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About us:

"The Committee in Solidarity with the Iranian Labor Movement - Abroad" consists of solidarity groups outside of Iran that support Iranian Workers' struggle for :(1) Democratic rights and economic justice ;(2) Exposing anti-labor policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran; (3) Building bridges between the Iranian and international workers' movements. For these purposes, the bulletin "Alternative Workers News-Iran (AWNI)" serves as the medium for publishing the latest news and reports about current legitimate struggles by the labor movement and progressive social activists in Iran. Concurrently, the editorial board of AWNI aims to circulate translations of selected highlights of news about international labor struggles, to progressive social activists in Iran.

The Editorial Board

Notifying Announcement

Explosion in Zemestan Yurt Coal Mine in Northwest of Iran with Miners buried alive

In the aftermath of the explosion of a coal mine accident in Zemestan Yurt Coal Mine in Golestan province (Northwest of Iran), where the Mine tunnel collapsed on the numbers of miners trapped inside the Mine, who were buried alive, the following, must be of grave concern.



warning

The Islamic Republic, which is busy the process for its presidential election, to attract the attention of workers and other segments of the society, to participate in the election, has conflicting news of the incident published, with news agencies in Iran, initially reporting two deaths and 50 trapped miners. Even the governor of Golestan province, with no shame at all, said: ‘‘the cause of the explosion, is the negligence of the miner’s themselves’’.

Minute by minute, the scale of the catastrophe increased, and today, the extent of this

explosion in the Zemestan Yurt Coal Mine, is the largest disaster in the history of mines of Iran. This is an accident, which so far, 21 people have been lost their lives, and it is expected that the death toll will rise higher.

What can be said about the Azarshahr Coal Mine, is that, the Coal Mine was privatized in 2002-2003, and its major stakeholder, with 20%, belonging to The Iranian Mehr Fund (Basij – Regimes' Militia), about 10%, the Takido (industrial and reclamation mining complex co. of Sepahan), and partly owned by Negin Tabas. Also, reports say, that industrial and Mining co. of Northeast of Shahrood, with Ali Nasiri as the CEO, is the beneficiary of the Zemestan Yurt Coal Mine.

The working conditions of this Mine, is extremely inhuman, with the fundamental problem of the miners, is their unpaid wages, whereas, according to one of the miners, some of them have not been paid for 17 months. Many the miners, are either not insured, or have been working in the harsh conditions of slavery, with such greedy employers being the beneficiaries of their toil. The Coal Mines in Iran, on one hand, have been at the lowest level of safety in recent years, and unfortunately, on the other hand, the number of miners lost, and continue to lose their lives every year, is due to greed for maximum profit of the capitalist system of the Islamic Republic. This is in a time where the labor activist, political organizers, and protesting workers, who are struggling to achieve their human rights, have been severely oppressed, imprisoned, and in the last scandal, have been sentenced to 100 lashes, expulsion of their jobs, and other penalties, by the ignorant ruling Islamic Republic of Capitalism system. We, the labor activists in the solidarity committees with Iranian worker's movement – abroad, whilst expressing our sympathy and solidarity with the families of the miners, who have lost their love ones in this inhuman tragedy, strongly condemn the Islamic Republic, for hiding this terrible incident. We believe that such a crime of this dimension should not be forgotten by a cursory announcement by the Islamic Regime. We are calling on all the supporters, and sympathizers of the labor movement, to protest widely and use all our power against those who caused this heinous and inhuman crime, and bring the perpetrators to justice. The cause of this disaster is the greedy capitalist system of Islamic Republic. The Islamic Regime is directly responsible for all those miners who died and the other injured ones. Those responsible must be disclosed & revealed before the people of the world.

Solidarity committees with Iranian worker's movement – abroad

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3 May, 2017



**Gozaeshgaran Appeal: We must not be silent
in the face of injustice against Iranian workers!**

Only a few days have passed, , since the May Day celebrations, the day of solidarity of the workers of the world, that we are hearing of the tragic deaths of miners of the Yurt Mine in Golestan province of Iran.

The explosion of ‘‘Yurt’’ Mine, is caused by the reckless and inhuman behavior of the Islamic Republic towards the Iranian workers.

Over the past few days, the arrest of protesting workers for the banning of the May Day celebration was the Islamic Regime’s concern. The Islamic Regime of Iran never accepts responsibility for the workers’ lives. Work - related accidents nationwide are out of control, and workplaces are highly unsecured. The Iranian workers don’t have any security life wise and economically in any field of work. Their late unpaid wages on time is always one of the topics in their protests. Minimum wages of Iranian worker has been assessed as 4 times below the poverty line. Well known and trusted labor activists, are in prison with the harshest conditions.



In the aftermath of the explosion at Yurt Mine, dozens of miners have been buried alive in a depth of 1200 meters underground and have lost their lives. According to the reports, this Mine doesn’t have any emergency exits and it is one – sided. The trapped miners of this Mine have been deprived of their wages and their pays have not been paid on time.

According to the reports, prior to this accident, any protest by miners to the unsafe working environment in this Mine, was equal to facing dismissal. State media gives conflicting news on the status of the trapped and injured miners of this tragic & devastating incident to the public, and the Minister of Labor of Islamic Republic, blames the trapped miners for this disaster, whilst the miners of the Yurt Mine, before the fatal accident occurred, have repeatedly warned officials of a gas leak.

We, the social and political activists, whilst feeling the great impact of this accident, condemn the anti – labor policies of the Islamic Republic, extend our and sympathies, solidarity and condolences to the families and colleagues of the victims.

We are asking all of the international institutions and Trade unions, progressive people, and organizations defending human and workers rights, to strongly condemn the anti –labor policies of the Islamic Republic, and show their protests by expressing it to the Iranian authorities.

More than 200 people have signed this petition.

Gozaeshgaran site

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World Federation of Trade Unions

Class oriented – uniting - democratic - modern – independent!

WFTU condolences for the dead workers in mine explosion in Iran

06 May 2017

IRAN, MIDDLE EAST

At least 35 miners lost their lives because of an explosion that took place in a mine in North Iran. The World Federation of Trade Unions, representing 92 million workers in the 5 continents, expresses its sincere condolences to the families and friends of miners. The WFTU stands firmly on the side of miners all over the world and supports the demands for better and safe working conditions at the workplaces. The Secretariat



The Syndicate of bus drivers celebrating international worker's day at The Azadi Bus Terminal

On International Worker's day, the members of bus driver's syndicate were at The Azadi Bus Terminal from 1 pm, carrying banners with the slogan saying unity, solidarity and petition, honouring the protest at The Terminal. Packages of advertising chocolate and pens were handed out among the workers as well. "Mostaghel" newspaper on May 1, had dedicated most of its page 1 and 2 to review bus driver's problems and their demands and had also printed the syndicate's statement, was spread widely among the drivers and worker at The Azadi Bus Terminal, Navab intersection and Vali Asr intersection. The security forces tried really hard to hinder the workers protest at The Azadi Bus Terminal.



**Slogan: International worker's day,
Be auspicious !**

And at the end of the ceremony because of the harsh treatment of the workers by the security forces and their attempt to confiscate the advertisement chocolate and pen packages that the syndicate's members had on them and filming the protestors, for a few minutes there was some tension, which was solved by worker's insight and after that at 2 pm, the ceremony at The Azadi Bus Terminal was over. According to the extensiveness nature of bus lines and terminals, which is where drivers

gather, on April 29 and 30th, a number of the syndicate's members gathered at The Elm & Sanaat Terminal, Javanmard Ghasab Terminal, Raah Ahan Terminal and Azadegan Terminal to congratulate their coworkers in advance on International Workers Day. And also advertisement chocolate and pen packages had been spread among the workers.

The Syndicate of Bus drivers of Tehran and environs

May 2, 2017

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT



30 April 2017

AI Index Number: MDE 13/6147/2017

Iran: Release imprisoned trade unionists and uphold workers' rights

Several trade unionists in Iran languish in prison while many others face prison sentences of up to a decade solely for their peaceful trade union activities, Amnesty International said today, on the eve of International Worker's Day on 1 May.

The organization renews its calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release those imprisoned for their peaceful trade union work, and quash the harsh prison sentences that have been handed down to others for similar reasons. The authorities must lift their repressive and unlawful ban on independent trade unions, and allow workers to hold peaceful gatherings, including on International Workers' Day, and to exercise their right to form and join independent trade unions to improve their living situations, which they describe as increasingly dire and poverty-stricken.



Esmail Abdi

Trade unionists currently jailed in Iran for their peaceful activism include **Esmail Abdi**, a mathematics teacher and a member of the board of directors at the Teachers' Trade Association of Tehran (ITTA-Tehran), who is serving a six-year prison sentence; and **Behnam Ebrahimzadeh**, a member of the Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations, who has spent nearly seven years in prison, serving two separate prison terms totalling almost 13 years. On 22 April 2017, Esmail Abdi announced that he would launch a hunger strike on the eve of International Workers' Day "in solidarity with all teachers and workers, and in protest at the lack of independence of the judiciary, which is issuing national-security convictions against individuals who are active with workers' and teachers' trade associations."

The prospect of imprisonment looms over several other trade unionists, including three other members of the board of directors at the Teachers' Trade Association of Tehran, **Mahmoud Beheshti Langroodi**, **Mohammad Reza Niknejad**, and **Mehdi Bohlooli**; a member of the Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers', **Mahmoud Salehi**; three members of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, **Davoud Razavi**, **Ebrahim Madadi**, and **Reza Shahabi**; and two members of the Free Union of Workers of Iran, **Jafar Azimzadeh** and **Shapour Ehsanirad**.

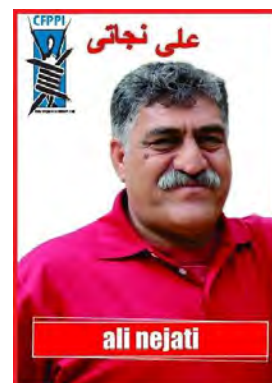
These men have all been sentenced to harsh prison terms ranging from five to 11 years, after grossly unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts on trumped-up national security charges such as "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading propaganda against the

system”, “disrupting public order” and “forming a group with the purpose of disturbing national security”. Most are free on bail pending the outcome of their appeals; Reza Shahabi was granted medical leave in October 2014 after spending four years in prison but has recently been summoned back to prison. The men’s court verdicts blatantly reveal the extent to which Iran’s courts cite peaceful trade union activities as “evidence” of “acts against national security” and “anti-revolutionary propaganda”. These activities include: organizing peaceful gatherings, including on International Worker’s Day; attending peaceful protests against poor wages and publishing their photographs online; receiving invitations to attend international meetings of trade unions; signing statements in support of trade union rights; and launching petitions to seek a rise in the national minimum wage.

REPRESSION OF INTERNATIONAL WORKERS’ DAY GATHERINGS

International Workers’ Day this year appears already to be following a common pattern whereby the Iranian authorities deny workers the right to peaceful assembly.

The Free Union of Workers of Iran has reported that several trade union activists, including **Ali Nejati**, a member of the board of directors of the Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane Company Trade Union in Dezful, Khuzestan Province, and **Sheys Amani**, a member of the board of directors of the Free Union of Workers of Iran in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, have been summoned by intelligence officials for interrogation ahead of 1 May and were warned against organizing gatherings.



In 2016, the Human Rights Activists News Agency, an independent human rights organization, reported that security forces suppressed May Day gatherings across the country, detaining at least 12 trade union activists from different cities and summoning another four for interrogations.

In the court verdicts of trade unionists reviewed by Amnesty International, participation in International Workers’ Day gatherings is consistently cited as “evidence” of “spreading propaganda against the system” or other national-security related offences. Sometimes, as in the case of construction worker **Osman Esmalee**, this appears to be the main activity for which a prison sentence was handed down. Branch One of the Revolutionary Court in Saqqez, Kurdistan Province, sentenced him to a one-year prison sentence in October 2015. He is currently at liberty pending the outcome of his appeal hearing, which took place in March 2017.

On the eve of planned May Day demonstrations, Amnesty International urges the Iranian authorities to respect the right to peaceful assembly and end all repressive measures aimed at prohibiting peaceful gatherings.

BACKGROUND

By criminalizing peaceful trade union activities and banning the formation of independent trade unions, the Iranian authorities are flagrantly violating their human rights obligations under international law. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both of which Iran has ratified, impose an obligation on the Iranian authorities to respect and protect the rights to freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, as well as the right to form and join trade unions of one’s choice. Trade unionists are also protected under the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which highlights the obligation on states to respect the right to defend human rights, which includes trade union rights, and protect human rights defenders from harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other ill-treatment.

Iran’s Labour Code permits worker representation only through an Islamic Labour Council (ILC) or a trade association (also known as a Guild Society). Under the existing legal framework, an ILC and a trade association cannot exist at the same enterprise. In practice, ILCs receive more support from the government, which has resulted in an organizational monopoly in their favour.

The primary purpose of ILCs, as set out in Iranian legislation, is to support the Islamic Republic system rather than trade union rights. Section 130 of the Labour Code states that the establishment of

Islamic societies is “to propagate and disseminate Islamic culture and to defend the achievements of the Islamic revolution.” Furthermore, candidates standing for election to ILC boards face discriminatory screening procedures, including the need to demonstrate their Islamic belief and “practical allegiance” to Islam, and show that they are faithful to the rule of the Supreme Leader (*velayat-e faqih*).

Trade associations are not independent either and must obtain state approval to function. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is mandated to inspect the election of trade association officials. Trade associations are required to inform the Ministry of general assemblies at least 15 days before they take place. Ministry officials are entitled to observe, interfere with and disrupt such meetings, and issue measures of suspension and dissolution.

Despite undue restrictions on the right to freedom of association and a ban on independent trade unions, many workers in Iran have courageously formed such unions as well as workers’ support organizations in order to protest against unpaid wages, precarious work conditions, staggering inflation and poor living conditions.

Workers’ rights are human rights. Amnesty International stands in solidarity with trade unionists in Iran as they strive to ensure their right to establish independent trade unions and bring about a day where all persons in the country are able to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to just and favourable conditions of employment, social security, and an adequate standard of living for oneself and one's family, including access to adequate food, clothing, housing, education and quality health services.

Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a labor activist has been released

May 1, 2017

On the International worker’s day, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a labor activist was released from Karaj’s Rajaii Shahr prison. As „Didban“ reported quoting from „Herana news“, on the eve of May 1, 2017, on international worker’s day, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, was released from Rajaii Shahr prison in Karaj.

Mr Ebrahimzadeh born in 1977, was first time arrested in 2008 in Eshnaviheh town being accused of writing

slogans and campaigning. Second time May 1, 2009, on International worker’s day, Mr Ebrahimzadeh was arrested in Laleh Park in Tehran with a group of labor and civil activists, and a month later was released on bail. This imprisoned worker was arrested for the third time on June 12, 2010. After his arrest, he spent four month in Evin’s solitary confinements being interrogated and after that he was transferred to Evin’s 350 Section. 15t branch of the revolutionary court led

by judge Salavati in a short court appearance and without the presence of a Lawyer, sentenced him to 20 years of jail, which was reduced to 5 years in a court of appeal.

Behnam Ebrahimzadeh was beaten during the famous riot of Evin’s guards to Section 350, known as “black Thursday” and was transferred for 15 days to solitary confinements in Section 240 of Evin. This labor activist was transferred to solitary confinements in Section 209 on April of 2014 and after a while was illegally exiled to Rajaii Shahr prison in Karaj.

Ebrahimzadeh is suffering from Discus pain in his back and arthritis in his neck and thus several attempts, he was not able to receive any medical attention in the prison yet. His son, Nima was



diagnosed with cancer, and his family reported, that because of Nima's condition, the difficulty of getting to and from prison and financial constraints, they are unable to make the weekly visits. Mr Ebrahimzadeh has several times being mistreated in Rajaii Shahr prison and sent from one Section to another.

As Behnam Ebrahimzadeh's 5 years sentence was coming to an end, last year on the 31 of July in a court of appeal of the province of Tehran, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh's 9 and a half year sentence was reduced to 7 years, 10 month and 15 days of prison, and a fine of 450 thousand tomans. His accusation were "gathering and conspiracy to commit a crime against the internal and external security", and campaigning against the government.

This sentence was given to him, because of his activities while he was doing his 5 year imprisonment. Along those accusations this imprisoned worker was also being accused of "... Detention" and "the use of satellite equipment and playing cards". All these accusations were made while he was in prison.

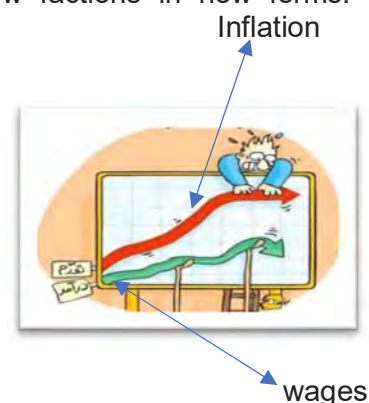
**STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S SEROMONY ON
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY - IRAN. 2017**

This year's effort for Organizational Mobilization on the basis of labor protests

International Workers' Day- May first, 2017 is the day to emphasize the need for International Solidarity of Workers. The history of the working-class struggles shows that the workers in any categories, clique and any work stations that they are, not only on a certain day, but always and every day, only in solidarity and mobilizing independently from the capitalist governments and independent from employers will be able to win over capitalist factions. This is the only way they can achieve their demands and aspirations of their own class.

Iranian workers such as factory workers, workers in the field of education (such as teachers), miners, agriculture, building and construction, service workers, workers in the field of health (such as nurses and paramedics), transport workers, bakeries, foundries, housewives, workers in the areas of rug sales and distribution, workers at various levels, including technical and skilled workers in the arts or technical which by selling their labor power subsist, retirees, seasonal workers and working on project basis, also unemployed workers, all of the above are part of the working class; to achieve their demands, they have no choice but to fight back in united and organized manner against capitalism (private and governmental) and also have no choice but to be independent from all factions of capitalism, both conservatives, reformists, centrists or new factions in new forms.

Poverty, inflation, very low purchasing power, salaries being several times below poverty line, while, poverty line in Iran is \$1,000.00 per month, crackdown on activists, repression of expression, lack of social-political freedom, every day shows the real face of capitalist system of exploitation and oppression to the working class and yet, it shows the intensification of the system's crisis. In the past year, labor protests and unrests continues the trend of increase with the spread of wider and wider class gap in Iranian society and implementation of further neo-liberal and anti- worker policies (including privatization and downsizing, wages damping of the work force and contractors), more protests do take place. Different workers' strikes for back pay, higher wages, against unemployment and job insecurity, privatization, intermediate and contractor corporations, and other protests against the lack of safety in the work place, is spreading day by day. Also, in rest of the world, labor protests against the policies of capitalism is growing and the creation of the independent organization from capitalists and employers around the world becomes a necessary and urgent need.

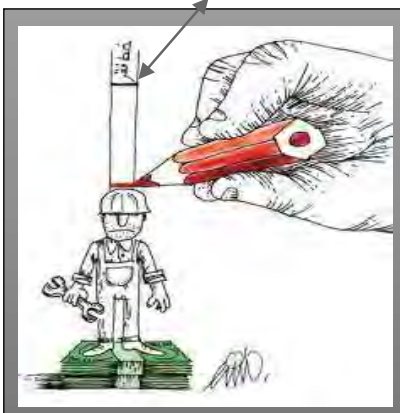


Implementation of anti-workers' economic policies of Rohini's administration (Continuing the same trend that the administration of Ahmadinejad, Khatami and Rafsanjani, and others had on the basis of same general interests and policies, but every day with more momentum) is against our being and livelihood. Inception of discussions based on foreign investment in varieties of manufacturing and services more than anything aimed for cheap labor in Iran. It is in this context that the global capitalism opens more ways to exploit Iranian workers and Iranian resources. In order to accomplish that, global capitalism tries only to recognize governmental organizations and non-independent or organizations in authority institutions and global of the so-called workers that are ready to deal and work with global capitalism.

Our workers know well that wars, turbulences, and killings in various regions of the world, including in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq is taking place by financing of weapons of the global capitalist powers and by taking advantage of tools such as differences in nationality, religion, etc. and with the expenses paid out of pocket of workers are taking place. These measures are to ensure the profitability of capitalism in the region and the world and for our workers only brings ruin and misery, poverty and death. Obviously, we workers and other toilers must ignore the differences in ethnic, national and religion with the emphasis on the unity of the working class in the region and the world, unite against all the forces of mercenary capitalist and do not allow more than existing conditions to subject us to the misery created by neo-liberal capitalism.

Council's celebration of International workers' day in Iran for the eighth year in accordance with the tradition every year on the eve of International Workers' day this year, on May 1, 2017 congratulates this great day. Based on actual experience in labor protests, and as a doubled emphasis on a critical need, we name this year as an attempt to organize labor protests in the context of working class revolutionary aspiration. This council invites all workers and labor groups to celebrate the International Workers' Day in a much more united, independent and splendid. Meantime, supporting the statements of independent labor organizations and groups, we declare the most important current demands of the Iranian working class in six cases below. This council asks from all peoples defending the struggles of working class and also from workers and labor activists to try to publish and promote the Council's statement as well as other statements by non-governmental groups.

The poverty line



1 - any amount received as wages below \$1,000.00 per month, is imposing a wage below the poverty line and the imposition of the death and misery of the workers.

We support the efforts of organizations and groups of independent workers regarding wages and declare that realization of minimum wage that is decent is based on the basket of livelihood and a dignified life and in accordance with today's standards won't be achieved through tripartism and supreme worker's council (dependent on the regime) and it can only be ascertained with the unity and organized

labor. We would continue our struggles against the minimum set miserable wages and would never stop protesting until realization of dignified minimum wage is accomplished.

2 - We the workers in various sectors, express our support for the efforts of our workers and our other comrades in other sectors such as teachers and nurses protests,

mine workers protests, petrochemical and automotive workers protests, protests against unpaid salaries and wages below the poverty line, against expulsion, against repression of activists and workers' representatives, against intermediary corporations and contracting and protest against gender inequality in the workplace and community. We declare that the only way to achieve our demands is the creation council) in our work environment. The type of independent organizations that is truly independent from "Workers' Home", "Islamic Labor Council", "Trade Associations", and generally of capitalism (and the employers and the government).

3 – We the Iranian workers have carries the main load of ۲for consecutive years. What was supposed to be achieved after the agreements, was only to serve the interests of domestic and foreign capitalists. We the Iranian workers strongly condemn the schemes of foreign capitalists to exploit cheap labor forces and resources and also their efforts for the recognition of organizations affiliated with the government and pseudo workers' organizations by global labor institutions.

4–Because of creation or strengthening of independent organizations in the Iranian worker's movement and in

defense of the class rights of the working class, workers and labor activists have been suppressed by the repressive capitalist regime. The families of these loved ones must be seriously materially and spiritually supported by different strata of working class. In the meantime, that we support these loved ones, calling for an end to the persecution, harassment, repression and summons of workers and labor activists and for the elimination of this tension and oppressions we will exhaust all our efforts.

5 – We the Iranian workers fully support the migrant workers in Iran, including workers from Afghanistan, the struggle of workers in other parts of the globe and also, we are committed to support other social movements, including movements in support of rights of women (especially working children and children working on the streets), student movement, environmental movements and other progressive movements. We recognize these movements as inseparable part of class struggle.

6 – We the Iranian workers declare that to achieve social freedom, to abolish the death penalty, to achieve freedom of speech, thought, and freedom of dressing, to achieve the right to organize, building parties, strikes, to protest, right to assemble, and the right to the celebrate the International Women's Day, International Workers day, and so on is the fundamental rights of workers which we strive to gain them and we condemn any conflict and any exclusion or prohibition against celebration of the International Workers Day.

Long live May Day, the international working class solidarity!

March forward in strengthening the independent organization in the context of labor protests!

Council's celebration of International Workers' Day in Iran, Mat 1, 2017 !



sanctions

An interview with Mahmoud Salehi, the renown worker activist,
by <http://etehad-k.com> (Worker's Unity) regarding workers'
« cost of living basket » and the wages in 2017
(Part II)

Q : *In what you said before you emphasized that in order to do away with this « trilateralism » working classes must be more cohesive. How and what basis do you think this cohesiveness should form ?*

A : There are different tendencies in the labor movement. For example there are activists who constantly cry that « we don't have our own real representative in the « High Council of Labor ».



This means that these activists believe in « trilateralism ». There are other activists who criticize the election of certain representative of the workers, but if they themselves are present in the sessions for the determination of wages then they don't care about the interests of the workers as whole.

There are, of course, some workers' activists and some workers who have the illusion that workers demands can reach the authorities through Members of the Parliament (Madjles). Against this view there are anti capitalist activists and vanguards. This group is not ready, under any excuse, retreat and consider their mission to give awareness to the working class about the actual situation.

This group is not only fighting the bosses and their supporters but also fight with all the anti working class tendencies. We shouldn't forget that we must also struggle for the workers minimum wage and social welfare services for them, but as long as there is this « trilateralism » and 3 against 6 situation, the working class can not achieve the livable minimum wage. It should be reminded that because of the personal costs that the vanguard of the working class has borne, the situation today is better than anytime in the past and the workers have become more aware and are taking stides in their class struggle. This fact will lead , gradually, the different tendencies within the working class towards more cohesiveness.

Q : *The majority of the workers' activists, including you, insist that by giving slogans or outside of the workers' centers, it is impossible to organize workers in their own independent and mass organizations. Then what is going to happen to the workers activists' associations formed outside of the work environment and are struggling for workers organizations ? Is it possible to organize a huge class numbered in several millions with small activists associations ?*

A : These associations and committees have so far done positive work and we must be proud of every single members of them and tell them : good job !

The purpose of these committees was to help to create the mass organizations built by the workers themselves, (I don't want to get into some claims that some of these committees introduced themselves as the workers' organizations). Although these committees have not been able to organize the working class, they have been able to get the awareness to the working class.

In my opinion, there are sincere individuals every one of whom can lead a number of workers. The working class and its vanguard should avoid «sloganeering» and with a spirit of hopefulness struggle against the capitalist system. Real vanguards of the working calss should be constantly present among the workers instead of waisting their time among the activist.

Q : In the second half of 2016 and somehow at the beginning of 2017, workers' protests increased significantly. Demands of these movements were entirely economic and about increasing the wages or payment of the unpaid wages and benefits. Some activists believe that these strikes and protests were spontaneous Does spontaneity means that the activists did not have any role in organizing the workers ?

A : People who say that workers' protests are spontaneous and don't have any organizing, do not pay attention to the live and online movement of the working class. Workers' protests have not become ubiquitous and considering the very difficult conditions of struggle in Iran, the activists have not failed. You need to consider the lack of funds on the part of these activists. For a simple travel from one city to another, an activists must spend one third of his monthly salary.

This is a fact that the majority of the workers' protests have been for preventing lay off of the workers or the payment of the unpaid wages. But all these protesting workers have been organized.

Q : In recent years there has been some hot discussions regarding the independent organizing among the workers' activists. Has there been any success in this regard ?

A : If you mean organizing the activists, I personally don't believe in such organizing. But if you mean organizing the working class, then this discussion is continuing and in the present supressive situation in Iran, it is not something we can evaluate today.

Q : Workers mass organizing has always been one the most important options, but in practice different tendencies within the class have their differences in this regard. Is it possible that on the basis of the general interests of the workers, to create an independent organizationj or other independent vessels ?

A : Iran's working class and its true activists are moving forward every moment. It is evident that the capitalist system does not use only the supression but also utilizes many other tricks. It is also evident that the working class can not attain its demands. It is obvious that some people do not want the working class to become organized and jeopardize their interests. But Iranian working class has realized the necessity of getting organized and striving to get organized.

The Price to pay for being a Teacher!

*A teacher's recollection of prison time
(part 2)*

Rasul Badaghi

I walked into the solitary cell, thinking about my ideas (life conditions of teachers, public schools, standard schools, student gyms, school libraries, arts, scientific and sport competitions between students and teachers, free exercise facilities, scientific tour and budgets for student requirements). I asked the question in my thought, that, will my death help or hinder achieving such goals? If it helps, then I am satisfied with my death. Once I entered the solitary hall, I could smell death and felt ideas of hatred and disillusionment. The prison guard was a laid-back person.

There was a brotherly feeling between us,

It was kindness and love,

But it was hidden and unawake,

Suppressed,

Only for bread,

I could see this through the eyes of the guard,

From his heavy and saddened hands,

That was blamed for opening the door, I knew.

His heavy hands cried that he and I belong to the same country,

His eyes begged and cried;

You the prisoner,

Do not think of me as a traitor,

I am beholden to provide for my kids.

While in prison, I thought about my future that either I die or get out live, out of there. If I die what would happen to my kids?

How about my Mom...! My sister and her kids,,,,? My brother's kids!...

Such thoughts appeared only when I forgot about my goals. It would escape my mind soon.

It was me. Teachers and students and valuable goals fulfilled my life and kept me spiritually alive.

I lived in prison with my ideas:

Life is sweet when one has ideals.

Those ideals define goodness or badness of the death!

Death is not unpleasant,

A bitter life facing the octopus of economical and cultural poverty.

A life under the shadow of poverty and ignorance is approaching a death while calling it 'life'!

What can be done with a father's sadness, when he comes home empty handed and ashamed?

What happens to kid's looking forward for the father to provide? What goes on in street kids'

minds that are often hungry? I have occasionally seen my unemployed neighbor who tries to hide his hunger from others? I want to sob loud for such absolute poverty.

I will scream aloud, Who wants to stand with me?

Continues in next edition

