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<http://vahedsyndica.com/>

International email:

irunionmessenger@gmail.com

Facebook :

www.facebook.com/Metalworkers

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MINIMUM WAGE MUST PROVIDE FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR

By: Ebrahim Madadi

In principle, determining the minimum wage in the statutes of ILO is based on providing for the necessities of a family in the member countries. According to the existing norms, the basis to determine the minimum wage is the minimum cost of living. Nonetheless, focusing on minimum for the working families is not fair; why always the "minimum" is considered for them? Anyways, if we base this issue on this principle, what is stated in the Labour Law is that the minimum wage of workers in our country must be enough to provide for a family of four. However, based on the statistics released by the Central Bank and other statistical and economic institutions in Iran, the figures announced by the Ministry of Labour in the past 35 years have never matched the reality, and every year the gap between the minimum wage announced by the Ministry of Labour and the minimum wage in reality has been increasing. Therefore, it is seen that the class gap has been increasing. The workers demand is that the minimum wage must be determined based on the ILO directives and the provisions of Iran's laws, such that it provides for a family of four. Recently the policies of population growth and "more children" have been on the agenda of the state, and the limitations that the Social Security Organization [worker's insurance organization] had and was covering the insurance services only two people in the family are being removed. Consequently, the number of family members has been increased. Under such circumstances, if they want to grow the population, they must increase the minimum wage from what it has been. In the meetings of the High Council of Labour, where the worker representatives of the Islamic Councils [of Workers] take part every year, the wages and rights of workers are undermined and normally the Council submits to the wishes of the Minister of Labour and the employers. As such, the inalienable rights of the workers for decent wages and bonuses are ignored and violated. Iranian workers are very critical of this situation, because they don't allow

the formation of real labour organizations, there are only state-fabricated labour organizations, and this happens to workers every year. Of course there are labour protest gatherings too. It would be better that the officials and the main decision-makers respect and care more about the rights of workers. The notion that they want to calculate next year's minimum wage in proportion to the inflation rate is misleading. The law states that the minimum wage must [first] be sufficient to provide for the living cost of a family of four and [then] must be adjusted in line with the real inflation rate.

October 21st, 2014

Source: <http://vahedsyndica.com/archive/552>

A LETTER FROM NASSER AGHAJARI TO THE MINISTER OF OIL

The Honorable Minister of Oil,

Doesn't the workforce that builds every detail of refineries and installs them and leads the refineries to commission and productivity have any rights?

We are referring to the memorandum of Mr. Zanganeh [Minister of Oil] to his four deputies about the wages in the beginning of the this [Iranian] year at a rate of minimum of about \$250/month and a maximum of \$1000 for the first half of the [Iranian] year, in which the honorable Minister stated: "Due to the obligation of supporting the skilled workers of the great industry of oil and gas, and considering the powerful presence of our respected colleagues in the areas of production and export and supplying the domestic needs, please take necessary actions to arrange for the payment of monthly wages and bonuses... based on the above directive in the subject of this memo."

This action of the Minister is an indication of the financial support for the workforce in the Iranian oil industry. However, this support and appreciation only encompasses a small minority of the workforce working in the oil and gas production operations, i.e. those who work in refineries and petrochemical plants. It does not include the project workers who are currently working with full steam in phases 12, 15, 16,

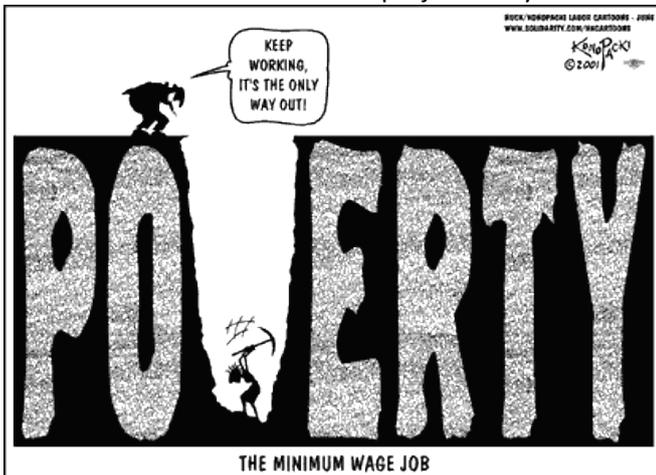
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17 and 18 of South Pars project, thanks to the government's priority in this project. The project workers build refineries, not just produce a few barrels of oil. Those workers and other colleagues who have been blessed with financial support of the Ministry of Oil have had no role in building and installing and commissioning the refineries, although they all deserve much more than what you are offering them. You have ignored the technical-industrial project workforce that "makes" all refineries and petrochemical plants and gas refineries, and is currently building and commissioning phases 15-16 and 17-18 and 12 of South Pars project. Why?



You ignore the builders of the Iran's oil industry who are all Iranian and skilled and have built every detail and component of the oil and gas industry with their creative minds and hands. What is your explanation for this exclusion? Are you aware that the Tier 2 and 3 and 4 contractors whom the government considers "job creators" don't pay the wages of these skilled project workers on time (monthly)? And if they insure the workers, they don't insure them corresponding to their actual income, but insure them at minimum wage. Do you know that project workers do not collect unemployment benefits, even though we know that it is only in project jobs that the likelihood of unemployment is inevitably high?

Do you know that project workers work 12 hours a day, 23 days a month, i.e. 276 hours per month? Do you know that this is in violation of the labour law? Do you know that the living condition in the workers' residences is worse than living conditions in stables? No sanitation, no leisure time. Do you know that the

free trade industrial zones are exempted from the application of the labour law? In fact, they are exempted from Iran's Constitution. Therefore, the project workers are not protected by any law, and this means barbarism.

Although it is naïve to have any hope in improvements in the living and working conditions of workers today because of the implementation of "structural adjustment" and privatization policies, but we hope that our problems are looked into by the honorable Minister and the government administration.

Yours,
Nasser Aghajari

The Union of Project Workforce of Iran (UPWI)

South Pars site
October 25th, 2014

METALWORKER REPORTS FROM TABRIZ TRACTOR MANUFACTURING FACTORY

On Saturday October 25th, 200 workers of "Industrial Machine Tool Division of Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Factory" gathered in front of the plant entrance in protest against the delays in paying wages for 2 months and the unclear future of this division. They then exited the plant and gathered in the street. These workers who have not been paid for the last two months, and are ignored by the plant authorities, are seeking help from the provincial offices. The industrial complex of Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Factory is located in a 400-hectare land, 50 hectares of which is indoor area. This factory was built and started working on September 27th, 1967. The first production line was Romanian tractors, and then the production of the British Massey Ferguson tractors started in 1976. Tabriz Tractor plant includes the production line of tractors, engine, forging, casting, industrial machinery (loader...) and agriculture machinery and small trucks. It is unrivaled in the Middle East.

Labour strikes during the revolution (of 1979) were well known to the people of Azerbaijan (north east of Iran), and every movement in the Tabriz Tractor Factory will be soon talked about in the city. The struggles of the workers of this factory have been a

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decisive factor in shaping the political and social atmosphere of Tabriz and Azerbaijan. After the revolution, when Mr. Fazili came in as the CEO of the company, there were talks about moving the equipment and facilities to the Southern city of Isfahan. When the workers found out about this decision, they went on a 10-day strike, which made the management call off their plan to move... Later, Forging plant, Motor manufacturing and Casting were dissociated from the main company in 1987. In 1994 the Tool Shop was separated too. The busing service is



still common between all the segments of the complex. As a result of fragmentation of the original factory and the physical separation of the workers, and then firing conscious workers who were instrumental in organizing the brilliant strikes of 1978 (leading to victory of revolution), the workers of Tabriz Tractor were left without conscious unionist and labour activists. This factory, with 11,000 workers and unrivaled products in the region and exports to countries like Turkey, Syria, Tajikistan, Libya, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Venezuela and Argentine is the pride of the people of Azerbaijan. In 2003 the assembly line No. 2 of this company was built in the province of Kurdistan (Sanandaj Tractor) with an annual capacity of 3500 tractors. Also, in the same year Uremia Tractor Factory was commissioned to produce orchard tractors. In 2005 the Industrial Machinery section of the company was purchased by an investment company called Mehr Eghtesaad (Economy) Iranian. The owner of this company is the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps.

Destroying such unrivaled industrial complexes such as Haft Tappeh Sugarcane, Tabriz Tractor and Isfahan

Steel Mill is on the agenda of the parasite mercantile capitalism of Iran.

The public relations office of the UMMI

November 1st, 2014

METALWORKER REPORTS FROM IRAN KHODROW (AUTOMOTIVE)

Following the broken promise of Mr. Hashem Yekkeh Zare, the CEO of Iran Khodrow, who had promised to compensate workers for the low wages of this year, the workers of the main assembly line took a strike action on October 6th and stopped going to the canteen. On the second day, Hashem Yekkeh Zare who is called "Cheap Hashem" by the workers, came to the assembly hall and said that the \$200 monthly pay is approved by the government and he cannot do anything about it. One of the workers stood up and pointed out the heavy and tough work in the line and said that when employment agencies brought 150 workers to work here, they did not last more than 10 days and they all ran away. You see that our work is not proportional to our pay. Then Mr. Yekkeh Zare promised that he would consider giving out bonuses to all workers to compensate for their low wages.

This is at a time when Iran Khodrow is working at full capacity and everyone knows about its astronomical profits and bonuses of the high ranking managers, but they hesitate to raise the workers' pay.

The public relations office of the UMMI

October 24th, 2014



CONTACT BETWEEN THE UMMI AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF FIOM

Friday morning October 17th, at 10:30 am, a meeting was held with Stefan Marooka, the head of the international department of the Union of Metalworkers of Italy (FIOM), at his office and a comradeship letter from the Union of Metalworkers

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and Mechanics of Iran (UMMI) was delivered to him. During this meeting the working condition of the UMMI and other Iranian unions was explained to our fellow worker comrade Stefan Marooka. The head of the international department of FIOM welcomed mutual cooperation of the two trade unions.

Public Relations of UMMI

The Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran

October 18th, 2014

Excerpts from the Statement of the UPWI

DEREGULATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE OIL AND MAJOR INDUSTRIES IN IRAN

In a hard hitting statement released on 2nd October 2014, the trade union representing contract and project workers of Iran stated that the government is in fact violating the constitution. The statement says: "All skilled, industrial and trained workers in Iran are facing a serious challenge as a result of the government's attempt to deregulate the manufacturing projects in the oil, petrochemical and major industries in the country. This has come about because the government, the institution that should represent the interests of all Iranian people and be the guardian of, and uphold, the constitution, is violating the constitution by only supporting the interests of middlemen, lobbyists and finance capital. The government has declared all major industrial parts of the country as the "Free Trade and Industrial Zones" and as such exempt from following the provisions of the Labour Law. Despite its shortcomings, the Labour Law reflects the constitution of the country!"

According to this statement, the government has distributed the book containing the regulatory provisions covering labour relations, Contract of employment and Social Security provisions for the Free Trade and Industrial Zones to government agencies and employers for implementation without any announcement and publicity. The statement lists a number of provisions that in effect nullifies the labour law and makes a mockery of the labour

relations. According to provision 27, "Based on the special regulations permissible in these areas, the employers of these special free zones are not obliged to insure their employees.". According to Provision 37, "the employer can sack a worker from his post without offering any acceptable reason". The statement warns against the consequences of the current government's policies and states: "Is it possible to regulate social relations without any legislation?"

Following a comprehensive survey of how social relations in Iran have been legislated in the past 100 years the statement warns against the consequences of the government policies. "The result of institutionalising neoliberal economic policies is increasing unemployment, inflation and recession that would push the country to the verge of disintegration. All youth, male and female, are unemployed, don't have any income and are unable to form an independent family."..... "The result of following structural adjustment and privatisation of the last 25 years was the negative growth of the previous government that was supported by the fundamentalists." This is the consequence of the structural economic policies that has plunged Iran for 25 years in the quagmire of recession and inflation. Your attempt to remove coverage of law from our industries is also a by-product of these regressive economic policies and relations."

The Union of Project Workforce of Iran (UPWI)

October 2nd, 2014

TRADE UNION IS OUR RIGHT!



Other contact emails:

s_felezkar@yahoo.com

sfelezkar1961@gmail.com

vsyndica@gmail.com