**Workers Fund Iran at Hamburg Marathon 2011**

Supporters of Workers Fund Iran will be pounding the streets in the Hamburg marathon on May 22. They will get their running shoes on to raise sponsor-ship money for the important and unique work of this charity – can you support them?

Workers Fund Iran (WFI) was founded in December 2005, inspired by suggestions from veteran Iranian labour activist Albert Sobrhanian (1927-2004). WFI aims to reduce and relieve poverty amongst Iranian workers (both em- ployed and unemployed). This results from both the nationalisation of the Iranian régime and the sanctions im- posed by other countries. The charity pursues its objectives through the activities of its office in Hamburg, which helps workers in Iran to rebuild international working class soli- darity, directly with the workers of Iran. The charity is an independent organisation. Funds sent to Iran will be distributed amongst the most needy working class fami- lies who are facing destitution, regardless of ideological affiliation. We hope the funds will stop families sending their children to the streets as beggars or peddlers and selling their body parts, which is a com- mon practice.

You can support us by filling out the form on the Hopi stall or online by us- ing Charity Choice’s website (via workersfund@gmail.com)

**“Selling your kidney has turned into a profession.”**

In April, Jafar Azizadeh of the Free Union of Iranian Workers gave an interview to Deutsche Welle Radio on the state of the labour movement in Iran.

There is news of shut-downs or slow- down of work in factories and production facilities on account of sanctions.

First, I should say that in my opinion, these closures are not down to sanctions, al- though sanctions have had their own ef- fects. The closures are products of the late 80s and early 90s. These policies, imposed over the last 30 years, have snow- balled into the deep economic crisis that we are seeing today.

The workers’ situation is now diurnal. They receive extremely low wages and live under very difficult conditions. There are no very low wages for skilled workers, or capi- tals is very limited. But unemployment is constantly rising: We have heard that Kaveh Petrochemical Works was privatised in the 1990s, its 1,300 workers fund at the Kian Tyre Factory was privatised in the 1990s, its 1,300 management. 25 representatives (five each from the various organisations in Iran that could coordinate the protests on a national level.

But this situation will not last long. Their silence does not mean they have capitulat- ed. There are local and individual pro- tests – and successes. Iran Khodro’s gen- eral manager has announced that workers will not move any more. Currently, the condi- tions in the factories are such that the work- ers can hardly show any signs of solidarity or raise their voices. This is down mainly to the fact that the workers’ organisa- tions in Iran that could coordinate the protests on a national level.

The minimum wage rate just rose by nine percent, while the inflation rate is much higher. Are there protests against this?

It seems on the surface that many workers are capitulating, but in reality this is not the case. Let me give you an example. You can pull a car that has broken down for a little while, but eventually this car will stop and not move any more. Currently, the condi- tions in the factories are such that the work- ers can hardly show any signs of solidarity or raise their voices. This is down mainly to the fact that the workers’ organisa- tions in Iran that could coordinate the protests on a national level.

Even now, there are protests going on. Alborz Tire workers were successful in re- ceiving their wages because of their demonstrations at the presidential offices.

How have the 2009 protests changed the situation?

On the surface, it appears that the workers’ struggle for wages and benefits has been successful. But the reality is different. The situation cannot be sustained, and the workers and their organi- sations will not stand still in the face of ex- treme dire and the currency has been devalued a number of times in the last few months. Many workers have not been paid for many months.

The managers seem to be using the oppor- tunity to hire workers on low wages and precarious contracts to get rid of workers who own their jobs and are opposed to cutbacks. These practices have become very wide- spread. At the Iran Khodro car plant there will be mass layoffs. However, the manage- ment is planning to keep them in the number of addictions, social ills, depression and psychosocial problems.

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