

# Tudeh News

**International Bulletin of the Tudeh Party of Iran - April-May 2000 - No.205**

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## **Excerpts from the Statement of the CC of the Tudeh Party of Iran Popular Movement must be Alert**

- **Regime pushes the country deeper into violence, terror and bloody oppression as its latest conspiracy against the popular movement unfolds**
- **The regime's Moharam Plan <sup>1</sup> has several characteristics:**
- **The extensive oppression of opposition papers by widespread arrest of writers and columnists critical of the supporters of the absolute rule of the supreme religious leader, Velayat-e-Faqih; and the closure of independent newspapers;**
- **Serious threat of bloody suppression of the people's movement unless they retreat and give up their demands for reform;**
- **Preparing the Revolutionary Guards<sup>2</sup> and other paramilitary forces to form a quasi-military regime when required,**
- **Instigating chaos and unrest, and creating tension in order to justify oppression under the cloak of establishing security,**
- **Utilizing all 'legal' and forceful means to pervert the course of the elections for the 6<sup>th</sup> parliament, with the aim of altering the balance of forces in parliament in favour of the faction supporting reaction and dictatorship;**
- **There is compelling evidence that the reactionary forces and their paramilitary forces at their service were the architects of plots such as the assassination attempt on Sa'eed Hajarian<sup>3</sup> and subsequent claims that the reformists had a hand in the plot. Part of this plot was the concocting of a list of political and well-known individuals, some of them close to the president, even the president Seid Mohammad Khatami himself, supposedly under the suspicion of involvement in these assassinations. The list would then be produced to facilitate a quasi-military coup d'etat and the crushing of the popular movement.**

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<sup>1</sup> Last year the regime started a campaign of repression called the Moharram Plan (named after the month in which the Prophet's son-in-law was assassinated at the beginning of Islam). With the launch of this campaign the Salaam and Neshaat daily papers, critical of the fundamentalist faction were closed down and the severe attacks on the student movement were carried out.

<sup>2</sup> Armed corps at the service of the fundamentalists supporting the regime of Velayat-e-Faqih, the absolute rule of the supreme religious leader.

Aware and combatant compatriots, and supporters of freedom and opponents of reaction and despotism,

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<sup>3</sup> Sa'eed Hajarian was the adviser to the president, member of Tehran City Council and proprietor of the daily paper, Sobh-e-Emrooz. He was deputy Information Minister (security and intelligence) during Rafsanjani's administration. An attempt was made on Hajarian's life in March and he is now in hospital. The authorities closed down his paper on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2000.

Seid Ali Khamenei, the supreme religious leader of the regime, attacked those who seek reforms in our country suffering under despotism, during the Friday prayer sermon in Tehran, on 13<sup>th</sup> April. He branded as spies and agents a large part of them including the independent press and a number of individuals close to president Khatami, and the millions to have cast their votes in the parliamentary elections during the last few months against the candidates of the corrupt and brutal regime of Velayat-e-Faqih. Khamenei declared that in Islam, legal violence is acceptable violence and if necessary it can be used. According to Khamenei: 'Islam does not consider violence to be the basis, but in legal cases, the use of violence has not been ruled out.' He then adds: 'Islam is a comprehensive religion, not a one dimensional one'. Where it is set against force, disturbance and breach of the law, the use of violence is prescribed.' (Quoted from the Islamic Republic's press, IRNA, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April). Undoubtedly, as a declaration of support for the murder and assassination of dissidents, Khamenei praised Assadollah Lajevardi, who was responsible for the execution of thousands of political prisoners, and freedom fighters and called him one of the 'fighters and brilliant faces of Islam'. He stressed on 'legal' violence and hinting at Khomeini's decree for the killing of Salman Rushdie, threatened all the opponents of the dictatorial regime to death and 'legal' violence. In his statement, Khamenei did not clarify whether he considers the security forces' attack on the university and throwing students from upper floors of the dormitory building to their death were examples of 'legal' violence or not.

Two days after Khamenei's inflammatory sermon, which was undoubtedly prepared with the collaboration of the security forces, the Revolutionary Guards issued an unprecedented statement in support of dictatorship, oppression and violence against dissidents whether religious or secular: 'When the time comes, the enemies, small or big, will feel the blow of the revolution's sledge hammer in their skulls with such force that they will be stopped from treachery and conspiracy forever.' The Guards' statement branded the reformists and the more than 20million people who voted against the dictatorial regime in the June 1997, and those who in recent weeks cast their votes in the parliamentary elections, as the 'outcasts of the revolutions', the 'agents and puppets of the enemy', the 'corrupt and at war (with god)'. In line with Khamenei's

sermon, the Guards declared that they would: 'at the smallest hint from their Leader, they would descend on the criminals like thunder. When the time of smiles and tolerance comes up (and god forbid that it should) the law of revolutionary violence and Islamic intensity is enacted to safeguard justice, but with no compromise or discrimination, it will be enforced with such speed that you cannot even imagine it, then it will be too late to learn lessons from it.' (quoted from Mosharekat, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April).

These two important developments which amount to a declaration of war by the leadership of the reactionary regime of velayat-e-faqih and the Leader himself, against the popular movement. In addition, in recent days the persecution of those critical of the regime has intensified. Shamsol-vaezeen, Ghoochani, Ganji and Emadedin-e-Baghi<sup>4</sup> were called before the court accused of 'publishing lies, sacrilegious material, and acting against national security'. Ahmad Hakimipoor a member of the City Council in Tehran and a close aide of Saeed Hajarian, was arrested accused of the attempted assassination of Hajarian.

In parallel with these dangerous developments, in recent days, the Council of Guardians has declared void tens of thousands of votes cast in different towns and cities in the parliamentary elections, attempting to change the balance of the votes. These efforts exposed the reaction's clear aim of sabotaging the work of the sixth parliament and showed that in the intense and critical conditions prevailing today, the vote of the people is of no value for the regime's leaders, but it is seen as a threat that must be crushed violently.

In recent weeks, and especially in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on Hajarian and other reformists critical of the regime, our party has repeatedly warned of the increasing threat of the reaction's conspiracy against the popular movement. Undoubtedly the recent events in our homeland are tantamount to a serious alarm bell. Ignoring such a warning and failing to deal with it intelligently and in an organised manner, would have dire consequences for our country.

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<sup>4</sup> Shamsolvaezeen is the proprietor of Asr-e-Azadegan daily, Ghoochani is a journalist, Ganji is a writer and journalist for the Fath daily, Emadedin Baghi is a journalist.

The leadership of the regime of velayat-e-faqih has embarked on an attack to regain the positions it has lost during the past three years. The characteristics of the onslaught, as manifested in recent days are manifold, but they fall within the following broad categories:

- The extensive oppression of opposition papers by widespread arrest of writers and columnists critical of the supporters of the absolute rule of the supreme religious leader, Velayat-e-Faqih; and the closure of independent newspapers;
- Serious threat of bloody suppression of the people's movement unless they retreat and give up their demands for reform;
- Preparing the Revolutionary Guards<sup>5</sup> and other paramilitary forces to form a quasi-military regime when required,
- Instigating chaos and unrest, and creating tension in order to justify oppression under the cloak of establishing security,
- Utilising all 'legal' and forceful means to pervert the course of the elections for the 6<sup>th</sup> parliament, with the aim of altering the balance of forces in the parliament in favour of the faction supporting reaction and dictatorship;
- Expediting the ratification of deeply anti-popular bills in the last days of the shameful lifetime of the 5<sup>th</sup> parliament.

What prevails in our country today, is a social, political and economic disaster that has turned life for the majority of the people into a bitter and arduous struggle full of intolerable social and economic pressures. This is the fruit of the policies that the regime of velayat-e-faqih intends to prolong by resorting to 'legal' violence. The regime's threats are being made at a time when millions of Iranians voted in the February elections rejecting the continuation of these policies, effectively demanding fundamental and democratic reforms in the country's political life. What is expressed from the platform of the Friday sermons by the highest ranking leaders of the regime, is nothing but approval of murder, terror and violence against opponents of the velayat-e-faqih albeit Islamic or non-Islamic, and in fact it is a declaration of war against reforms in our society. Unity of action and opposition against the conspiracies of reaction, is the only way to defeat the reactionary plots threatening the popular movement in our country.

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<sup>5</sup> Armed corps at the service of the fundamentalists supporting the regime of Velayat-e-Faqih, the absolute rule of the supreme religious leader.

The reactionary forces are hoping that by continuing a provocative policy of intensifying pressure, arrests and new assassinations, they can weaken the movement, force a number of political forces within the pro-Khatami front termed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Khordad coalition to surrender and renege on the aims of the coalition movement, and finally after weakening the movement, to crush it. Any demagoguery around the reasons for Khamenei's statements, claiming that he in fact meant 'illegal' violence, is nothing but confusing the movement and creating complacency towards the dangerous threat that is facing the movement. The Tudeh Party of Iran, once again, stresses that according to its sources, the ruling reaction has started a dangerous plot for the total suppression of the people's movement, and it is only by extensive and complete unity of the popular forces that this plot can be foiled.

Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran  
16<sup>th</sup> April 2000

## Only An Organised And United Struggle Of The Workers Will Counter Reactionary Conspiracy

Iranian Workers!

In a pre-planned move, members of the outgoing fifth Islamic parliament controlled by anti-national and reactionary elements are using their last days of their term to eliminate factories and work shops employing five or less workers, from coverage of the employment law. If they succeed in their conspiracy, they will effectively deprive at least 2.8 million workers that account for about 40 percent of the entire workforce in the country, from any protection whatsoever from the new employment law. The workers, as a result, will either face the possibility of losing their jobs or be forced to bow down to inhumane and harsh working conditions imposed by the employers.

The Iranian worker will recall the events of June 9th, 1999: wide spread protests of the workers in response to the introduction of the draconian bill that "removed work shops employing three or less workers from the employment law". The result: the bill was shelved. Our party then warned the workers of the deception involved in the regime's manoeuvring and that the workers movement to be aware of artful trickery of the reactionary forces. We wrote: "the shelving of the employment law reform in the parliamentary commission, the government's opposition and the finally its rejection . is only a temporary and calculated ploy. The "Velayat-e-Faghih" regime will try to achieve its goals by other means and in different circumstances" (Nameh Mardom, No: 560, Thursday June 21st, 1999).

The reactionary members of the parliament in defence of this anti-national and anti-workers rights introduced this bill as "an incentive to job creation" and an attempt to tackle severe unemployment. Abbas Abbasi, a reactionary member of the parliament from Bandar Abbas, in his speech defended the bill, saying: "the government is unable to make any further investments and have been running short on investments for three consecutive years . and no new jobs have been created". And Shojaee, another reactionary member of the parliament said: "there is no other way to tackle the unemployment issue in the country, than this

bill. The president (Khatami) and the government also agree with this bill. If the bill is ratified, at least 30 or 40 percent will find jobs and a "cheap" solution requiring no investment for unemployment will be possible..". The emphasis on a "cheap" workers rights in the eyes of the defendants of the "Velayat-e-Faghih" and the dictator regime, more than anything else, reflects the mind set of these leaders of reaction: preserving the interests of big bourgeoisie at the expense of those of the workers. However, in reality, ratifying this bill will lead to about three million workers, when including their families, will comprise a population of 12 million, losing the benefit of any legal protection. As a result, their lives will more than ever before be hostage to the will of big bourgeoisie.

According to this bill, the employers will have the means to hire workers, impose slavery conditions, and fire them at will, without any legal repercussions.

Another point that the workers of our country need pay special attention to is the passive nature and the lack of clarity of the government's stand on this issue. With many members of the cabinet, specially those responsible for social and economical policies, (belonging to the reactionary "Kargozaran-e-Sazandegi" Party) and the defeated head honcho, Hashemi Rafsanjani, there is no hope of the government taking any serious action against this bill. Clearly, the only way to oppose this draconian bill is through a united and organised country-wide struggle of the workers. Recent news is indicative of workers protest movements in cities such as Tehran, Tabriz, Ahvaz, Abadan, Ghazvin, Rasht, on the rise. In this case, a wide spread protest by the workers against this anti-working class bill must be carefully organised; the very interests of the workers and their families are at stake. By employing all forms of protest including sit-ins, demonstrations, strikes and regional and country wide protests, must force the reactionary forces to retreat.

Iranian Workers!

You along with millions of other Iranians have played an important role defeating the

reactionary forces in the elections of the 18th Feb, 2000. It is your undeniable right now to demand from the incoming sixth parliament to immediately nullify this bill; you must demand from these newly elected

members to give this matter the highest priority. You well know the only way forward for the workers is through unified and organised action. Presently, the establishment of the independent trade

unions are among the most important tasks of the workers movement in Iran. The call for the revival of syndicates and independent trade unions has already been put forward by the "Workers of the factories of Tehran" statement. It is the immediate task at hand with the support of all progressive, freedom seeking and patriotic forces in our country. The Tudeh Party of Iran, the party of the workers of our country, in its more than 58 years of struggle, has always struggled side by side the workers for their rights. This time again all members and sympathisers of our party will join the workers in their stand and employ all their ability to defeat this current deception of the reactionary forces.

The workers constitute the main core of the democratic and freedom seeking movement in our country. When their interests are being

attacked by the reactionary forces, it is imperative for the other flanks of the movement, specially the students and women to join in, in solidarity, and give their support. We firmly believe that only the solidarity of those combatant flanks of the movement and their united and planned action can open the way to the future; it is the way to release the country from the shackles of dictatorship and the "Velayat-e-Faghih" regime. The unified and organised movement of Iranian people is capable of eradicating all barriers in its path to achieve this aim.

Onwards To Organise And Revive Independent Trade Unions!

Onwards To A United Front Of Workers, Students, Women And Progressive And Freedom Seeking Intellectuals Of Our Country!

United We Go Forward To Organise The Anti-Dictatorship Front For Freedom, Independence And Social Justice And The Expulsion Of "Velayat-E-Faghih" Regime!

The Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran

March 1st, 2000

# Reports on Workers Strikes

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of January, the workers of the Abadaan refinery in south western Iran went on a strike. This strike was mainly in protest at the proposals for the restructuring of the oil industry. According to this proposal, a large number of blue and white-collar workers employed in the oil, gas and petrochemical industries will be fired under the plans to rationalise the number of workers. The Oil Ministry has announced that according to the timetabled programme, more than 40,000 employees will be 'rationalised' in this process.

In addition, parts of the strategic and important oil, gas and petrochemical industries are to be transferred to the private sector, domestic and foreign included, and the law of nationalising the oil industry which was the achievement of the premiership of Dr. Mosadeq in the early 50s and the nationalisation movement, will be reconsidered. The oil workers of the Khuzestan province have reacted with the same vigilance as they showed in the 40s and 50s when in the struggle led by the Tudeh Party of Iran to nationalise the oil industry, they were vanguards. This time too they have staged strikes to express their opposition to the regime's plans.

The strikes and protests are not limited to the oil workers of Abadan. According to numerous reports, the whole of the oil-rich regions and refineries in Tabriz, north western Iran, Isfahan in central Iran and Kermanshah in the west have also been the scenes of industrial unrest. In January, a large number of workers went on a strike in the petrochemical complex of Bandar Shahpoor in the province of Khuzestan. The Abrar paper, reported on 25<sup>th</sup> January that: 'More than 750,000 workers of Bandar Shahpoor downed tools and assembled outside the entrance to the complex. They demanded a stop to the privatisation of the oil industry and expressed their severe opposition to it. The struggle of the workers in our country is not limited to the workers in the oil industry, although the heroic workers of the oil industry are the vanguards of the struggle. The paper, Economic News, reported on 19<sup>th</sup> January, that more than 500 workers had gone on strike in the Sepanta factory in Ahvaz,

demanding a rise in wages and the option of obtaining home loans. They also protested against the policy of cutting down the workforce.

In January there were other protests by workers, among them the protest of the electricity workers in the Tehran region. The workers' grievance was connected to the corruption and embezzlement. The workers have paid their hard-earned wages to the company to secure land and homes that the housing ministry had promised them. But after several years they have been told that no land belongs to them. The workers' protests ended with the intervention of the security forces, when the workers threatened to go on a strike.

In Tehran the workers of the Metro Company, which has become a byword for corruption, stopped work and staged a sit-in in protest against low and unpaid wages. Tehran Metro is run by Mohsen Hashemi, the son of the former President, Hashemi Rafsanjani. One of the workers' demands was the removal of Mohsen Hashemi from management.

Another important protest in the past few months was by the workers of companies covered by the Industry and Mine Bank. The workers stopped work on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January and assembled in front of the central branch of the bank in Tehran. They protested against unpaid wages and privatisation plans.

All the factions within the Islamic regime in Iran promote privatisation as one of the most fundamental solutions to economic problems. On the opposite side, the blue and white-collar workers see this as a certain way to create insecurity and employment crisis. One example of this conflict is the protest of the employees of the subsidiaries of the Industry and Mines Bank, which was faced, with president Khatami's defence of the privatisation plans.

According to Ghoram-reza Shafei, the Industry Minister: 'Since the beginning of the year (up to December 99), 1,070 billion Rials (\$1=1600Rials approx.) worth of shares in the national industries have been sold to the people

(i.e. to capitalists). In this period around 370 billion Rials shares of the Industry and Mines Bank have been sold, and there are in total, 26million shareholders'.

Another significant development in the arena of workers' rights, has been the recent ratification of the anti-worker law that exempts workplaces employing fewer than 5 workers from the labour law. This law has already prompted angry protest by workers. The daily Hamshahri reported on 28<sup>th</sup> February that several thousand workers gathered in front of the parliament in protest at this reactionary law. The implementation of this law effectively removes 2,800,000 workers from the relative protection of the labour law.

What has also been significant in the strikes and protests reported in the past few months has been the political nature of the demands. While trade union rights are paramount in these protests, political aspects of the demands such as opposition to privatisation indicated

the high level of political awareness among the workers and their resistance to anti-national and anti-worker policies of the Islamic regime. At the same time there are two clear weaknesses in the movement: weak organisation and lack of overall co-ordination and solidarity across the board.

The task ahead is to raise the level of organisation and solidarity within the working class movement and mobilise it with correct and effective slogans and agendas; link it to other sectors of the struggle against dictatorship, namely that of the women, students and youth, broadening the platform of the protests from the factories to the level of the society at large and link the disparate strikes and protests to each other on the national scale. These together with raising the level of working class consciousness through forging closer links with the workers' party, the Tudeh Party of Iran are some of the urgent tasks of the struggle at its present critical stage.

# Assassination Attempt on Khatami's Adviser

*Regime concocts conspiracy theories to conceal true perpetrators*

The assassination attempt on Saeed Hajarian, adviser to president Khatami and proprietor of the daily Sobh-e-Emrooz has provoked a great sense of disgust at the rightwing conservative faction within the regime. The leaders of the regime and the supporters of the rule of the supreme religious leader try to influence public opinion by concocting laughable conspiracy theories, as they did in the aftermath of the serial murders of writers and critics of the regime, Foroohar, Mokhrari, Pooyandeh, Sharif and others. Then they accused agents of 'Zionism', 'the Grey wolves', or 'internal feuds' as the cause of the killings and claimed that these crime had been committed by others in order to damage the reputation of the Islamic Republic and to stoke the differences within the regime. But it soon became apparent that it was the extreme conservative faction that used the services of Saeed Islami, who had served for years under Ali Fallahian in the Information Ministry, and who with the 'religious' sanction of people like Yazdi and Janati had prepared the way to crush the movement, had their plot not been thwarted by the massive resistance of the people and their protests.

Today, we are witnessing the same pattern emerging. Tarraqi, one of the most notorious figures of the right, and the former member of parliament for the north eastern city of Mashad, even claimed that the assassination attempt on Hajarian was carried out by the supporters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Khordad coalition of pro-reform forces. Others tried the scenario of foreign agents.

When the reports that almost certainly, the revolutionary guards had a part in the assassination attempt, emerged, Khamenei, the Leader became nervous that his followers would be further exposed and ordered that the media remain silent on the subject. While defending the Guards, he said: 'If anyone tries to undermine the security, the people, youth and security and armed forces will not remain silent...Some individuals in the country have the aim of spreading rumours and make people suspicious of the officials.' What Khamenei is afraid of is that the social base of the regime will be completely eroded in the society. The other threat to the regime is that people will start to press for the security forces to be disarmed and re-organised.

The daily Sobh-e-Emrooz indirectly made this demand and stated that the only way to uproot the armed violence in the country is to 'de-politicise' the military and security forces. The experience of the last three years, following the victory of the popular movement in the 1997 elections in rejecting the conservative candidate, showed that the ruling reaction continues its rule only through its reliance on force. The regime knows that it has no hope of survival without the paramilitary organisations and the armed forces. The direct and indirect control of all military units, from the revolutionary guards to the mobilisation corps, and the Information Ministry, under direct control of the Leader, Khamenei as the ultimate representative of reaction and despotism, is one of the greatest threats to the popular movement in Iran.