



# **IRAN:** **View from the LEFT**

**April 2022**

**NO.28**

## **Word of the Month**

### **Ukraine's Tragedy**

*No doubt the US/ NATO conspired to draw Russia into the slippery trap that is Ukraine. But, inexplicably, the Russian regime fell into it. Russians as well as Ukrainians, together with the rest of the world, are paying the costs of this atrocity.*

*It is still too early for us to predict all the resulting ramifications. Still, two points are certain:*

*1- Instead of halting NATO's aggressive expansion to the East, Russia's actions have made it a certainty. Sweden and Finland are now moving to join NATO.*

*2- Russia's invasion has turned their Ukrainian cousins into bitter enemies and destroyed the solidarity between them.*

*The West laid this trap, and will use this invasion to further their own ends. But we cannot avoid condemning Russia for falling into the trap. We are for peace and we must condemn any and all acts of warmongering.*

## **Unity, solidarity, organization**

We are approaching the first of May, International Workers' Day. What is the significance of this day for Iranian workers? Why should they take to the streets on this day, to protest and rejoice, and to celebrate this day. While the celebration of May Day is still forbidden in Iran, why should the workers try every year to break the bans and being attacked

by the security forces and detained and even sentenced to occasional long-term imprisonments?

What is the significance of May Day as a day of global workers' solidarity and what is Iranian workers say on this day in solidarity with workers around the world?

The Worker Group of the Left Party of Iran





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(People's Fadaian) in a report on the struggles of workers, teachers and other toilers in the country, notes the importance of May Day. The report reviews more than 4,000 activities of protest over the past year and concludes:

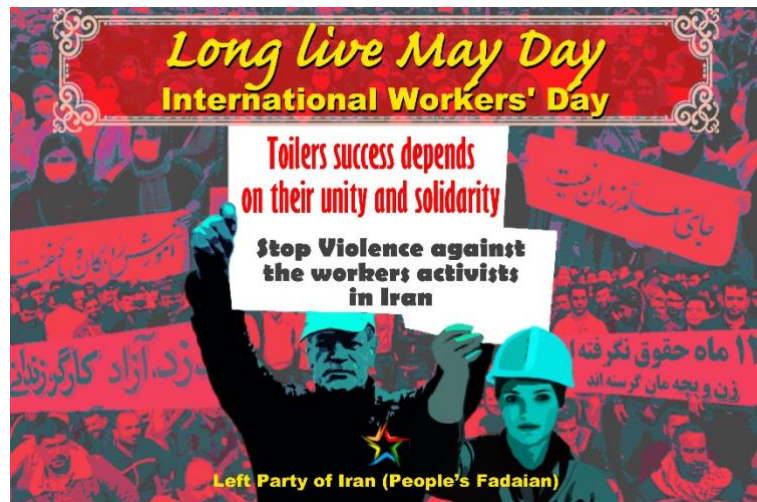
*It is hard to believe this volume of protests and strikes happen annually but it is true. Two years ago we had about 2,000 labor strikes in Iran and the numbers are growing year over year. All of these strikes and protests take place in a situation where the strike is considered illegal by the government and the activities of the unions are severely suppressed and the union activists are sometimes sentenced to up to 6 years in prison. Moreover, activists are flagged and they are subject to pay fines, expulsion from work and deprivation of social activities.*

*In recent years, the courts have increased the punishment of union*

*activists and leaders, prosecuting and convicting more people and in some cases barring defendants 'lawyers from appearing in court. In some cases, lawyers have been imprisoned after they did not comply with the demands of the security forces. Currently, ten active members of the Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions are in prison and a number of others are on trial while few more are awaiting their sentencing.*

*The share of women in the employment market is 15%. Wage and other sorts of discrimination between men and women*

*is high. This discrimination is recognized and practiced by the government. Most women working in the private sector are not covered by legal protections and the severity of discrimination there is far greater than in the government sector. Most private institutions set conditions before hiring women that in practice deprive them from the basic human rights such as marriage and having children. There are no inexpensive or free Day Care centers in the workplace and in many cases, employers refuse to let women go back to work after maternity leave. In*





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*government offices and institutions, men are given priority when hiring. Sexual harassment is common practice at work place.*

*The number of working and street children is increasing annually while the average age is decreasing every year. There are now millions of working and street children in the country, many of whom are under the age of 8.*

*Widespread unemployment in Iran and intense competition for employment have exacerbated pre-existing discrimination against migrant workers. Migrant workers are forced to work for lower wages, work in more difficult conditions, work longer hours for smaller wages and they are completely deprived of insurance and other protection laws.*

*The statement of the Political-Executive Board of the Left Party of*

*Iran (People's Fadaian) while congratulating the workers, toilers and the people of Iran on the first of May occasion, strongly supports their struggle for freedom, welfare, social justice and a society free from exploitation and oppression, discrimination and injustice. The statement emphasizes the widespread commemoration of this day:*



*Despite thousands of your annual strikes and protests, the regime has been able to break most protectionist and social laws, freeze wages below the poverty line, deprive*

*laborers of job security, intensify gender pay discrimination against women, and deprive children of education and instead marching them towards the working market. Regime has managed to plunder social security funds and bring tens of millions below the line of absolute poverty and destitution. The government also has let employers to increase workers' pressure and exploitation and to deprive of their rights. This situation is due to the existence of tyranny and oppression and the suppression of fundamental freedoms and labor organizations on the one hand, and the lack of organization on the other hand.*

*Workers who can go on 4000 strikes and protests in one year despite repression and lack of job security and legal protection, also have the capacity to organize in the current situation. The rallies that take place during the protests are*





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*an assembly to organize. The selection of case representatives is useful, but not sufficient. An effective organization is the one that can pursue claims for at least a year. If the workers, despite thousands of strikes have not been able to repel the aggression of the government and the capitalists on their rights, and meet many of their demands, it is due to scattered and the lack of organization, insufficient level of solidarity and coordination between the numerous strikes. Without organization, solidarity and coordination among the protesters, the desired results can not be achieved.*

The declaration adds:

*The life threatening policy of the Islamic Republic and the destructive sanctions of the United States have so far inflicted heavy sufferings on our people and, above all, on the workers and toilers of our*



*country. The continuation of the harmful policies of the past in the current Iran's Nuclear negotiations has completely blurred the prospect of an agreement. No agreement will make our country face more bitter*



*days. Turn Labor Day into a day of protest against the aggressive nuclear policy of the Islamic Republic, against sanctions, and for allocating the facilities resulting from the agreement to the*

*construction and livelihood of the people.*

*This year we hold the day of global solidarity as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and dealing with this phenomena has created divisions within the labor movement. The main victims of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the destructive role of the "West" in the outbreak and continuation of this war are the people of Ukraine and Russia, and in the first place the toilers of the two countries. Together with all the peace-loving people of the world, in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and Russia, on Labor Day, let us raise our voices against this war and call for an end to the war and the establishment of peace through negotiation.*

## **■ Afghan refugees are an opportunity**

*After the Taliban returned to power and a large group of Afghans*



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took refuge in Iran, an inflamed atmosphere was created in the country. The political-executive delegations of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaïyan), the Union of Republicans of Iran and the Solidarity of the Republicans of Iran, while expressing regret and condemning the abusive treatment of Afghan immigrants, made remarks on the need to maintain and expand friendly relations with the Afghan people. In parts of the joint declaration of these three forces, we read:

*The people of Iran and Afghanistan have a common language, culture and history for thousands of years.*

*Millions of Afghans have come to Iran to work during 60s and 70s . Coups and foreign military interventions during this period have led to an increase in the number of job seekers in Iran.*

*The Islamic Republic of Iran's regime has intensified its horrible treatment of Afghan refugees over the past few weeks. The government forcibly has deported large numbers of Afghans. As an example, in late March, 200 refugees were deported to Afghanistan on a daily basis. In addition, the Iranian government treats Afghan refugees in a discriminatory manner and has not set the conditions for the humane reception of Afghan refugees in*

*accordance with the international standards.*

*Another problem is the existence of intolerance and racist attitudes in a part of Iranian society, which in turn has made immigration in Iran difficult. On the other hand, certain groups in Afghanistan are fomenting tensions and animosity between the two nations through lies and propaganda.*

*Afghan refugees and migrants are hardworking, kind and patient people who have done the hardest work in the most difficult economic situation in which they find themselves. During the last half century, they have played a key role in the development of infrastructure and the expansion of Iranian cities.*

*The main portion of the society during the last 43 years with their complete tact and hospitality were able to understand the*



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*Afghans refugees role in our economy. They understood they should be the helpers of*

*Afghan refugees whom share common language and culture. It is true that today's situation is much more difficult than it was in the past but our civil society forces are now more vigilant than yesterday and they will be able to turn the Afghan refugee presence, not as a threat, but as an opportunity to invite them to Iran's diverse and multicultural society. In this situation, it is expected that all national and democratic forces of the country will react and not allow the situation to become tense. Afghanistan's conscious and democratic forces, in turn, have a responsibility to prevent the atmosphere in Afghanistan from escalating the situation into anti-Iranian tendencies.*

In addition we, the three organizations and the

Republican Parties, urge the United Nations to provide Iran with the necessary facilities to properly regulate the situation of asylum seekers and to ensure that those funds are properly used in the right directions to support Afghan refugees.



**The Statement of six parties on the occasion of May 1st.**

## ■ Compatriots,

May Day is a symbolic day for workers around the world, and we, the signatories of this Declaration, congratulate all the workers, toilers and justice seekers of the world.

Prior to 1890, the working conditions of workers in industrialized countries were extremely

oppressive and inhumane. They had to work up to 12 hours a day and in some cases even up to 16 hours. In the 1880s, labor movements in the United States grew significantly, resulting in the formation of the American Federation of Six Trade Unions. In 1886, a number of workers were killed, imprisoned, and two were executed following mass demonstrations to reduce working hours to eight hours/day in major American cities, particularly in Chicago. The result of these struggles was the passage of the 8-hour labor law in many capitalist countries.

In Iran, May Day began almost thirty years after it was declared as the International Workers' Day. In 1922 for the first time Labor Day was widely celebrated by various institutions and groups in Iran. From then on, May Day was held with restrictions





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until the celebration of Labor Day was declared free during the reign of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh as Prime Minister. Later, the declaration of Labor Day as national holiday was established in 1990.

In the Islamic Republic, trade unions became Islamic unions and despite the fact that Labor Day was recognized in the labor law, the government does not allow workers and their independent organizations to march in non-governmental celebrations and protests. Only government-affiliated Islamic organizations can hold rallies and marches in a controlled manner, and they also restrict public participation in such rallies by imposing restrictions.

Living conditions and job security are not observed in the Islamic Republic: Lack of job and health security, fatal

work place accidents and illness often lead to stop payment of wages. The wages of workers, especially "contract" workers, are so low that their families are generally under poverty lines and in deep misery. Unemployment is very common among young people, graduates, and especially women. In dealing with these problems, regime uses violence such as in November 2020 oppression of popular protests.



The economic situation has deteriorated terribly: the population below the poverty line is growing by leaps and

bounds. According to official data, 26 million people are living below the poverty line. The price of medicine and housing has risen so much that it is beyond the reach of the common citizens. The price of civil services, fuel, water and electricity, the Internet and the elimination of the compatible foreign currency have led to a sharp rise in the prices of basic and food items. The continuation of US economic sanctions, in turn, has exacerbated the crisis, recession-inflation and declining macroeconomic indicators.

The scope of the protests is growing every day: the corrupt government of the Islamic Republic has shown in practice that it not only lacks a plan and solution to end the economic recession and curb inflation, create jobs and provide welfare for the people, but also is unable to decrease the



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damage on economy on a daily basis. Last year, protests by workers, teachers, nurses, retirees and other wage-earning groups broke the record of all post-revolutionary years, and intensifying repression could not stop the spread of workers' protests.

The toilers are calling for fundamental change: It is now clear that the repression and arrest of workers and trade union and civil society activists, as well as the country's conscious teachers by the Iranian regime can no longer prevent people from continuing their struggle to fulfill their demands. The regime is unable to meet these demands. The realization of these demands requires fundamental changes in the structure of the government.

Freedom of independent trade unions guarantees the growth of democracy: We believe

that the establishment of independent and free trade unions is the undeniable right of workers and other working classes in Iranian society. The creation of independent unions will not only help to assert the rights of workers and other sections of society, but it will also promote political struggles, change the atmosphere and democratize the country.

The first day of May is an opportunity to show the solidarity of the workers and wage earners and the freedom fighters and their press supporters and the country's justice seekers. We support the workers' efforts to enjoy a humane life and social welfare.

We, the signatories of this International Workers' Day statement, congratulate all the workers of the world and urge the fulfillment

of the following demands:

-Unemployment and job seekers should be paid grants.

-Freedom of expression and strike should be recognized for all social groups.

-May first should be declared as an official holiday and no restrictions should be imposed on holding the May Day celebration.

-Eliminate any sex discrimination and injustice against migrant workers and women, especially Afghan workers in Iran.

-Imprisoned labor activists, including Ismail Bakhshi, Parvin Mohammadi, Sepideh Qalyan and Amir Amirgholi, as well as Alireza Saghafi, a trade unionist and member of the Writers' Association, should be released immediately and unconditionally.





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-All political prisoners should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Last not Least, we believe that social justice for workers, toilers and other sections of society is not possible without the removal of the Islamic Republic of Iran's regime and replacing it with a patriotic, just and democratic system.

Happy May Day,  
International Day of  
Workers and toilers.

April 30, 2022



- Union of Republicans of Iran

- Iran-Europe National Front (Sixth Organization)
- Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian)
- Social Democratic and Secular Party of Iran
- Iranian National Front organizations abroad
- Solidarity of Republicans of Iran



***IRAN: View from the LEFT" is published for those who are interested to know the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) stance on current issues on a monthly basis.***

***IRAN: View from the LEFT may occasionally contain news from Iran that media might not have drawn attention to.***

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