relations with foreign governments

M. Jahangiry  
16 December 2019

**Notes:**

- [1] *Communist*, No. 16
- [2] Evaluation of battles and branches of the worker communism in Iran, part 4, Majid Hosseini
- [3] Notifications on the Formation of the Worker Communist Faction in the Iranian Communist Party
- [4] Statement by the Congress of the Founding Congress of the Iranian Communist Party, September 1983
- [5] As source 3
- [6] As source 3
- [7] As source 2
- [8] As source 2
- [9] Dialogue on the Formation of the Worker Communist Faction in the Iranian Communist Party [10] As source 9
- [11] Mansoor Hekmat - Our Differences
- [12] Arbitrary Historiography: A Narrative of the Iranian Communist Party's Past - Part 2: Reza Moghaddam
- [13] Explanation to the 20th Plenum on the decision to leave the Communist Party of Iran
- [14] As above
- [15] From the book *On Party Activities in Kurdistan*, page 64
- [16] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Voyage\\_to\\_Icaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Voyage_to_Icaria)
- [17] Manifesto of the Communist Party
- [18] Manifesto of the Communist Party - Preface to the 1890 German Edition
- [19] Manifesto of the Communist Party - Preface to the 1893 Italian Edition
- [20] Mansoor Hekmat - Foundations of Worker Communism - Worker Communism Seminar
- [21] As source 20
- [22] As source 20
- [23] As source 20
- [24] The Program of Communist Party of Iran
- [25] As source 20
- [26] Mansoor Hekmat in his article "Goodbye, comrade" on 20 April 1999
- [27] As source 20
- [28] As source 20
- [29] As source 20
- [30] As source 20
- [31] As source 20
- [32] "The discussion about the 'working class and being a communist party' is a licence to unite with the non-working left!" Reza Danesh
- [33] As source 20
- [34] Fundamental Characteristics of the Worker-communist Party
- [35] As source 11
- [36] As source 20
- [37] As source 20
- [38] As source 20

[39] Is Communist Victory in Iran Possible?

[40] Party and Society: From a pressure group to a political party

[41] As source 39

[42] Working Class and Communist Party or Working Class and Left Coalition Organization  
- Rahman Hosseinzadeh

[43] On the occasion of Mansoor Hekmat Week - interview by Ismail Weiss with Mozafar Mohammadi

[44] Koorosh Modaressi - The Working Class and the Communist Party

[45] On the "Communist Committee Movement" by Muzaffar Mohammadi

[46] Mohammad Jafari - No communist party in Iran is or became worker!

[47] As source 45