



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.

Word of the Month



There have been large demonstrations in southwest Iran, due to an extreme shortage of fresh water. The local people, mostly Iranian Arabs who depend for their livelihood on their land, have been protesting government policy, peacefully, for years. This year, their stronger protests were met by force, culminating in several fatalities of unarmed protestors. Under the pretext of allocating 'surplus water', the Islamic Republic has been pumping fresh water from this region to central parts of the country for the use of industries owned mostly by the Revolutionary Guard or the private sector.



This policy of neglecting Mother Nature in order to privatize water has, like elsewhere in the world, created a man-made disaster. Today the region faces

an extreme shortage of fresh water for human and livestock consumption, and for agriculture, forcing huge numbers of people off the land. Man privatizes water, an essential natural resource for the greater environment (not just the pockets of capitalists), which has set off a major environmental crisis which cannot be easily reversed.

Respect Mother Nature!

The month of difficulties, the month of strikes, demonstrations and protests in Iran

Undoubtedly, the summer of 2021 like the autumn of 2017 and the winter of 2019, will be recorded as a season full of all types of prominent social movements as part of a popular uprising in Iran. In addition, the summer of 2021 confirms another pattern in the uprisings of the last decade in Iran. The distance between these uprisings is constantly decreasing. Let's take a look at three categories of popular movements in July:

The largest workers' strike



The protests of the contract workers in refineries, petrochemicals and power plants have raised to a nationwide strike since the last week of last month due to the no response to their demands by the owners of contractors hiring firms and managers of the



Ministry of Oil. The strike, dubbed the 'Campaign 1400' (1400 is the current year in the Iranian calendar), first began in several companies affected by the dismissal of 700 contract workers. The strike quickly was supported by contract workers in several companies with the same structure. This is the second strike in the oil and petrochemical industry during the current year since August 2020.

The most important demands of the workers in this strike are wage increase to 12 million Tomans (US\$500) in relation to the inflation rate, determination of wages in other wage levels with the consent of the elected workers' representative, true implementation of job classification, direct employment of contract workers by the oil company, increase of vacations, improvement of workers' health conditions, the safety of the environment and working conditions. The strike comes as contractors hiring firms refuse to implement last year's oil company management directive on job classification, wage increases and adherence to labor laws. In addition, they have begun shortening contracts, wages and benefits in response to workers' protests and have intensified pressure on workers.



The political-executive board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) issued a statement in the first days of the strike:

The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) supports the nationwide strike of contract workers in the oil industry and calls on other

workers and left-wing, democratic and social justice organizations to do whatever they can to support the just strike and the demands of oil workers. Their demands are the wish list of all workers and wage earners of the country. The success of this strike and the failure of the anti-labor attempts of the contracting companies and their supporting and collaborating government are crucial as they both getting prepared for a new attack on the rights of the working people. The strike is part of the trade union rights of workers. We condemn any effort to suppress the strike. We are in favor of observing the workers' trade union rights and we request an appropriate response to the demands of the striking workers of the oil industry.



The strike became the most important and widespread workers' strike in the past 43 years and since the revolution of 1978 with contract and project based workers of dozens of other companies in the Iranian oil industry joining it. The announcement of full-time workers of the oil industry and other sectors to support the strike made it even more visible. The number of striking workers passed 100,000 in the first week of this month.

As the strike continued, government officials who had previously refused to address it as an issue for the Ministry of Oil started confronting the strike. Zanganeh, the oil minister, falsely called the demands of contract workers as unlawful and President



Rouhani sought to separate contract workers from full time workers and delegate the handling of contract workers' demands to the owners of contractor hiring firms and the Ministry of Labor. Meanwhile, the owners of the contractor hiring firms also used all kinds of threats and pressures to break the strike.

The political-executive board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) in its second statement while analyzing the strike, wrote:

The strike of the contract workers is not only the most important labor event after the revolution, but it is the most important socio-political event after the fake presidential elections and the appointment of 'Ibrahim Raisi' as Khamenei's most trusted agent. The strike is the expression of workers' distrust of this appointment and it is against the false promises of the Khamenei's criminal mastermind and the ultra-conservative extremists and supporters in the Chamber of Commerce to improve the living conditions of people.



The fact is that the demands of the 106,000 contract workers that Zanganeh, to deceive public opinion and justify repressive actions of the government, calls them illegal are perfectly legal, precisely because of the trampling of workers' basic rights by employers and with the support of the government and parliament and the repressive apparatus of lawbreaker employers, the vast majority of whom are rich kids of the regime's officials and commanders of the army and relatives of government officials. However, this time the situation is

not such that the government and the employers can completely ignore the demands of the workers.

This big move, although it has a demand and trade union aspect, but due to the heavy weight of this industry in the country's economy and the level of awareness in this part of the Iranian workers, whatever the outcome, it will seal its mark on the political developments in the fight against the Islamic Republic and attaining freedom and justice. Just as the popular uprisings of January 2018 and November 2019 had a profound effect on the relationship between society and the regime, and just as the civil movement boycotted the election and regime became even more isolated, this great strike will have its effect both in terms of boosting the self-confidence of the people and its practical achievements. Victories of the various struggles of the people in various forms against the policies and system of the Islamic Republic open the horizon and the way to freedom and social justice.



The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) once again greets the workers participating in the nationwide oil strike, emphasizes support and solidarity with the militant workers, and wishes the workers victory in their struggle for justice. In our view, by maintaining solidarity, perpetuating and expanding their strike, and gaining the support of more workers' groups and other wage-earning and popular justice groups, workers can



neutralize the repressive plans of the regime and employers and force them to accept their righteous demands.

Blackouts



Iran does not normally face the problem of electricity shortages and is even one of the electricity exporting countries in the region. However, over the past few weeks the country has faced frequent power outages.

Frequent daily blackouts lasting for several hours have caused serious living and working problems. The blackouts not only make it more difficult to treat Corona patients, but also creates disruption in the country's production and services sectors. This critical situation, especially in the hot regions of the country where the temperatures sour to around 50 degrees Celsius, is unbearable and has angered people. Electricity shortages alongside a terrible water crisis situation is pointing to a catastrophe in some southern, southwestern and eastern provinces of the country. The government is apparently trying to moderate the crisis by resorting to rations, but it is even unable to promise to end the blackouts in the near future. According to studies, it is expected that the risk of power outages and water crisis are going to be increased.

The electricity crisis is just one sign of the existence of super-crises in the country. Plunder, inefficiency and deep-rooted corruption and ignorance are implemented in the structure of this government, resulting pressure on the lives and livelihoods of the

people which in turn causes frequent protests. The power outage has now sparked another wave of public outrage, with reports of loud protests especially in Greater Tehran Area, Gilan, Mazandaran, Fars and Khorasan provinces. Slogans against Khamenei, as the main culprit of all the misery in this system, resonate more and more with each blackout.



The political-executive board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) announced in a statement:

The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian), expressing concern about the consequences of the crisis of repeated power outages and putting pressure on the people, insists on the legitimacy of their protests and declares its support for the protestors. Our country produces enough electricity but its people suffer from power outages. The needs of the foreign and domestic policies of the Islamic Republic, which are completely against the national interests, prevent the lights in the houses of the people of this country. This government is unwilling to shut down the costly torture centers with their bright lights shining 24 hours a day albeit temporarily; nor it is willing to temporary shutdown of the religious and idealistic buildings. The government does not reconsider electricity exports and it is unwilling to control and manage unnecessary spending that puts double pressure on electricity sources. In the Islamic Republic, lights are not allowed in people's homes. So people will not be silent!



They will go on strike and in a civil way, they say NO to the Islamic Republic.

Water scarcity

The water stress is another super-crisis in Iranian society that has become more frightening due to both natural causes and ongoing mismanagement of resources. Water crisis was the last straw in igniting the fire of rage everywhere and especially in Khuzestan province. The people of this province took to the streets in dozens of cities, chanting: 'I am thirsty'. For several consecutive nights, they protested against the water shortage and the mismanagement of resources by the government.



But the rightful protest of the people turned bloody and several people, including 26-year-old Mustafa Naimawi from Shadegan and Qasem Khediri a 17-year-old teenager in Kuta Abdullah, Ahvaz, were shot dead by security forces. The oppressors have imposed a severe security atmosphere on the cities of Khuzestan and have cut off the Internet in parts of the province. People take to the streets at night to mislead the oppressors of their identity. Video reports indicate the presence of children among the demonstrators and the injured.

The Khuzestan province has long been plagued by 50-degree Celsius heat and seasonal drought, the continuing Covid-19 epidemic and the rise of its fifth wave, frequent power outages, unemployment, poverty, return of sewage to urban drinking

water, and an unfavorable economic situation. 660 villages do not have water piping and all the villages in the province are water supplied with 78 mobile tankers. Livestock and cattle which are the only source of livelihood for the villagers are on the verge of perishing. The cultivation of the people is facing destruction. The severity of water shortage in some cities of Khuzestan is such that some residents of cities and villages collect and drink water from their air conditioners.



The miserable situation has caused Khuzestan to become the center of labor and social protests in the last decade. Khuzestan was at the top of the provinces in January 2018 in terms of the geographical extent of the protests. Out of 27 cities in Khuzestan, people in 9 cities protested against the regime. Currently, the largest nationwide strike by contract workers, which its center is based in the province, is in its 18th day. The Haft Tappeh Workers have also gone on strike in protest of non-payment of wages and several other unions' demands, and in support of workers in the oil industry. Service and administrative workers in the eight districts of Ahvaz Municipality went on strike on July 13 to protest against a mandate that deprives most municipal workers with less than an associate degree of changing their employment status and gathered in front of the provincial and municipal buildings. Retirees and pensioners in the city of Ahvaz



also gathered on July 11 and demanded an increase in their salaries.

The announcement of the political-executive board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) writes in this regard:

The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) considers the water shortage and frequent power outages crisis in the country, especially in Khuzestan, to be the result of the regime's destructive management and recklessness and it declares support for the just protests of this province against water crisis, poverty and the miserable conditions in their province. According to data, the most important work that the regime has taken in response to the multifaceted critical situation in Khuzestan in recent years is to strengthen the repressive security force in this province, especially in its Arab regions.



The government's violent crackdown on protesters in Khuzestan during the events of January 2018 and November 2019, as well as the recent protests, have shown that the government's intelligence-security forces and the Revolutionary Guards have used bullets against the protesters.

The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) believes that the way to counter this repression is to increase the power of popular resistance and their cohesion. A movement that, for example, during the recent united resistance of the people away from ethnic and linguistic differences, with the symbol of "chains" as a sign of unity, was

demonstrated by the protesters. Emphasizing the need to unite trade unions and social protests, we call on various social groups and political organizations to unanimously express their support and solidarity with the protests of the people of Khuzestan. Uniting the protests of different social groups across the country and expanding solidarity with the protesters will change the balance of power in favor of the society and to the detriment of the regime, which can provide favorable conditions for political and social transformation.

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A word with the military and law enforcement forces

As the protests of the people of Khuzestan continued in dozens of cities in this province and the support of the people of other regions of Iran for them, the Islamic Republic returned to its usual way of dealing with crisis and instead of responding to the most basic needs of the protesters, resorted to repression. Government repressive forces opened fire on the people, killing at least eight teenagers and youths and injuring many more during the past ten days of the protests. Support for these protests, however, has been significant. Almost all opposition political parties, the Council for Organizing Protests of Contract Workers, the workers of 'Haft Tapeh' company, 'Ahvaz



Steel' factory, the 'Association of Iranian Writers', Cinematographers and Cultural Activists, Teachers' Union, etc. have expressed their support for the people of Khuzestan and protested against their repression.



The political-executive board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) in a statement addressed the military and law enforcement forces. The statement reads:

Do not point your guns at your sisters and brothers in defense of the corrupt leaders of this system of discrimination. You are one of these people. You also suffer from poverty and discrimination. Expensiveness has emptied your pockets as well. Unemployment has also affected many of your family members, neighbors, and fellow citizens. Do not follow the orders of the military and law enforcement leaders of this tyrannical regime, who are complicit in the robbery, looting and corruption of the government. The Islamic Republic will be history sooner or later. Do not stand against the people. If you will, there is a way for you to disobey the commands. Disobeying the orders to shoot at the protesters is your human and moral duty...

In these critical days, our party calls on military and law enforcement personnel to refrain from participating in the repression of the people in any way they can. The people's arms are open to any personnel who turn their backs on the regime. We also condemn the detention of the protesting people, as well as the human rights activists who support

them. We call on the political and democratic institutions, and the individuals who do not want to submit to the ruling tyranny, to defend the lives and dignity of those arrested and with intensifying their struggles, not to allow the repression of the people's protests to continue and the fate of the detainees to be decided in silence and in the regime's dreaded dungeons.

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Afghanistan: No to Taliban, YES to national and regional agreements

Our neighboring country, Afghanistan, is at one of its historical junctures. The US government continues to pursue its policy of hasty withdrawal and the Taliban leadership, contrary to its commitments in 'Doha' and 'Astana', has effectively put the continuation of the civil war ahead of negotiations with the Kabul government. During the past few weeks, large territories, mainly in the north and rural areas, have been occupied by the Taliban forces.



The turmoil and ambiguity about the near future is now clearly reflected in Kabul's diplomatic situation. Some embassies have closed down while others have seen staff reductions and readiness to leave the country in an emergency. The US government, which attacked the Taliban-dominated country in 2001, not under the auspices of the United Nations but under its leadership and centrality and even before the issuance of the Security Council



resolution, after nearly 3,000 military casualties of allied forces and spending more than 2 trillion dollars and most importantly, the loss of tens of thousands of Afghan lives over the past 20 years, has now pursued a policy of hurried retrieval. The United States, which at the time showed its irresponsibility in pursuing the Neocon's policy of military power, now it is showing its utmost irresponsibility in bringing the Afghan people under the Taliban rule.

Under these circumstances, the beneficiary countries in the developments in Afghanistan are trying to fill the gap by multiplying their political and even logistical movements and securing their share in the alternative power structure of the current government in advance. Pakistan, Russia, Central Asian countries, the Islamic Republic, China, India and even Turkey have sought to shape the re-Talibanization of Afghanistan in their political, military, and economic interests.

The Islamic Republic, which has so far continued to play a simultaneous and three-pronged relationship with the elected government of Kabul, relations with the Taliban and special support for some non-governmental and anti-Taliban Mujahideen forces, has now taken steps to gain closer ties with the Taliban. The regime's policy towards Afghanistan, which has always been based on anti-Americanism and its defeat in this land and the inevitable withdrawal, and not based on the lasting interests of the people of the two countries, now seeks to exploit the vacuum created by the US withdrawal.

The statement of the Political-Executive Board of the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) reads:

The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) is following the whole situation in Afghanistan with sensitivity and concern and believes that all the progressive forces of our country need to face this great crisis from the position of the

interests of the people of the two countries and peace in the region. Any solution that, in the interests of this or that foreign government, favors the reactionary Taliban with a horrible past and compromises by accepting the wishes of the "Islamic Emirate" is against the interests of the Afghan people. There is no doubt that the Taliban, relying on the extreme backwardness of the tribal communities of the country and with the close support of the Pakistani military and the money and religion of the Saudis and Qataris, is a serious fact in the country without which the Afghan peace process is meaningless. But going under its impositions is nothing more than sacrificing Afghanistan's fledgling human and civic values. This exaggeration that the Taliban are very different from that of the Taliban 25 years ago is not true. Hope must be pinned on Afghan civil society and counted on it.

We see peace in Afghanistan as a regional issue, just as we see the continuing multifaceted crisis and war in this country as a threat to the entire region. Security in Afghanistan, if not in the context of the understanding of the countries of the region and if it does not rely on the survival of minimum democracy and the guarantee of political and social freedoms, does not contain peace but more arson. Our wish for the people of Afghanistan is getting out of the current dilemma and at this critical time we reaffirm our support for the civil resistance and political vigilance of the progressive and democratic forces of Afghanistan.

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