

Tudeh News



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The Difficult Challenge Facing the Student Movement and Freedom-Fighting Forces in Iran

(Abridged from "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 764, 12th May 2007)

In the past few weeks we have been witnessing an increase in the attacks by the reaction and their dark-minded henchmen on social forces and especially in universities, and on the students' and teachers' movements. These developments are not surprising to those familiar with the events in Iran and the policies of the ruling regime. Immediately after the rigged presidential elections and the installation of Ahmadinejad as the candidate of big businesses and the military – security corps, it was clear that reaction would try its best to derail the process of reforms and revert to the pre-1997 conditions before the reformist president Khatami was elected. During the past 2 years we have been witnessing a slow but deliberate move by the regime towards intensifying pressure on

social forces such as the labour movement, and the independent movements of women and the students of the country. The widespread assault of the security forces on the independent labour organizations and unions, the arrest of hundreds of labour activists, and the subsequent widespread attack on women's movement activists and suppressing the voice of the women of our country for freedom – and their demand for an end to medieval laws ruling over our society – and in recent days the widespread attack of security forces and thugs of "student militia" which is an indispensable part of the formal and informal system of oppression in our country, are all signs of tightening the siege by the reaction against the popular movement to finish the job. This campaign has been organized at such a time that the leaders of the regime, hiding behind slogans like "defence of the national interests", and resort to demagoguery and populism regarding issues of concern in the region. How can a regime attack the rights of women, worker and students so brutally, torture women and students and then claim to be defending the country's national interests?

The course of events in recent months reveals a worrying phenomenon- one that all freedom-loving and democratic forces of the country must deal with vigilantly. The regime's rulers are trying, on the one hand, to hide behind phony "anti-imperialist" slogans and claims of "defending national interests", and at the same time taking advantage of the anti-human and warmongering policies of imperialism to

gain respect and credit in the region. On the other hand, it is intensifying domestic pressures and persecutes opposition forces by accusing them of pro-imperialism, thus facing political and social forces with grave dilemmas. The disunity of political forces in our country, the lack of organized cooperation among social forces, and the lack of a realistic and clear plan of action suited to the complex and harsh conditions of the country are allowing the ruling reaction to advance its plot with speed and without effective resistance. In a recent statement about the difficult situation in the country, the "Organization of the Graduates of Islamic Iran" (a students' organization), mentioning the current course of events, pointed out that the current developments "show signs similar to those witnessed when the regime conducted its security campaign against its opponents, leading to the 'chain murders' of political prisoners". The statement then adds that "while the treatment of teachers, workers, women and even young boys and girls in the streets, has so far been conducted under the pretext that they were in breach of the law; and aimed at providing moral guidance for society, unfortunately the most recent developments indicate that the perpetrators are now using National Security as a pretext and are threatening the very existence of the opposition. Thus far, the interpretation of a behavior, action, spoken word or writing would lead to legal and security repercussions, but from now on the mere existence and presence of a dissident is considered intolerable; and false excuses, and fabrication of words and actions will be used to solve the problem of the existence of the opposition."

Mujahedin-e-Enqhelab-e-Islami - a reformist Islamic organization - warned: "probably in the next few months we will be faced with other forms of fabricated crises. These crises will be staged with two goals: first, to distract the people from the questionable actions and events undertaken

in the foreign policy arena and the nuclear portfolio of our country, towards trivial and bogus issues. In any event, issues such as the opening of extensive talks with the United States that until recently was deemed, by the regime, as counter-revolutionary and a sign of fear; and also the events happening in and around the nuclear case, will all raise many complicated and unanswered questions in the minds of the public."

The latest reports reveal the continuing trend of arrests and persecution of the dissenters and freedom-fighters. In a recent report, Advar News reported the arrest of three students of the Polytechnic University in Tehran.

Haddad, the Deputy Chief of Security for Tehran District Attorney - who is one of the notorious faces in this office and has played a pivotal role in the arrest and torture of student activists during the 2003 student unrest - spoke of the continuation of assaults on and arrests of student activists in an interview with Fars News Agency and added that "in addition to the five arrests made, a few others have been identified who will probably be arrested shortly." The reasons cited for the arrests were "disobedience and notoriety that has been seen in these publications towards Islam and religious icons."

It is also noteworthy that on May 2nd, security forces raided a gathering of teachers that was organized in front of the Parliament, arrested a number of them and subjected them to torture. In a letter of protest, the "National Teachers' Organization" wrote to Farshidi, the Minister in Ahmadinejad's cabinet, regarding the heavy handed treatment of the teachers. The letter reads: "what has happened to you to allow an assault on frail teachers with lashes? What is the teachers' crime? Have the teachers asked for anything other than fair treatment and equal and proportionate wages and benefits? Rest

assured that the brutal treatment of teachers, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, and creating a security-conscious atmosphere in the education system, will not be a deterrent and in fact, considering the closeness and unity of teachers, it will make the situation more difficult for you and other authorities.”

While strongly condemning the regime’s brutality and the actions of the security forces against students, teachers, women, and workers of country, the Tudeh Party of Iran believes that the only way to combat the ever-growing assaults by the reactionaries is a united and organized struggle by all freedom-loving forces and social forces of the country. The continuation of the current trend will no doubt cost the freedom-fighting movement of the country dearly. We must redouble our efforts to create a broad united socio-political movement. The way to confront the dangerous plots of the reaction to completely destroy the nascent process of reforms and to wreck the resistance of socio-political forces of the country is nothing but an organized and united mass struggle.

Unity: the Urgent Need of the Workers and Trade Union Movement

(Abridged from "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 764, 12th May 2007)

On the International Workers’ Day this year, despite all the suppression and mounting pressure, the working class and other toilers of our people demonstrated their strength through united and widespread protests. They proved that by unity and solidarity, they are able to resist the continuous assaults of reaction against their historical achievements, interests and rights. On May 1st, the spontaneous protest of the workers that took the shape of a rally in Tehran met with an immediate and brutal

reaction by the police and the security forces that attacked and beat the workers. Protesting against the policies of the anti-labour government of Ahmadinejad, especially the plans of the Ministry of Labour, along with the slogans against the privatization and security of capital investment and temporary contracts, layoffs and the like, were an indication of the class consciousness and strength of workers under the present sensitive circumstances.

In addition, the statement of “Founding Council of Labour Unions” on the occasion of Workers’ Day, which highlighted the main demands of workers in 19 sections, showed the level of consciousness, maturity and growth of the workers union movement under the present unfavorable domestic and international circumstances. The statement stresses on issues such as the revival of workers union rights and establishment of self-governing unions, abolishing article 191 of the Labour Law - exempting work places with fewer than 10 employees from the Labour Law- withdrawal of the bill to reform the labour law, abolishing temporary contracts, putting an end to privatization, increase in wages, protecting the rights of women, child and immigrant workers, supporting the teachers’ and nurses’ demands, and also opposing the war and sanctions against Iran, defending and supporting the peace movement all around the globe and demanding the withdrawal of US military forces and its allies from the region.

Another part of the statement of “Founding Council of Labour Unions” reads: “Our country is going through delicate and difficult times. The Iranian workers, besides participating in the daily trade union struggles, must be fully conscious of the current situation. The forces that used to condemn any workers’ action now have become the overzealous proponents of working class. These forces want to drag the working class movement here or there to

suit their own interests. The most important factor that can neutralize these efforts is class and trade-consciousness and this consciousness has to be expanded while organizing the working class in trade unions...”

Along with the publication of this statement on the eve of May 1st, this year a few other unions such as the Tehran Transit Workers Union and the founders of the Mechanics and Metal Worker’s Unions, the Painters, Tailors and Shoe Makers stated the trade union demands of the workers to the Labour Minister via a letter. In their letter, they highlighted their demands such as the revival of independent trade unions, and their opposition to privatization and the spread of the temporary contracts.

These actions, specially the statement by the “Founding Council of Labour Unions” with regards to the main demands of the Iranian working class are of fundamental and serious importance. Efforts must be spent to bring these actions and efforts closer to each other, and in such a vital and important period unite and organize all the forces of the trade union movement. Dispersion, no matter why, is an impediment to the development and growth of the trade union movement at the present time. This is a key point which should never be neglected. The regime of the Supreme Religious Leader (Velayate-e-Faqih) has followed and is following a specific policy to deal with the trade union movement. This policy takes different directions and shapes in line with the events in the political scene and different internal and external events. This is exactly why we shouldn’t allow the labour-trade union movement to fall into the abyss of disunity and dispersion in dealing with the current very important and rapid developments. Otherwise, the ruling reactionaries, and in general different factions in the ruling circle, will neutralize and control the labour and trade union movement in the direction of their own

interest and their long and short term political goals. We have repeatedly emphasized that the labour and trade union movement is striving under unfavorable conditions. The reaction and imperialism have the intention to strongly influence it in favour of their own goals, and that is why the unity of the working people, with all the present ideological differences, is of vital importance. This importance is to the level that the existence and continuation of the present struggle depends on it. Promoting the class awareness, defending the independence of the trade union movement against such manipulations, in addition to intelligent draw on of the events in the political scene and also struggle against the anti-worker government of Ahmadinejad at the present is only possible with the unity and solidarity and distancing from separation and dispersion. Factionalism, separation and dispersion will only help the policy of having power and control over the trade union movement that is followed by certain wings of the regime, and it also will seriously increase the risk that bodies or factions of the ruling circle would take advantage of the trade union movement or parts of it. The trade union movement is in dire need of unity and solidarity based on the International Declaration of Trade Union Rights with the purpose of organizing the movement correct class foundations. It is only through unity that collective, strong, independent and popular trade union organizations could be established that embrace all the workers. This is the least suffering way to overcome the risks that threaten the trade union movement.

**WORKERS OF THE
WORLD UNITE!**