



HANDS OFF THE **PEOPLE** OF IRAN

Stop the War conference, October 27

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Hands Off The People Of Iran fights against the threat of any imperialist intervention, war or sanctions against Iran. It looks to build active, practical solidarity with grass-roots radical secular forces in Iran, the militant women's, workers and students movements. We want regime change, both in Iran and in the imperialist countries. But we know that change must come from below - from the struggles of the working class and social movements - if it is to lead to genuine liberation.

Call to all delegates and StWC members No exclusions from the anti-war movement!

The October 12 decision of the StWC officers' group to reject the affiliation of Hands Off the People of Iran is a crude political attack on a distinct trend of thought within the anti-war movement.

The flimsy justifications for this given by chair Andrew Murray are dishonest and have been effectively brushed aside by statements already issued by Hopi. We have to look behind his words to find the real reason for this disgraceful exclusion.

"I am absolutely disgusted that your organisation has been barred from affiliating to the Stop the War Coalition. The government of Iran murders communists, brutalises gays and oppresses women - there should be no compromise with it from leftists. 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend' is a cretinous political position!"
Attila the Stockbroker, poet and musician

Hopi fights for a solidarity campaign centred on two key principles.

First and foremost, we are implacably opposed to any imperialist intervention in the region (including sanctions) and for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of *all* US-UK troops. This demand is echoed by the working class and rising social movements inside Iran. We are sure that the StWC officers share this stance.

All the more dishonest of comrade Murray therefore to attempt to smear Hopi by association with pro-war media figures like David Aaronovitch and websites like *Harry's Place*, which also backed the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We have nothing in common with such foul political forces, we take no responsibility for anything they write or say.

In fact, as part of Hopi's activities in Farsi, we have relentlessly exposed the advocates of 'regime change' Bush-style, as well as

those Iranian political groups and organisations who deliberately or unconsciously take a soft line on the blood-soaked policies of imperialism in our region.

However, as the threat of military intervention increases, we see it as our duty and responsibility to stand in solidarity with the Iranian people, who, with the exception of the regime's paid agents and security forces, are increasingly united in their opposition to *both* imperialist war *and* the rule of the theocracy. It is clear that it is *this* that is the officers find objectionable and are trying to exclude from the movement. This is a betrayal of the embattled working class and progressive movements of Iran.

We read their demands, see their protests and hear their slogans every day.

The thousands of workers in Haft Tape who in October chanted, "We're hungry - why is the state refusing to pay our wages?" The workers in Iran's oil industry who write that "dividing the company into hundreds of small, private contracting firms is privatisation of Iran's oil industry on a scale far more alarming than what is happening under the US invasion in Iraq". The car plant workers in Iran Khodro who this week drew attention to the death of yet another worker (the third in less than two months) through exhaustion in this most exploitative joint French-Iranian capitalist venture.

Scottish Socialists support Hopi

At its conference over the weekend of October 20-21, the Scottish Socialist Party voted (with three abstentions) to "support the Hands Off the People of Iran (HOPI) campaign, which aims to build and organise practical solidarity with the growing movement against war and oppression in Iran. We encourage SSP members to participate in the campaign's activities."

Hopi stands with these comrades and seeks to mobilise practical support for their struggles.

Likewise, the anti-war movement as a whole should declare its solidarity with the regular demonstrations organised by leftwing students, such as the one held on October 22. Student protesters in Tehran chanted, "Death to the dictator, death to reaction", "Ahmadi Pinochet, Iran will not become like Chile" and "Release the imprisoned students". On October 23, hundreds protested at Bouali University against the 'suicide' of a fellow student who was held by the security forces following a previous demonstration.

Support for these brave opponents of the theocracy should be the natural impulse of the leaders of any anti-war movement. Instead - *shamefully* - it seems that 'anti-imperialist solidarity' is being re-defined as solidarity with the reactionary Iranian *regime*.

The October 13 conference of Irish Anti-War Movement in Dublin saw leading members of IAWI/Socialist Workers Party denounce Hopi as being "patronising to the Iranian people" by supporting their struggles for democracy and a better society. At this meeting - which featured representatives of the al Sadr group in Iraq and Hezbollah - Andrew Murray actually told the audience that the reports of demonstrations in Iran are "all part of the lies and hysteria being created in the present period".

So who are 'our people', the comrades we should seek out and support? Should we link arms with the secular, socialist anti-war movement in Iran? Or must we uncritically promote Hezbollah, a group regarded by the majority of the Iranian population as thugs who throw acid in the faces of young girls for daring to reveal part of their fringe beneath their headscarf. Hezbollah are the hoodlums with chains who attack workers staging protests outside privatised factories where the unscrupulous owner (often a relative of a senior cleric in power) refuses to pay the workers their wages - Hezbollah are called to make arrests and break up the protests. Hezbollah are the forces who arrive in jeeps to demolish the huts of impoverished shanty town dwellers when a developer buys up the land and needs it cleared.

Hopi includes in its ranks comrades that have personally experienced the repression meted out by the brutal Islamic regime. Those that have mourned the loss of tens of thousands of socialists, communists and progressives - tortured and executed at the hands of the clerics - now view their anti-western rhetoric with contempt.

We have even dared to hope - obviously mistakenly! - that incidents such as Irangate, not to mention the track record of Iran's islamic republic over 28 years, would be sufficient to prevent anti-war campaigners confusing Tehran's anti-US slogans with the genuine anti-imperialism of the Iranian people. In our era, genuinely consistent anti-imperialism can only be anti-capitalist in content.

Do the SWP and those like the Communist Party of Britain's

Our campaign demands:

- **No to imperialist war!**
- **No to the theocratic regime!**
- **The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all troops from the Gulf region!**
- **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!**

Come to Hopi fringe meeting Today, after the conference, 5.30pm

Sunrise room, D2,
Diorama Arts
Centre, 3-7 Euston
Centre, NW1
(5min walk from
Friends House)



Hopi launch conference Saturday December 8, central London

- Imperialist strategy and the threat of war
 - The Iranian regime and the recent crackdown
 - Trade Union rights, strikes and solidarity
 - Hopi's structure
- Please send an email to office@hopoi.info for more details. All welcome.

Andrew Murray really think that clerics presiding over a neoliberal capitalist economy - in a country where the gap between the rich and the poor grows every day, where corruption, drug addiction and prostitution are rife and where the barbaric regime clings to power only through brutal repression - either want or are in a position to fight US imperialism?

The suggestion from Andrew Murray that Hopi is designed to *replace* to StWC is palpable nonsense: we are specifically concerned with the war drive against Iran. However, there is no question that we do represent a distinct political challenge to the political method of the dominant trends within the StWC leadership. We make no bones about that.

However, if this movement is to be a *movement* - and not the property of particular political trends - then it must have a range of contending politics and strategies to take our struggle against war forward. In their actions in excluding Hopi, the StWC officers are breaching the spirit of the aims of the coalition, which explicitly state that "Supporters of the coalition, whether organisations or individuals, will ... be free to develop their own analyses and organise their own actions" (www.stopwar.org.uk).

Hopi will continue to expose the false image of the Iranian people manufactured by the pro-war media, but we will also expose the rosy portrait of Iranian society depicted by the crude apologists of the Islamic regime, such as Campaign Iran - which, to its shame, the StWC officers support while smearing Hopi.



How Hopi was founded

Amir Javaheri Langaroudi (Workers Left Unity - Iran, Etehadchap Kargari) replies to allegations by Andrew Murray

A standard reply has been sent by Andrew Murray (Stop the War Coalition chair) in response to the emails and protests by HOPI supporters over the exclusion of the campaign. In this reply Murray states:

“Our decision in respect of these two organisations is, however, political. Both are effectively controlled by the Weekly Worker group (“CPGB”) - indeed their spokesman in the current controversy is the *Weekly Worker’s* national organiser. This body has been hostile to StWC from its inception. It declined to support the objectives of the Coalition, which they now pray freely in aid, when they were first adopted in October 2001.”

In response to this outrageous claim, a number of points have to be clarified: HOPI was set up by Iranians in exiles in UK and USA, many of them activists and members of Workers Left Unity - Iran (Etehadchap Kargari) in response to calls by antiwar students, workers. The first calls for such a campaign appeared in Farsi on the website of Etehadchap and Rahe Kargar in the summer of 2005.

Some of our activist spoke at dozens of meetings calling for such a campaign throughout 2005 and 2006. Radio Barabari (‘Equality’) broadcasting daily to Tehran reported our call extensively and we received support from leftist students at Iranian University, worker activists and many others.

Outside Iran, editors of Iran Bulletin - Middle East Forum, the central committee of the organisation Rahe kargar (Iran) and second generation Iranian students who produce a monthly journal reporting workers struggles in Iran, Iranian Workers Bulletin, supported this call and a letter in English was sent to a number of British/US organisations, individuals, and local STWC branches calling for help in setting up a campaign along these lines.

The Green Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain were amongst the first British organizations to responded positively to this call, allowing us for the first time to set up a campaign regarding Iran that goes beyond the usual circle of Iranian exiles and their supporters inside the country.

Indeed both organisations, plus Communist Students that joined HOPI later, have been amongst the most active British supporters of the campaign. However, the cam-

“As a long-standing supporter of STWC, present on almost all the London marches against war in Afghanistan and Iraq, I urge the officers of the Stop the War Coalition to reverse their decision to reject the affiliation of Hands Off the People of Iran (Hopi) and Communists Students (one of Hopi’s affiliated organisations) . Failing this, the decision should be overturned by the next meeting of the Steering Group or at the next AGM on October 27.”

Tim Oxtan, Colchester

paign’s publications in Farsi and English are the result of constant cooperation and consultation between Iranian and British comrades.

Rather than becoming an ‘alternative’ to the StWC, HOPI sees its main task as giving give a voice within Coalition to left activists inside Iran, who were deeply hurt and angered by pro Hezbollah slogans raised in last summer’s anti-war demonstrations in London and elsewhere.

If Andrew Murray is referring to the list of members and supporters of the campaign, then currently Green Party members and independent leftists and activists constitute the vast bulk of our supporters.

HOPI’s Iranian activists and speakers include:

- **Mohamad Reza Shalgouni**, founder of the Revolutionary Organization of Iranian Workers - Rahe Kargar. Member of Irans’ Palestine Group who spent 8 years in the Shah’s prisons.
- **Torab Saleth**, a former member of the International Executive Committee of the USFI (United Secretariat of the Fourth International) and currently an activist of Workers Left Unity Iran.
- **Ardeshir Mehrdad** - author and activist on the Iranian left with over 35 years of political activity.
- **Ruben Markarian** a former member of the Central Committee of Rahe Kargar and a cadre of this organisation.
- **Nader Sadeh** - member of Haste Aghaliyat (Fedayin)
- **Azar Sheibani**, Firouze Rad - activists in the Campaign for Abolition of all Mi-

sogynic Gender Based legislation & Islamic Punitive Laws in Iran

There are many other that we can refer you too and that would be more than happy to give you a rundown of their history in the movement.

Is Andrew Murray suggesting that the CPGB has recruited all of these Iranian activists or infiltrated their organisations in order to set up HOPI?! This is beyond comprehension.

But let us assume for a moment that the ludicrous suggestion by Murray is correct and the *Weekly Worker* group set up HOPI as a rival to StWC. Why would it want to now affiliate to the Coalition? In order to take it over? How on earth would this be possible? So, your ‘political’ reason for excluding it seems rather sectarian!

We, in Etehadchap Kargari, are determined to continue our activities in HOPI. The support we got in response to our call in Farsi to unite in a campaign like HOPI has been impressive. This is one of the most successful campaigns we have undertaken in the last few years.

“As long-standing supporters and affiliates of the Stop the War Coalition we are concerned to see reports that Hands off the People of Iran (HOPI) has been denied the right to affiliate.

Although we are not connected with Hands off the People of Iran, we can see nothing in its stated aims, of opposing any attack on Iran while remaining in opposition to that country’s Islamicist regime, which is any way incompatible with membership in the Stop the War Coalition. We are not alone in this, as evidenced by the well-known anti-war campaigners who are listed among supporters of Hands off the People of Iran, as well as the Iranian refugee groups who are affiliated and have loyally taken part in Stop the War marches with the rest of us.”

Charles Pottins on behalf of the national committee of the Jewish Socialists’ Group

Open letter

No political censorship!

"We, the undersigned, urge the officers of the Stop the War Coalition to reconsider their decision to reject the affiliation of Hands Off the People of Iran and Communists Students. Failing this, the decision of this sub-committee should be overturned by the next meeting of the Steering Group or at the next AGM on October 27.

Both organisations were told in identical

I always understood that the three central planks of the STWC's campaign were (1) opposing war, (2) opposing racism and (3) defending civil liberties and free speech. Whatever disagreements one might have with HOPI's political programme, it seems to me that they clearly support all three of these aims and as such should be allowed to affiliate.

It defeats the whole purpose of a broad-based anti-war campaign if the Coalition starts rejecting genuine anti-war organisations because they are not politically "pure" enough, particularly when the organisations in question are based in the country currently under greatest threat of military attack by Bush and co."

Dr. Sue Blackwell, NEC University and College Lecturer's Union (pc)

emails by StWC chair Andrew Murray that their aims and campaigning priorities are "entirely hostile to the Coalition" (October 12). We believe this is very wrong.

Hopi's founding statement has two core elements. First, total and unconditional opposition to any imperialist military attack on Iran or sanctions.

Second, Hopi insists that at the same time we must be critical of the reactionary Ahmadinejad regime. It actively supports the struggles of the women's, democratic and workers' movements against their regime, is in daily contact with Iranian activists and organises fundraising events for workers in Iran, many of whom go without wages for many weeks.

Hopi is totally opposed to Bush-style regime change - and positively campaigns for democracy from below. If this makes us a 'hostile' organisation in the eyes of some StWC officials, then the Stop the War Coalition must re-assess its campaigning priorities."

Amongst the over 100 signatories:

Peter Tatchell, OutRage & Green Party
 Moshé Machover, Israeli writer
 Mehdi Kia, Iran Bulletin
 Torab Saleth, Workers Left Unity
 Andeesheh Nicko, Iranian Workers Bulletin
 Leanne Wood AM, Plaid Cymru
 Tam Dean Burn, actor and founding member of Artists Against the War
 Cllr Matt Sellwood, Green Party, Oxford
 Cllr Susan Murray, Green Party & Lewes CND
 Professor Christine Cooper
 Hillary Horrocks, NUJ (pc)
 Terry Brotherstone, president UCU Scotland (pc)
 Attila the Stockbroker, poet and musician
 Liz Leicester, Camden Unison (pc)

"The more organisations involved in the movement, the more noise we can make, and the more influence we can have! I do not believe that excluding certain groups can have any positive effect, and I do not see any reasons why HOPI would have a negative impact on conference or future actions of StWC."

Lewis Coyne, Liverpool School Students Against War

Organisations supporting Hopi:

Campaign for a Marxist Party ■ Communist Party of Great Britain ■ Communist League - USA ■ Communist Students ■ Democratic Socialist Alliance ■ Green Party ■ Iran Bulletin - Middle East Forum ■ Iranian Workers Bulletin ■ Irish Socialist Network ■ Marxistische Initiative - Germany ■ Movement for Socialism ■ Organization of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar) ■ Republican Communist Network ■ The Rotten Elements ■ Socialist Alliance ■ Socialist Democracy (Ireland) ■ Scottish Socialist Party ■ The Starry Plough Initiative (Ireland) ■ Workers Left Unity - Iran ■ Young Greens ■ Youth/Peasants Federation - Nepal

Join us!

suggested contributions: individual £10/£5; local organisation £25; small nat. organisation £50; large nat. organisation £100

Name _____

Organisation/union _____

Mobile phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

please return to: HOPI, PO Box 54631, London N16 8YE

Supporters include:

■ **Diane Abbott** Labour MP
 ■ **John McDonnell** Labour MP
 ■ **Peter Tatchell** OutRage
 ■ **Caroline Lucas** Green Party MEP
 ■ **Tommy Sheridan** Solidarity
 ■ **Ken Loach** filmmaker
 ■ **Mark Steel** comedian
 ■ **John Pilger** journalist
 ■ **Naomi Klein** writer and activist
 ■ **Haifa Zangana** writer
 ■ Cllr **Rania Khan** Respect
 ■ Cllr **Lufta Begum** Respect
 ■ Iranian Workers Bulletin
 ■ Workers Left Unity - Iran
 ■ Green Party
 ■ Organization of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar)