

# Tudeh News

**International Bulletin of the Tudeh Party of Iran—May 2011 - No. 271**

**International Dept. Address:** BM Box 1686 London WC1N 3XX

**Fax:** (Berlin: 324-1627) (London: 208-392-2653)

**e-mail:** [mardom@tudehpartyiran.org](mailto:mardom@tudehpartyiran.org) - **URL:** <http://www.tudehpartyiran.org>



## Statement of the Tudeh Party of Iran

### **On the Occasion of May Day, the International Workers' Day**

**To fight for social justice and the violated rights of the working people is an indivisible part of the struggle against the ruling despotic regime.**

#### *Honourable working people!*

**W**e congratulate you, the true fighters for the liberation of the humankind, on the occasion of the May Day, the International Workers' Day.

May Day is the day to commemorate more than a century of historical and epical struggle of the working class against the oppression of capitalism, for parity and social justice, peace, freedom and emancipation of human from exploitation, and is the day to remember and honour all those distinguished and legendry humans who sacrificed their lives for the great ideals and causes of the working class.

125 years ago, on the first day of May of 1886, the textile workers in Chicago, with their bloodied fight for their legitimate rights, became the vanguard of the relentless struggle of the working class against global capitalism, which despite all the ups and downs, has been going on until today and has had great achievements.

This year, the workers of the world celebrate the May Day at a time when, in addition to the continuing crisis of the global capitalism,

historical developments and events are also sweeping the Middle East, from Egypt to Tunisia and Yemen, and are tearing down the very existence of the rotten dictatorial regimes in the region, in which the working class has played a significant role. Four years after the intensification of the monetary, financial and economical crisis of the global capitalism, and despite the claims of the capitalism theorists about the transient and temporary nature of this crisis, it is clear today that the recent crisis is not a short-term and transitory one due to the inefficiency of the capitalism mechanisms or failing to utilize and implement those mechanisms, but precisely demonstrating the failure of the very nature of the capitalism system, and in particular, concepts like "free market", the self-adjustment and auto-tuning ability of capitalism, and implementation of neo-liberal policies.

The continuing crisis in the European Union and the economical collapse of countries like Greece and Ireland along with the bleak economical situation in Portugal, Spain and Britain with hundreds of billions of dollars of debt, in addition to the continuing crisis in the United States and Japan, all are indicators of the continuing tragic affects of global capitalism.

Anti-people policies to discard and eliminate social services such as public healthcare and education and social security, and growing rate of unemployment in developed capitalist countries, and exacerbation of poverty and privation in developing countries that are struggling under the policies dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, more than ever illustrate the harsh conditions that the working

class is facing with in various countries of the world.

According to the latest estimates of ILO, the number of unemployed in the world in the year 2011 exceeded 205 millions. In its statement on the occasion of May Day, The World Federation of Trade Unions reports an unemployment rate of 20% among the European youth and 10 million jobless in the US.

The peace-loving people of the world are truly concerned that under the condition of growing economic crisis, the capitalist states try to overcome the current crises by inflaming wars and military conflicts and stimulating weapon production monopolies, as they did during times in the past century. The interventionist policies of imperialism in the Middle East, from military invasion of Libya to direct intervention against the people of Bahrain and in support of the anti-people lackey regime of this country, once again proves the discredited claims of imperialist states about defending democracy and human rights, and highlights the need for the urgent attention of the progressive forces around the world to the struggle for peace and effective organizing for this goal.

### **Working people of Iran!**

Contrary to the false claims of the regime leaders and the anti-people government of Ahmadinejad, this year, the International Workers' Day in our nation will be celebrated under the circumstances of a wide-ranging political, social and economic crisis and growing suppression of the regime against the labour cadres and activists. Recognizing the ever-deepening economical crisis of the regime, Ali Khamenei called the new Iranian year the year of "economic jihad". As was anticipated, the destructive and anti-national policies of the military state not only has sunk Iran in an unprecedented economic crisis, but also the uncontrollable inflation, millions of jobless, bankruptcy of manufacturing plants and exacerbation of poverty and privation, all in all resulting in a very harsh living conditions for millions of Iranian families.

According to the formal state statistics and reports by the authorized press, the unemployment rate has reached its highest during the two terms of Ahmadinejad in office. According to the recent studies of Statistics Centre of Iran (SCI), the unemployment rate in the spring of 2010 increased to 14.6% and the number of jobless surpassed 3.5 millions. The official unemployment rate in the previous years was at most 11.9% and the number of jobless was just over 2.5 millions. The study conducted by Mehr newspaper last year showed that in the 5 years from 2005 to 2009 (both years included) the rate of unemployment was at its peak in 2009. According to this statistics, 24.7% of the youth between the ages of 15 to 24 were out of job. According to SCI, in the year 2010, the unemployment rate among this same age group was 29.6%.

The root cause of the current unemployment and joblessness must be found in macro-economic policies of the state, including the privatization of manufacturing units, lack of support for the domestic manufacturing, promoting an economy based on brokerage and imports, tenderpreneurship, and the control of major parts of the economy of the country by the leaders and military commanders of Sepah Corps (Islamic Revolutionary Guard). As reported by daily "Donya-ye Eghtesad" [World of Economics] early last summer, "20,000 unfinished manufacturing plants are waiting in billions for investment capital. Industry Minister Deputy talked about 20,000 incomplete industrial units around the country and said that 'solving the problem of investment funds required by these units is in our agenda...'"

The Chamber of Commerce also reported in its Industry Commission that 50% of manufacturing units in most of the regions of the country are idling and thousands are out of job. Kalemeh website also published a report early last summer titled "A glance at the economic report of the Chamber of Commerce; critical days for the domestic

production” in which numerous statistics are produced and the dire conditions of the manufacturing are reviewed. The report reads: “currently the domestic production is going through its worst days...according to the report of the Industry Commission of the Chamber of Commerce, 50% of manufacturing units in most of the industrial regions of the country have either closed their doors or are at the verge of closure...the majority of the large manufacturing and industrial units across the country are working under 30% of their rated capacity...some of the manufacturing plants are forced to adjust their workforce due to the economic situation.”

### **Vigilant and militant workers!**

Close to two years has passed since the electoral coup of the Sepah Corps and the Supreme Leader. The brutal and bloody suppression of the wide spread protests of the people against the continuation of the tyrannical regime, and violation of the democratic rights and freedoms, including the trade and economical rights, have been some of the crucial issues whose impact on the day-to-day life and activity of the labour movement is noticeable. The harsh suppression of social and political activities has not been limited to the militant student and women of the nation, but has targeted the labour activists too. Your unrelenting struggle for your legitimate rights such as the right to organize independent class and trade associations has continued in recent years with its ups and downs, and bears valuable lessons for future struggles.

The working class of Iran left last year behind while gained experience from the protest movements and strikes in companies like “Tabriz Petrochemical Co.”, “Iran Khodro” (Iran’s largest car manufacturer), “Abadan Refineries”, “Pars Wagon”, “Haft-Tapeh Sugarcane Co.” and “Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Co.”, and started the new year with the labour strike in “South Pars Gas Site” (Assalouyeh), “Pars Paper Mills”, “Shapoor Petrochemical Complex”, and “Mahshahr Petrochemical Complex”.

The century-long experience of labour struggles in Iran and the world has shown that the recourse of the workers, working people and toilers in confronting the capitalism maneuvers is unity and organization. A united and organized working class is a colossal liberating force that could, and should play an essential role in the liberation of the nation from the chains of the current dictatorship.



Today, alongside fighting for better wages, improvement in the working conditions and job and social security, the fight for independent trade organizations is of particular significance. Organizing the struggle to form independent trade unions and syndicates is one of the important tasks in front of the labour movement of our nation. All possible and available means and resources must be utilized in this complicated and tough struggle.

The experience of the recent struggles in the past two years against the tyrannical regime of the Supreme Leader demonstrates this solid fact that despite all the economic and political crisis of the ruling dictatorial regime, it could not be defeated without united and joint efforts of various social strata and the united action of all the freedom-loving political forces. The recent experiences of the victorious popular movements in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen are indicative of the active and significant role of the labour movement alongside other social groups and strata in the fight against the dictatorial regimes.

Realizing this immense danger, i.e. the united action of all the anti-despotic forces, the Iranian regime is making every effort to divert and prevent it from happening. Due to years of

fierce suppression, lack of desired level of organization, scattered forces, and severe restrictions on the operation of the independent trade unions and syndicates, the labour movement could not attain its violated rights without taking part in the general and nationwide struggle of the people against the ruling dictatorship.

In its close to 70 years history of struggle, the Tudeh Party of Iran has always considered the struggle for the ideals of the working class as one of its most important tasks, and today too, committed to this glorious history from which prominent figures of the labour movement like Ali Omid, Shenassaei, Hosseinpour Tabrizi and others have been born, continues this sacred struggle alongside the working people and working class of the nation.

### **Working people of Iran!**

On the eve of the May Day, the international labour celebrations on the first day of May, in harmony with the international trade union movement let's call out for trade union freedoms and the right to organize independent unions for all, an immediate end to the killing and persecution of trade unionists, and the immediate release of all the political prisoners. Let's hand in hand build a broad anti-dictatorship front against the united ranks of the reaction, despotism and autocracy, and open the road to social justice, freedom and independence. The century long history of the heroic struggle of the working class of our nation promises the victory of the people against tyranny and reaction.

**Happy May Day, the International Workers' Day!**

**Greetings to the glorious memory of the martyrs of the Iranian labour movement!**

**Victory for the people's struggle to discard the regime of Supreme Leader and for freedom, peace, independence and social justice!**

***Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran***

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## **Ministry of Labour, and support and promotion of fictitious Labour Organizations**

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*(From "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 867, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011)*

One of the policies of Ahmadinejad government from the beginning of his term has been the suppression of unions and independent organizations as well as weakening the activities of labour organizations that are not in line with the government. Since the last presidential election, and particularly since the execution of the plan to eliminate the subsidies, this policy has been enforced more adamantly than before.

On Feb 12, 2011 "KalemeH" news website exposed the illegal financial donations of the anti-national government of Ahmadinejad to reactionary and anti-labour organizations such as "Workers Islamic Society" in order to obstruct the labour struggle and to suppress and contain the labour- and union-movement.

"KalemeH" reported: "in an illegal and questionable move, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs paid 80 million Tomans (equivalent of about \$80,000) to Workers Islamic Society in May of 2006 as aid to labour institutions and organizations. This illegal action took place in the 9<sup>th</sup> government when Hassan Tizmaghz (member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce) was the chair of Tehran's Labour Office."

The report continues: "Workers Islamic Society is one of the political party that supports the government and has obtained its permit to operate from the Ministry of Interior under "Article 10 Commission" of Laws governing parties and organizations and is not a trade organization registered in Ministry of Labour."

Paying millions of Tomans to ultra-right groups such as “Workers Islamic Society” happens at a time when the independent unions and the activists of labour movement are under tremendous pressures, are being detained, and some has been fired just because of union activities.

The policy to strengthen superficial organizations is not limited only to financial aid, and is followed with logistic, theoretic and other means of financial support and alike. The coup government attempts to subdue and contain the labour movement and growing protests in manufacturing and industrial plants and in workplaces in general. Another important point to pay attention to is the appointment of the members of the Iran’s Chamber of Commerce to critical and influential positions in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The example of Hassan Tizmaghz as mentioned above is a lucid indication of the reality and clearly shows the anti-labour nature of Ahmadinejad government•

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## **Freedom for all Political Prisoners – Release Imprisoned Workers**

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*(From "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 867, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011)*

In confronting the union movement of the working people, the anti-labour theocratic regime of Iran has taken hostage and detained a number of workers active in independent trade unions and organizations. The union activists have been arrested and imprisoned solely because of the struggle for the rights of the working people and free operation of trade unions. The families of workers are facing with hardship and agony in various areas as a result of this clear injustice. The continuing persecution and harassment of trade union activists is the official policy of the anti-people government of Ahmadinejad, and the entire reactionary theocratic regime of Iran in general.

The way that the Judiciary system treats the workers such as Mansour Osanlou and Ali Nejati, is a plain and clear example of this practice. Osanlou has been deprived of adequate and necessary medical treatment despite recommendations by doctors. Ali Nejati, the former President of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers Union, has been fired from his job after having been imprisoned. In early April, after heavy coercion from the Dezful (in the southern Khouzestan Province of Iran) office of the Islamic Revolution District Attorney and repeated summons to the Ministry of Intelligence, Ali Nejati suffered a heart attack and has been hospitalized.

The ruling reactionary regime is taking revenge on the working class by exerting constant pressure against the activists of the union movement and the leaders and officials of the independent worker organizations. The labour and union movement, along with all the progressive and patriotic forces and parties, demands an end to the campaign of repression and coercion against the union activists and call for the freedom of the imprisoned workers. On the “International Workers’ Day”, let’s send a loud and clear message demanding the release of all the detained labour activists and of political prisoners.

Here is a partial list of imprisoned trade union activists:

1. Mansour Osanlou – Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (VAHED)
2. Ebrahim Madadi – VAHED
3. Reza Shahabi – VAHED
4. Gholamreza Gholamhosseini VAHED
5. Behrouz Nikoufard – Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers Union
6. Behrouz Jalalzadeh - Haft Tapeh Union
7. Alireza Saeedi - Haft Tapeh Union
8. Reza Rakhshan - Haft Tapeh Union
9. Abolfazl Abedini – Labour activist and journalist
10. Behnam Ebrahimzadeh – Labour activist
11. Ebrahim Esmaili – Labour activist

12. Rasoul Badaghi – Teachers Union activist
13. Aliyeh Eghdamdoust – Laid off teacher; trade union and women's rights activist
14. Gholamreza Ghanbari – Teachers Union activist

Let's unite in the struggle to free all political prisoners●

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## Statement of the Iranian Trade Unions and Labour Organizations on the Occasion of the International Workers' Day

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<http://www.tudehpartyiran.org/detail.asp?id=1367>

28 April 2011

Issuing a statement on the occasion of May Day, the International Workers' Day, seven trade unions and labour organizations called on all workers and toilers of the country to join a united and organized struggle around specific demands. In this statement, the labour unions point out to the dreadful living conditions of the workers and clearly demand that the anti-people programs to deregulate the economy and eliminate the subsidies be stopped. The statement reads, "In addition to being denied of their social rights, such as the right to organize and street demonstrations, the Iranian workers are every day and every moment faced with the fiercest blows against their livelihood...With the so called program of "Targeted Subsidies" that the ruling capitalist class has lunched with the backing of the international institutions of capitalism, the livelihood of millions of working families is being destroyed more than ever, and no-one is allowed to freely express his or her opinion about this situation..."

Identifying 14 specific demands, seven workers' trade unions, including the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (VAHED), the Reestablishment Board of the Metal Workers' Syndicate, the Reestablishment Board of the Painters and Interior Workers'

Syndicate, the Center for the Defense of the Workers' Rights and several other organizations addressed the workers and stated: "We call on all the workers across the nation to raise their demands nationwide and in a united manner."

Among the demands listed by the seven unions and labour organizations, a few important demands are pointed out, including the "unconditional freedom to establish independent workers' organizations, strike, protest, rally, freedom of parties" and also, "stopping the program to eliminate the government subsidies...and setting wages with the participation of the true representatives of workers...unpaid wages of workers to be paid immediately and without any excuses...abolishment of the death penalty...annulling all discriminatory laws against women...banning child labour...immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned workers and members of other social movements...to end firing and laying off workers under any pretext...we consider the benefits of the Social Security Insurance as an indisputable right of each and every member of the society and demand that this organization be managed by the elected representatives of the workers across the nation". In addition, the workers' syndicates rightfully emphasized on their class solidarity with the workers of the world and stated: "While expressing our gratitude for all the international support of the workers and people of the world for the struggles of the workers in Iran, and stating our resolute support for the demands and protests of the workers across the world, we consider us as their allies, and more than any other time, emphasize on the workers' international solidarity for emancipation from the hardship of the capitalist system." At the end of the statement, the old demand of the Iranian workers has raised again: "The first day of the month of May must be declared as an official holiday on the official calendar, and all the restrictions and prohibitions for commemorating this day must be removed."

In spite of the pressures and restrictions imposed by the theocratic regime and anti-people government of Ahmadinejad, issuing of the statement by seven workers' syndicates and organizations on the occasion of the May Day and stating their specific demands is another evidence of the process of ever growing movement of the labour-union movement in Iran. Supporting the labour union movement, we must move forward with relentless steps towards unification of the ranks of the workers' labour union movement. Tudeh Party of Iran, the party of the Iranian working class, having supported the rightful demands of the workers and toilers, has been fighting and will fight with all its might for the rights and interests of the working class, and to support the independent syndicates and the union movement of the working people●

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## The Land of No Law!

### A quick glance at workers' situation in small shops

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*(From "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 867, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011)*

**T**he destructive impact of the socio-economic policies of the theocratic regime of Iran on all aspects of the society in the past two decades is not hidden to anyone. Policies such as economic adjustment, reform of economic structure, and recently the so called economic development or linearization plan, has had consequences first and foremost in manufacturing and industry, and as a result, has caused major hardship on conditions and interests of the working class and other working people, including intellectual workers.

Workers in small shops and factories are among the prime victims of the orders and prescriptions of powerful capitalist institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), carried out by the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran. All published official reports and forecasts in the recent years indicate that workers in small

shops have been severely exploited and basically there are no laws to protect their rights and interests. This situation has exacerbated in recent years amid coming to power of the anti-people government of Ahmadinejad. The anti-labour policies of this illegitimate government have caused irrecoverable damages to the rights of the workers in small shops and factories.

On this matter, and in an article that published last fall, ILNA News Agency admitted the painful plight of millions of workers in small shops throughout country, and wrote: "Due to the specific approach towards small shops in the Labour Law, workers in these shops need extra attention and protection...We are in a situation where a great portion of investments are carried out in small shops and therefore it is necessary to monitor the working conditions in these shops more closely".

Of course in this article "the specific approach towards small shops" is purposely not elaborated. In fact, based on the socio-economic orientation of the theocratic regime of Iran as well as plans such as reform of the economic structure, and recently deregulation and economic liberalization with the aim of protecting the security of capital, small shops with less than ten employees were excluded from the Labour Law. Now the grand capitalism of Iran has the "legal" right to treat millions of workers like slaves and exclude itself from any laws and regulations. With the exclusion of small manufacturing or service shops from the Labour Law, workers in these shops across the country are now deprived of their legitimate rights and benefits such as insurance benefits, yearly wage increase, retirement and pension plan payments, permanent contracts and collective bargaining. Today, a brutal lawlessness has shadowed the lives of these shops.

The prevalence of "blank signature" contracts and forcing unprotected workers to sign affidavits that read "in case of accidents, workers have no right to seek any compensation" are only 2 examples of the

consequences of excluding small shops from the Labour Law that was approved by the 6<sup>th</sup> Majlis (Iranian parliament).

Last December, ILNA had quoted the officials of the "Worker House" of Islamic Republic- which is affiliated with the regime- that workers of small industrial-manufacturing shops have no choice but to sign the affidavit that in case of work injuries, they will not seek compensation. ILNA had reported last March that "Shops with less than 10 employees are exempted from the Labour Law and employers hire workers with pays that are below the minimum wage approved by the High Council of Labour. In these shops, most of the contracts are signed "blank" and are temporary".

In some cities like Khorram Abad, Ardebil, Saaveh, Dezful, Yazd, Hamedan, Sanandaj, Araak, Ghom and Semnan, workers in small shops are only paid about 60,000 Tomans (\$60) per month, and have no benefits such as insurance or pension/retirement plan.

Based on an official report by ISNA, a student news agency, which was published last March, the average monthly pay of the workers in small manufacturing shops in Tehran is 80,000 to 90,000 Tomans (\$80 to \$90) and most of the workers are working with "blank signed" contracts. The minimum wage standard is not recognized in these shops.

Workers in small shops and factories make up a large portion of the working class of the nation. Last November, and based on the information from "Workers House" of Islamic Republic, ILNA reported that 7 million workers are employed by these shops. On the other hand, the Ministry of Industry reiterated in its annual report two years ago that small shops and factories make up about 90 percent of Iran's manufacturing industry and employ 63 percent of country's workforce.

Based on this statistics, one can realize the importance of protecting the rights of workers in small shops and its role and impact on the current labour movement.

The large number of small shops and factories and the working conditions of their workers poses serious challenges for organizing the labour movement and strengthening the ranks of the union movement of the working people. But this does not mean ignoring the organizing activities in these shops to protect the trade and political demands of the workers.

In struggle against the anti-labour policies of the coup government, including the fight against the plan to eliminate government subsidies and liberalization of economy plays an important and undeniable role. In the framework of plans like this, the Labour Law is changed by the coup government in favor of protecting the security of capital against the rights and demands of millions of workers in service and manufacturing shops and plants. Relentless struggle to abolish temporary contracts, to form independent unions, for fair increase of wages, to oppose liberalization of economy and imposing devastating neoliberal economic policies has had the resolute and overwhelming support of the workers of small shops and factories and reflects their interests and demands.

In the current situation that the anti-people government of Ahmadinejad is attempting to restore the outdated system of master-apprentice by reforming and changing the Labour Law in the framework of economic liberalization, and secure the interests of the grand capitalists by establishing temporary contracts, millions of workers are objectively confronting these policies. Therefore, paying attention to the role of this segment of the working people and unrelenting activity among them, with the goal of organizing the protest movement and strengthening the labour movement in its struggle against the despotic regime, is of utmost importance.

It is only through a relentless, conscious and meticulous struggle that the ranks of millions of workers could be organized and put an end to the current disastrous lawlessness●