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Internet:

<http://sfelezkar.com>

<http://vahedsyndica.com>

International email:

irunionmessenger@gmail.com

Facebook :

www.facebook.com/Metalworkers

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EDITORIAL

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THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND WORKERS

The Nuclear Agreement has invoked fears and hopes among the [Iran's] workers. Obviously the workers syndicates want fair and civilized relationships with all countries and not based on domination and warmongering. We support all anti-war and peace negotiations in the region. But in the minds of the workers of Iran there are questions which will surface over time as the dust of the propaganda about the agreement settles.

Would this Agreement have tangible effects on the peoples' lives? Would it lead to economic prosperity? Would the blocked monies [due to the US financial sanctions] be returned to the people or would the financial corruption escalate? Would the 3-month unpaid wages in Asaloyeh be paid? Would industry's wheels start to turn and rescue workers from unemployment? Would the rising prices and inflation be eliminated from the workers' lives? Would [Iran's] import-oriented economy change to a sovereign economy with prospering industries? Would the principles stated in the national Constitution for free healthcare, free education and the right to suitable and affordable housing be guaranteed for the people by the state? Or would the rents increase and the banks- by providing massive loans to the [property] investors- encourage the rising price of properties?

For the majority of the people and the working class the promises and the declarations written on paper are not the benchmark by which to measure the benefits arising from the Nuclear Agreement. The benchmark for measuring the Nuclear Agreement's potential benefits would be the eradication of unemployment, elimination of

the rising cost of living, reviving the bankrupted factories and growth of domestic production to match those of the foreign counterparts, and most importantly, to review the import policy and to cutting off the government and private middlemen from the foreign trade.

The Labour Movement after the Agreement

We have been witnessing for sometime the attempts to curb and stop the labour movement. This attempt is aiming to grind and split the working masses and the independent syndicates. In addition to continuing to arrest the noble labour and union activists who are seeking trade union rights for the workers and the working class—there are other plans [against] the interests and the rights of the working class and its future that we must be aware of and analyse them carefully.

During the recent weeks, the Ministry of Labour published details of a plan to alter the structure of the labour organisations. This plan that [Minister] Ali Rabiei is particularly adamant to implement, is promoted as "Adapting the existing formal labour related laws and structures [in Iran] to match the ILO's conventions". In reality, after the coming to office of Rouhani's government whose Minister Ali Rabiei had promised to "rearrange" the labour organisations, the MoL is now, in effect, designing a "new" character and form for the activities of the trade unions and syndicates that would be aligned with the plans aimed at strengthening the cooperation with the global capitalism and relationships with imperialism.

From the point of view of the [government's] policy to attract foreign capital and the presence of the transnational corporations, the Ministry of Labour is intent that the labour movement and the syndicates must be kept in check and their actions must be limited and "managed". The intention is to legalise the temporary and blank

work contracts and deregulate the workplaces and thereby provide the foreign corporate and capital with cheap labour devoid of any legal protection. The recent visit by the heads of Mercedes-Benz and Peugeot automakers of Iran was part of these moves. The chief executive of the Islamic Labour Council had recently stated: "in the current year, following discussions with the deputy of Ministry of Labour regarding the reorganisation of the labour contracts, a plan was drafted that would be implemented." The "House of Workerse" has also aligned itself with this plan. Looking carefully at this plan, one can see which elements of the working people's struggles are being targeted. (a)The right to organise and to revive and establish genuine syndicates and essentially to revive union rights. (b) The attempts to abolish the [existing] temporary labour contracts and to protect job security.

Today, the need for the united action and avoiding any splits within the ranks of the labour movement is an issue that must be highlighted.

Strengthening the united action in the labour movement, joining the trade union struggle with the social struggle aimed at rebuilding and fortifying the position of the labour movement within the political landscape of our country, combining the immediate demands such as wage increase, elimination of temporary contracts, the right to strike, and establishing syndicates, with the struggle against the economic policies such as privatisation, removal of subsidies, unlimited import of goods; these all must be among the working class plans. This is the immediate task ahead of all syndicate and social [activist] that are working for the prosperity of the workers.

Our Unity is the Secret of our Strength and Downfall of Capitalism.

Lets Unite!

Open Letter from the ex-Labour Activists and the Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran (UMMI)

To: Mr. Hassan Rouhani, the honorable President of Iran, and
Mr. Sadegh Larijani, the honorable Head of Judiciary

What is being done to the [Iran's] labour community these days is very unfortunate. In fighting for their rights, labour activists not only for years have been sentenced to jail but also it is a couple of years now that they are being sentenced to lashing as well. Even recently the employers have dared to file grievances against their workers and workers' representatives who have been fighting for the labour rights and demands, and have taken them to court and fired them. According to a report by ILNA on May 13th 2015, "Three workers of Khuzestan Pipe and Tube Manufacturing plant where summoned to court based on a complaint filed by the employer for charges of disrupting the production. This private sector employer entered the factory in the company of a few plain-clothes officers and forced 80 senior workers out of the plant."

On the eve of the May Day, Embrahim Madadi and Davoud Razavi, labour activists from the Union of Tehran Bus Transit Workers (VAHED), and also Mahmoud Salehi and Osman Esmaeili in the province of Kurdistan were arrested for celebrating the International Workers' Day. You know very well that no one can be arrested unless a crime is committed, let alone if someone is just following the Constitution that guarantees rallies and gatherings.

In recent days, Shapour Ehsani-Raad and Jafar Azimzadeh have also been arrested and detained for their labour activities. After the gathering of the educational workers and teachers on the eve of the May Day, Esmaeil Abdi, the president of the Teachers Trade Association of Iran (TTAI) was sent for and threatened and forced to resign. Also in recent days, Mr. Ali Akbar Baghani, vice president of TTAI was taken to prison.

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Article 27 of Iran's Constitution clearly highlights the freedom of gathering provided that no weapons are carried and the gathering does not infringe upon Islam's principles. Who doesn't know that one of the principles of Islam is to serve justice, and that the labour activists have been fighting for justice for more than 150 years.

Mr. Rouhani and Mr. Larijani, according to the law, you will retire after 30 years of work and will enjoy your retirement pensions. This is a benefit that we, the labour activists, achieved for our society through our struggles, and you will also enjoy the fruit of this labour.

We ask you: where in the Constitution says that before an incident occurs, the judiciary agents have the right to arrest and detain the people? Where in the law says that activists who act within the framework of the Constitution would be raided in their homes and their families would be insulted? Is there not an establishment called the Department of Justice in this county and are there not summon letters to be sent to these activists calling them to go to the Justice office? Were these activists "fugitives", whose homes should be raided in the middle of the night (the illegal practice that happened to Ebrahim Madadi and Davoud Razavi)?

We were union activists for years during the anti-labour regime of Pahlavi and never witnessed such practices. We, who fought to change the monarchist regime to a regime which will respect the very freedoms that were restricted during the Pahlavi's, never imagined such behaviour and practices that we are witnessing today against the labour activists. Violating and trampling the Constitution and disrespecting the human dignity are unfortunately on the rise in our country. We have been witnessing clear violations of such Articles of the Constitution as: 3, 9, 19, 20, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 37, 38, 43 and 44.

Mr. Rouhani, per Article 121 of the Constitution you have taken the oath that: "I, as President, ...will devote all my capacities and abilities to the ...support of truth and justice, refraining from every kind of arbitrary behavior; that I will protect the freedom and dignity of all citizens and the rights that the Constitution has accorded the people."

Mr. Larijani, you are obliged by the Article 156 of the Constitution to "...secure public and individual rights

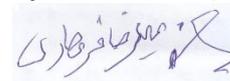
and promote justice and legitimate freedoms; [and] supervise the proper enforcement of law."

Under the Article 33 of the Pahlavi's Labour Law, strikes were legal, although from time to time the state apparatus would violate that right and even sometimes the workers were shot at. Let us remind you that the late Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti who, as the Head of Judiciary, was one of the authors of the Constitution, stressed in an interview with the *Islamic Republic* newspaper after the ratification of the Constitution that: "Strike is the right of the workers and we hope that in the Islamic Republic of Iran such a day will never come that workers would be forced to go on strike for their rights."

The authors of the Constitution duly paid attention to the clarity of these laws so that the people in power after them could not abuse these laws and restrict the freedoms of the people. They duly stressed under the Article 9 of the Constitution that: "No authority has the right to abrogate legitimate freedoms, not even by enacting laws and regulations for that purpose, under the pretext of preserving the independence and territorial integrity of the country."

In respecting the dignity of the labour and human rights activists, we, the undersigned, call upon you to free the trade and labour activists and strive to be adamant in your responsibility to ensure that the above-mentioned laws are properly implemented.

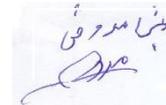
Alireza Farhadi, ex-member of the board of directors, Syndica VAHED (Tehran)



Mohammad Hossein Khaan-Yaghma, ex-member of the board of directors, Union of Mechanics and Metalworkers of Iran (Tehran)



Nabi Maroofi, ex-member of the board of directors, The Union of Masonry Workers (Tehran)



Javad Mehran-Goehar, ex-member of the board of directors of The Union of Shoemakers (Tehran)

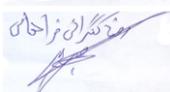
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Reza Kangarani Farahani, ex-member of the board of directors of The Union of Tailors (Tehran)



The Union of Mechanics and Metalworkers of Iran (UMMI)



May 29th, 2015

Statement by Trade Unions, Journalists and Writers:

FREE THE IMPRISONED TRADE UNION ACTIVISTS, JOURNALIST AND WRITERS

Ebrahim Madadi, the President of the Board of the [Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company](#)—Vahed Bus Workers Syndicate- (SWTSCB), Davoud Razavi a leading member of SWTSCB, along with Mahmoud Salehi and Osman Esmali the Kurdish trade unionists have been arrested for attempting to organise a May Day celebration. According to the article 27 of our country's constitution, international conventions and the International Charter of Trade Union Rights, this right [organising May Day celebration] has been recognised.

A numbers of us the workers activists, journalists and writers express our total support for our dear comrades [imprisoned] and demand their speedy and unconditional freedom. We emphasise that all Iranian people have the rights to assemble and protest have and that the arrest of the workers is trampling upon on the 'civic and human' rights and it is against the article 27 of the constitution.

1. The Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran
2. Union of Project Workforce
3. The Editorial Boards of the Message of Syndicate (Internal Magazine of Iranian trade unions)
4. Alireza Farhadi (the former member of the Executive Committee for the association of the

pensioners and the former executive member of SWTSCB (Vahed Bus Workers Syndicate, 1983)

5. Nabi Maroufi (former member of the Syndicate of Building and Construction Workers, 1983)
6. Javad Mehran Gohar (former member of the Syndicate of Shoemakers, 1983)
7. Reza Kangarani Farahani (former member of the Syndicate of Tailors, 1983)
8. Ali Nejati (member of executive committee of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers' Syndicate)
9. Amir Ahmadi (member of executive committee of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers' Syndicate)
10. Abdullah Vatankhah (representative of workers from Vacuum Parse and member of United Workers Association)

& the signatures of 140 other Iranian trade unionists, writers and journalists

UMMI New Site Launched

We are glad to inform workers, trade unions and friends of the labour movement in Iran and around the world that the bi-lingual (Farsi and English) web site of UMMI has been launched. As before, when our Facebook page and weblog was made available to those trade unions that did not have their own site or weblog, the new site is also available to all labour unions. We will translate and publish the materials and statements of labour unions in English in the new web site for fraternal unions outside of Iran to access. This new website is the fruit of labour of the workers whose heart beats for the unity in the labour movement and belongs to all Iranian labour unions.

UMMI New website:

<http://sfelezkar.com>

UMMI weblog:

<http://felezkar.com>

UMMI Facebook:

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