

Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran on the occasion of May Day (2016)

This year Iranian workers celebrate May Day, their own international and class solidarity day. The celebrations take place almost one year after the Lausanne nuclear deal and a few months past the lifting of economic sanctions in accordance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Contrary to the promises made by president Rouhani's government and its supporters that a compromise with the US and lifting of sanctions would improve the living conditions of workers and the poor, no real improvement has been made in the living conditions of the working class. On the contrary, workers have witnessed even more vicious assaults on their rights and living standards. During the nuclear crisis and the confrontation with the West, the working class carried the heavy burden of the sanctions and after the deal the Islamic regime has continued its attacks on workers' welfare and rights in order to attract greater foreign and domestic investments in the productive sectors.

Setting the minimum wage at four times below the poverty line for 2016, the government has planned to remove support to more than 20 million people. Combined with continued privatization and layoffs, this policy is part of the stringent austerity measures that have caused more poverty and economic hardship for the low-income households and the poorest sections of society. Yet another dimension of these policies of the Islamic regime is the intensified repression, continuous arrest of labor and other social activists and an increasingly tighter grip over society in general. The regime is intimidated by social unrest and is attempting to, by all means, eliminate all potential drivers of real change in the society.

Under the current circumstances, neither the government nor any of the different factions of the Iranian bourgeoisie has an immediate solution to the national disaster of unemployment and public poverty. While one faction beats the drums of a resilient economy, Rouhani's government and parts of the Iranian bourgeoisie are seeking an exit through full normalization of relations with the West and in Iran's integration into the capitalist world system. The goal is to join the World Trade Organization and attract large-scale investments. The outcome of these policies is tightening of the economic belt for the population and intensified austerity measures in the short term that will lead to growing social problems and deepening class division in the future.

The question that activists and leaders in the labor movement must address now and in the run-up to May Day is whether the working class will allow the Iranian capitalist system and the regime to continue this criminal and parasitic dominance at the heavy cost born by the working class.

The Iranian labor organizations and a group of other institutions, labor leaders and activists have issued a joint statement on the minimum wage set for 2016. Ahead of May Day, their statement emphasizes the necessity of joining forces to put an end to the current catastrophic situation. This, combined with their protests and struggle during the recent years, demonstrates the determination of the Iranian working class to transform the situation. These developments within the labor

movement over the last two decades give a clear picture of the current status of the movement and demonstrate that the determination of the activists to produce change has solid ground in the reality.

The expectations of workers have increased over the past two to three decades and these expectations cannot be met by the ruling capitalist system. The intensifying struggle of the working class, the creation of several independent unions and institutions, the existence of a wide range of labor leaders and activists well known within the society, rising political and economic demands that reflect those of the majority of the Iranian people during May Day all show the significant advancement and growth of the Iranian labor movement.

The radical and socialist leaders and activists of the Iranian labor movement must prepare themselves for responding to the needs of this phase in the society's class struggle. Class determination and public dissatisfaction alone will not suffice for advancing the rights and interests of the working class and poorest sections of society.. Having a clear vision and a roadmap to change are vital in order to achieve real results. At the moment, the top priority for these labor activists and labor leaders should be their active involvement in and support to the current labor struggles and to try to consolidate these scattered struggles. Expanding and consolidating the wide range of initiatives and agendas of the labor movement is the right pathway to reinforce the struggle of the working class and this approach requires consistent cooperation and unity among the independent labor organizations, institutions and labor activists.

The organization of workers within political parties in general and within a communist party more specifically has now become a subject of considerable deliberation among a significant number of labor activists. For success, it is necessary that the discussions on this important matter address all the capacities available in the Iranian labor and socialist movement. These discussions should revolve around the fundamental principles of a socialist strategy that concentrates on social revolution and organization of a socialist economy as the primary task of the working class.

Now that we are approaching May Day , the international day of working class solidarity, where the top priorities of labor activists and leaders is to organize gatherings and activities for this day, it is also important to use this opportunity to address issues facing the Iranian labor and socialist movement as well as the top priorities for action.

In the run-up to May Day, vital steps to advance the Iranian labor movement include voicing the demands of the working class, structuring the struggle of workers around their key demands and connecting the struggle at the national level. In the current situation and considering the unified struggle of workers and teachers for higher pay during the past year, cooperation with the teachers' movement countrywide this year will play undeniable role in organizing even more glorious May Day rallies.

On this day, Iranian workers will once again reject the minimum wages set by the Regime's Supreme Labor Council and will demand a wage increase that can afford them a life in dignity. At the same time they will maintain their demands for immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned trade unionists, for adequate unemployment insurance, the dismantling of contractor companies, workplace safety and workers' compensation, prohibition of child labor, the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, organization and the right to strike, release of all political prisoners, the abolishment of death penalty, separation of religion and state and an end to discrimination against women and ensuring gender equality on all spheres of economic, social and political life.

The government and the reformists associated with the government will try to use anti-labor institutions such as "Khane Kargar" (Workers' House), Islamic councils and other trade associations to derail the agenda of the workers' movement. It is important to, both politically and class-wise, boycott all the sham gatherings and activities held by these institutions on this day.

The Communist Party of Iran appreciates all the efforts and activities that are held ahead of international workers' day and congratulates all the workers around the world on the occasion of May Day, the symbol of workers' class and international solidarity.

Long Live Day!

Down with the Islamic Republic of Iran!

Long Live Freedom, Equality and Workers' State!

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran

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