

Workers in Iran

News & views from the labour movement in Iran



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Call for solidarity with Parris factory workers

Workers from a number of work places in Iran have expressed strong support for a strike at Parris factory in the city of Sanandaj against the employers' enslaving conditions for the renewal of their contracts and in protest at the firing of one of their representatives. The following is the letter, signed among others, by Tehran bus workers' union (Syndicate of Tehran and Suburbs United Bus Company):

We support Parris factory workers' strike!

Parris factory workers in Sanandaj have been on strike since the morning of August 19. This strike started in protest against conditions to renew work contracts. As part of the conditions to renew their contracts, the employers have categorized workers in three groups. Some have been given one-year contracts, some for three-months and some for one-month. This categorization is based on how submissive and accommodating that they have been to the conditions at the workplace. Accordingly, one of the workers called

Behzad Sohrabi, who is among those who have protested at the conditions, will be expelled at the end of his existing contract in a few days' time. Also, the rest of the workers will have their contracts renewed only on the condition that they leave a deposit of 2 million Tomans [equiv. of around 14 times the minimum monthly wage of workers in Iran] as security that they will not take part in protests.

These conditions and making workers put up a security deposit in order to work is organization of total slavery by the employers. Protesting against unbearable working conditions is workers' fundamental right. And no employer has the right, by threatening to sack them or by asking for a security deposit, to shut them up.

Workers and colleagues!

If this kind of enslaving contracts were not stopped once and for all, they would become a norm for all workers all over Iran, just like the "temporary contracts policy".

Before it is too late, we have to, in a

united way, support Parris factory workers' strike against the conditions of slavery for renewal of their contracts.

If the employers at Parris factory are able to impose their conditions, other employers will also, no doubt, everywhere impose the same conditions on us.

We, the undersigned, while supporting Parris workers' strike, also call for the immediate withdrawal of the above conditions for renewal of contracts for the workers of this factory, and protest at Behzad Sohrabi's firing. We call on all workers throughout Iran to join together in support of Parris factory workers' strike for their rightful demands!

- The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs United Bus company
- Kurdistan Textile workers
- Iran Khodro fired workers
- Workers of Shahoo factory
- Workers of Alumin factory
- The Electrical & Metal Workers' Trade Association in Kermanshah
- First of May Committee in Sanandaj
- Labour activists at Shora website

21 Aug 2006

A group of workers from Kermanshah petrochemicals' industry as well as the Follow-Up Committee for Setting Up Free Labour Organisations have also since joined as signatories.



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Editor:

Mehran Mahbobi

workersiniranca@yahoo.ca

Co-ordinator:

Shahla Daneshfar

shahla_daneshfar@yahoo.com

Public Relations:

Bahram Soroush

b.soroush@ukonline.co.uk

Publicity:

Hassan Salehi

hasan_salehi2001@yahoo.com

6- The Islamic Republic must be expelled from the international community

The Islamic regime in Iran must be kicked out of the international community, just like the racist South African regime, for 27 years of crimes against humanity, for the brutal suppression of the rightful struggles of the people, for the execution of over one hundred thousand political prisoners, for establishing a sexual apartheid in Iran and for promoting Islamic terrorism in the Middle East and throughout the world. We call for the non-recognition of the Islamic Republic as the representative of the Iranian people, for the ending of diplomatic ties with it and the closure of its embassies everywhere. We call for the expulsion of the regime from international institutions.

We invite all humanitarian, secular, anti-war and freedom-loving organisations, forces, parties and individuals in the world to sign this Manifesto and join the Third Camp to confront both poles of terrorism.

Initial list of signatories:

Mina Ahadi, Coordinator, International Committee against Stoning, Germany (including organisation).

Homa Arjomand, International Campaign against the Sharia Court in Canada and Director of Children First Now, Canada (including organisation).

Ophelia Benson, editor of Butterflies and Wheels, deputy editor of The Philosophers' Magazine, and co-author of 'Why Truth Matters', USA.

Nazanin Boroumand, Coordinator, Never Forget Hatun Campaign, Germany (including organisation).

Denis Cobell, President of the National Secular Society, Chair of Right to Refuse to Kill, and former Asst. Editor of Hyde Park Socialist, UK.

Jalil Shahbaz, representative of the Defence of Secularism and Civil Rights in Iraq, Germany (including organisation).

Deeyah, singer and composer, USA.

Caroline Fourest, writer, editor in chief of Prochoix, and author of several books, France.

Mersedeh Ghaedi, political prisoner in Iran for 8 years, Norway.

Tommy Gorman, writer, Ireland.

Hakeem Hasan, Secretary of the Health Care Workers' Council in Na-

siriyah, Iraq (including organisation).

Reinhard Hascha, Historian, Germany.
Farshad Hussein, Deputy Director, International Federation of Iranian Refugees, the Netherlands (including organisation).

Khayal Ibrahim, Head of Women's Liberation of Iraq, Germany (including organisation).

Parvin Kaboli, Spokesperson of the International Campaign for Defence of Women's Rights in Iran, Sweden (including organisation).

Hartmut Krauss, editor of 'Hintergrund', Germany.

Terry Liddle, Chair of Lewisham Humanist Group, UK.

Azar Majedi, Chair of the Organisation of Women's Liberation, UK (including organisation).

Manochehr Masouri, webmaster of the International Committee against Executions, Sweden (including organisation).

Sean MacAugey, journalist, Ireland.

Reza Moradi, activist of the Young Communists' Organisation (including organisation), UK.

Anthony McIntyre, writer, former Republican prisoner and H-Blocks blanket protester in Maze prison in the 70s and 80s, Ireland.

Kevin McQuillan, former chairperson of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Ireland.

Maryam Namazie, Writer, Director of the Worker-communist Party of Iran's International Relations, and 2005 winner of the National Secular Society's Secularist of the Year award, UK.

Richard O'Rawe, author of Blanketmen, Ireland.

Liam O Ruairc, Communications Worker, Ireland.

Fariborz Pooya, Director Iranian Secular Society, UK (including organisation).

Mohammad Reza Pooya, editor of Secular, the Netherlands (including publication).

Terry Sanderson, veteran of secular and gay activism, author of nine books with a journalistic career spanning 30 years and vice president of The National Secular Society, UK.

Michael Schmidt-Salomon, Giordano Bruno Foundation, Germany.

Antoine Sfeir, director of Les cahiers de l'Orient, and author of several books such as Les réseaux d'Allah (2001) et Liberté, égalité, Islam: la République face au communautarisme (2005), France.

Issam Shukri, Secretary of the Central

Committee of the Left Worker-communist Party of Iraq, Iraq (including organisation).

Bahram Soroush, Public Relations of the International Labour Solidarity Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, UK (including organisation).

Hamid Taqvaei, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, (including organisation).

To add your signature to the Manifesto, email thirdcampmanifesto@ukonline.co.uk. Moreover, please feel free to publish it.

For more information, the press can contact any of the signatories or Maryam Namazie at thirdcampmanifesto@ukonline.co.uk, telephone: +44 (0) 7719166731.

www.thirdcamp.com

International Labour Solidarity Committee
of the Worker-communist Party of Iran
National contacts:

Belgium:

Hossein Pishheban
workersiniran_belgique@yahoo.fr

Finland:

Abdol Golparian
workers_iniran@yahoo.com

Norway:

Saber Rahimi
workeriniran@yahoo.no

0047-986-94001

Germany:

Reza Nouri
workeriniran_de@yahoo.de

England:

Shiva Mahbobi
workersiniranuk@yahoo.com

Sweden:

Mamad Amiri
workersiniran_se@yahoo.se

Hassan Salehi
hasan_salehi2001@yahoo.com

Australia:

Arsalan Nazeri
workers_in_iran@yahoo.com.au

Canada:

Mehran Mahbobi
workersiniranca@yahoo.ca

Visit these websites:

www.wpiran.org
www.kargaran.org
www.m-hekmat.com
www.wpi briefing.com
www.socialismnow.org

Manifesto of the Third Camp against US Militarism and Islamic Terrorism

The present conflict between the Western governments and the Islamic Republic of Iran can have disastrous human, political and social consequences. The terrible experience of Iraq has shown to all the catastrophes that can result from economic sanctions and a military attack. Deterioration of living conditions, economic plight, death, destruction and displacement of people, and increased repression by the Islamic regime, would be some of the immediate consequences of economic sanctions or a military attack on Iran. This policy would unleash Islamic terrorism on a regional scale and escalate it internationally.

We must stand up with all our power to the US government's and its allies' bullying. We must put an end to the crimes of the opposite pole, i.e. Islamic terrorism. We must help the people of Islam-stricken countries to get rid of the menace of Islamic terrorist states and forces. American militarism and Islamic terrorism have brutalised the world. Neither of them has a solution to the present crisis and its resulting problems. Rather, they are themselves the cause of this crisis and its aggravation. Civilised humanity must rise up against both these poles and the suffering that they have imposed on the world. The human and genuine solu-



tion to the problem of nuclear weapons, to Islamic terrorism and its horrific crimes against the people of the world, and to the militaristic bullying of the US and Western governments lies in the hands of us people.

Amid all this, the struggle of the people of Iran for freedom holds a prominent and critical place. For years there has been a mass social movement in Iran against the Islamic regime and for liberty and equality. The triumph of this movement over the Islamic Republic of Iran would be a decisive blow to political Islam and Islamic terrorism throughout the world. It would also be a powerful response to the US government's political-military interventionism aimed at regime change, in the name of "exporting democracy", and imposition of reactionary puppet regimes on other societies. The victory of the Iranian people would be a giant step forward and a turning point in the struggle against militarist and Islamic terrorism and in defence of liberty, civilisation and universal rights for all throughout the world.

We, the undersigned, declare:

1- No to war, No to economic sanctions

Economic sanctions and a military strike on Iran will have catastrophic human, political and social consequences. What happened in Iraq should not be repeated in Iran. These threats must stop immediately.

2- No to US militarism, No to political Islam

In the conflict between the state terrorism of the West and Islamic terrorism, the civilised world is not represented. Both sides of this conflict are reactionary and inhuman. They must be driven back.

3- Nuclear disarmament of all states

Neither Iran, nor the USA, nor any

other state should have nuclear weapons. The Iranian regime's nuclear project must stop immediately. However, states which have the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons themselves are not competent authorities to judge on the nuclear capability of other states. Halting the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear project is the task of the freedom-loving people of the world, in particular the people of Iran - just as the nuclear disarmament of all states and liberation from the global nuclear nightmare can only be achieved by the struggle of the people of the world.

4- Attacks on civil liberties in the West in the name of 'war on terror' must stop

The governments in the West are violating or restricting civil rights and liberties in the name of fighting the terrorist threat and safeguarding security. Increased surveillance and control of citizens, curtailing freedom of expression and movement and denying the rights of immigrants are some of the commonest forms that this attack on people's rights is taking. This must be stopped. No excuse for an attack on civil rights and liberties is acceptable.

5- We actively support the struggle of the people of Iran against a military attack and against the Islamic Republic of Iran

For 27 years the people of Iran have been fighting against repression, violation of women's rights, sexual apartheid, stoning, torture, execution of political prisoners and poverty and economic deprivation. The people of Iran want to and can determine their own political destiny. Support for the struggle of the Iranian people for freedom, the victory of this struggle against the Islamic Republic and the establishment of people's own direct rule will be a crucial step in standing up to the US government's bullying and a decisive blow to Islamic terrorism in the Middle East and the world.

To: Trade unions and labour organisations of the world:

Condemn the Islamic Republic of Iran for attacking Parris workers! Support the Struggle of Parris workers!

Dear friends,

On August 19th workers of Parris Factory of Sanandaj started their protests in opposition to the new measures that was introduced by company management against their job security and which would impose enslaving and extremely difficult working and employment conditions upon them. Workers protested the shortening of contract periods and the new condition for being employed that requires two million Toumans (approximately 2500 US \$) security deposit and two cosigners.

Employer of the company with the support of the government and security forces and in order to defeat workers' resistance categorizes them according to their firmness in their struggle. As a consequence of that one year long contracts of some of the workers have been changed into three month contracts, some others' contracts into one month and one year contract of workers' representative Mr. Behzad Sohrabi has been cancelled and he has been laid off.

Workers of Parris factory together with their families and with the support of other citizens gathered in front

of the factory, set tents and spend a number of full days there and insisted to gain back their rights. On the morning of Saturday, August 26th management of the company in full cooperation with government sent hundreds of police forces to the place where the protests were held. Security forces attacked the peaceful picket line of workers with use of sticks and tear gas. A number of workers and members of their families were injured and tens of them were arrested and were put in custody.

On the way to prison workers could get off the buses and escape custody. Two persons named Akou Kordnasap (reporter) and Ebrahim Vakili (a worker at Shinbaf Textile Company) were also arrested who later were released on 5 million Touman bails. Today, Monday, August 28th, once again workers gathered for protest in front of Sanandaj Employment Directorship. The employer declared that four other workers naming Mahvash Vakili, Tayyeb Chatani, Saman Nazakati, and Habib Khodarahmi were laid off. Moreover, the employer stated that none of the workers demands would be met. The protests

and strike of these workers still continue.

Dear worker friends,

The Islamic Republic has imposed enslaving working conditions on workers on the one hand, and oppresses and attacks any protests for improvement of working conditions with atrocity on the other hand. Temporary work contracts, lack of job security together with prohibition of organization and unionization have caused intolerable working conditions for workers in Iran.

Support the struggle of Parris workers! Condemn the Islamic Republic for the attacks against them! Demand freeing of arrested workers and support their struggle against enslaving working conditions!

With solidarity,

Khalil Keyvan

Secretary of the Worker-communist Party of Iran — Organisation Abroad

August 28th, 2006

Mansoor Ossanlou released

Mansoor Ossanlou, the jailed president of Tehran's bus workers' union (the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs United Bus Company), was released at 3.30 pm local time today, 9th August, after spending over seven and a half months in prison. He was warmly greeted by his family and colleagues.

Ossanlou's release comes following seven months of struggle without let up by Tehran's bus

workers and the massive international solidarity that took shape for his release over this period. He was jailed for organising the bus workers and defending their rights. His release is a clear victory for the workers and people in Iran.

In a statement released today, WPI congratulated Mansoor Ossanlou, his family, the bus workers and all trade unions, organisations and individuals who fought

in the great campaign for his release. "Ossanlou was freed from prison by the bus workers and all those fantastic people in Iran and outside Iran who fought hard and put pressure on the Islamic Republic", the statement said. It called for the unconditional release of all political prisoners in Iran, the recognition of the bus workers' union and an end to the persecution of labour activists.