

Against the Current

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The Great Lesson of The February Uprising and Revolution

- Once again, 25 years since the overthrow of Shah's regime and establishment of the Islamic republic regime, the Iranian society is pregnant for a new revolution. The existing political crisis, that reflects the society's need for radical and revolutionary developments, is constantly getting deeper. Struggles of the toiling masses of people against the existing system are gaining greater scope and dimensions. Efforts of the ruling group to check the crisis have been unsuccessful. Bankruptcy and lack of credibility of all policies and tactics of the two wings of the ruling group are exposed to all.

The situation is reflected within the ruling power, manifesting in intensification of contradictions between the two wings of the ruling group and a deep crisis among the rulers. The regime's situation has got to such an acute stage, that even the wing within the ruling group (that at a time was making efforts to save the regime from danger of collapse and overthrow by means of meagre amendments to the existing political superstructure) has no longer any hope in regime's survival. A group of them who have sensed the danger of impending revolution, from now have joined the ranks of regime's bourgeois opposition.

All existing political realities indicate that no longer there remains any way to rescue the oppressive Islamic republic and its overthrow has become an inevitable imperative. Then, on the anniversary of February Uprising and overthrow of the Shah's regime, once again it is essential to reiterate the great lesson learnt from the 1979 Revolution. That the overthrow of a political regime alone is not enough to realise the demands of masses of people and address the needs of social development. That finally the political power rests with which class determines the destiny of a revolution. All know the fact that shah's regime was overthrown by a mass revolution and armed uprising. But since the Iranian working class could not seize the political power, the capitalist class together with the clergy, by maintaining the political power imposed another reactionary regime on Iran. As a result the Iranian workers and toiling people's revolution faced defeat.

Now too the danger remains. As the regime's overthrow gets closer in time and masses of people resort to revolution, the capitalists and all reactionaries are rushing around to prevent the seizure of political power by the Iranian working class and toiling masses at any cost and prevent the future revolution achieving its victorious end. Considering the experiences the mass of people gained from the defeat of revolution in the past, they have resorted to more sophisticated and subtler methods to advance their counter-revolutionary and reactionary policies. They are organised in royalist and republican groups, pose as defenders of freedom and democracy and like Khomeini, to deceive people give false promises. Their deception must have become clear to all by the fact that until recently, before the "reformists" were discredited; directly and indirectly supporting a wing of the Islamic state, they were making promises to reform the regime from within and transform it from an anti-democratic regime to a democratic one. Should the Islamic republic survive there would be no possibility to improve the situation, and the objective of the so-called reformist groups has been nothing other than saving the regime from collapse and overthrow. Hence they have resorted to other tactics and slogans to prevent people from making revolutionary advances. It is some time since they raised the slogan of referendum. They are asking the reactionary and oppressive ruling regime to heed the mass of people's demands through a

referendum. Of course, that tactic too has faced defeat right from now. The masses of Iranian people know the reactionary Islamic republic regime very well. They know it would not abdicate peacefully and try hard to defend its existence, through oppression and repression, until the last moment of its disgraceful life. The tactic also exposes the false nature of freedom seeking groups and organisations connected to capitalists and the rich. Nevertheless they do not give up, and under other conditions, they enter the arena with new slogans and tactics. It won't be long before the movement of masses of workers and toilers exalts to a higher level and uprising is placed on the agenda. At that stage the bourgeoisie's referendum slogan would be replaced with bourgeoisie's constitutional assembly. In any case their objective is to stop the masses of workers and toilers seizing the political power and realising their demands by themselves. It is there that the destiny of a revolution is determined. The masses of workers and toilers once during the revolution that led to the Shah's overthrow gained that experience. It is the experience that would not be repeated again by simple means.

Masses of workers and toilers, women and youth whose shoulders carry the burden of the future revolution and until this moment are the only serious power engaging the regime, must employ their past experiences and by learning from the past revolution, neutralise the efforts of capitalists and all reactionaries. That will not be possible unless the masses of workers and toilers that resort to revolution do not lose the initiative, not trust the promises but through mass organs exert their rule and take the political power. The experience of the period of uprising and overthrow of the Shah's regime showed the masses of workers and toilers that soviets are the mass organs particular to workers and toilers, through which they can retain the initiative and exert their rule. Therefore it was not without reason that the Islamic republic immediately when imposed, tried to smash the soviets that masses of workers and toilers had established through revolution and or demolish them from within and substitute them with Islamic and reactionary formations. Today too, all those who guard the existing capitalist system, all those who oppose comprehensive and consistent freedom and democracy, are foes of soviet system. They are making efforts to prevent things getting to a state that the mass of people would rise to make revolution and from the heart of this revolution emerge a soviet government and workers power.

Should it be the case that the masses of Iranian people get rid of all social and political tragedies that the existing socio-economic and political system has created, should it be the case that they realise their demands, there will not be any other path than revolution. During that revolution, development and exaltation of forms of struggle the soviets will once again appear. The past experience showed that at the highest stage of the growth and exaltation of the mass movement, when workers and toilers resort to political general strike and armed uprising, strike committees take on new duties and are promoted to soviets as the organs of uprising and exertion of mass rule. The role of these soviets, their consistency and level of resistance, are totally dependent on the problem that to what extent the existing government apparatus with all its military and bureaucratic organs and institutions that are in the service of exertion of the rule of the capitalist class, are smashed and flattened.

The soviets can be transformed to real organs of exertion of the rule of masses of workers and toilers when the whole of the existing government apparatus is demolished. The working class can not exert its rule through the existing government machinery that is the means of exertion of the rule of capitalist class. It needs a government machinery particular to itself. Such government machinery in Iran is a

soviet government. With existence of such a government the broadest, most comprehensive and consistent democracy can be established in Iran. With such a government the demands of broad masses of people would be realised and the foundations of the existing socio-economic system would be changed.

On the anniversary of the 1979 revolution, as the deepening political crisis in Iran is placing the perspective of a new revolution in view of all, It must be reiterated more than ever that the destiny of the future revolution in Iran, is dependent on which class seizes the political power. The victory of such a revolution only and only is dependent on the working class seizing the political power and exertion of the rule of masses of workers and toilers via the soviets. There is no other way to realise the demands of masses of Iranian people and necessities of social development.

A comparison between the Sixth and Seventh puppet "Elections" to the Islamic Parliament

The executive and supervising organs of the Islamic Republic finally arranged the stage managed "elections" to the Seventh Parliament by the order of the Supreme Leader and wishes of the President.

Four years ago, for the same propose the same organs arranged a stage managed elections. There was so much propaganda and noise on how important the election could be for the future of the Iranian people. The extent of propaganda went so far that even some organizations that call themselves left and supporters of working class encouraged people to participate in the stage managed show. At that time, not only the factions within the regime but also even the bourgeois opposition including republicans and monarchists based abroad, hand in hand with Iranian Government Radios, encouraged and tried to convince people to participate in the "elections". Their argument was that if the reformists take over even the legislative organs, there will be a great step towards democracy in Iran and all the huge demands of people in social, economical and political fields would be met.

Four years ago, only a few of revolutionary left and communist organizations, among them our organization, adopted the correct tactic of boycotting that stage managed show and told people that even if the reformists get majority of seats in the parliament, there will still be no changes to help fulfil their demands. After the puppet elections, we wrote an article in our paper Kar making a prognosis about the outcome. Now after four years, we can see how right the prognosis was.

Four years ago, the main tension between the factions of the regime was about how to draw millions more votes at the polls. The Guardian Council, under the leadership of the Supreme Leader, accused the Home Ministry under leadership of reformists, of manipulating the number of votes. Four years later, today when the Islamic Republic is in a dead-end and even though a number of reformist candidates could not be eligible for nomination, Home Ministry says nothing to the contrary. This is while the Home Ministry is still under the leadership of reformists and there is a "small" discrepancy among the announced number of eligible electors! Guardian Council says there are 43 millions and Home Ministry says they are 46 millions!

Four years ago, the "reformists" tried to remove the Guardian Council's power of control by through some of their daily newspapers. Four years later, not only the Council has rejected many of reformist candidates but also taken revenge for the previous elections by creating tension among the reformist ranks. Four years ago they closed the "Khordad" newspaper and four years later " Yas-e- no". Four years ago the Front for Islamic Participation and Revolutionary Islamic Mojahedin were allowed to be nominated but four years later, none of them got the permission. From among the reformists, only House of Worker and Revolutionary Priests Association could nominate their candidates. Four years ago, in some cities such as Shoosh and Shadeghan, people demonstrated against the regime, 8 youths were killed and several injured. Four years later, the same event occurs in other cities such as Ize where four people were killed. Four years ago, the well known corrupt personality, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani could not make it to parliament and withdraw his nomination after much cheating. Four years later another personality, Mullah Mehdi Karoubi had the same destiny, even though he was the speaker of parliament and with the reformists. Four years ago, both factions announced that participation in elections is what holds the system together and four years later the same history is repeated.

The reformists protested against disqualification of their candidates. They got no response from the people and so all of them resigned their positions even though they knew such resignations has no further effect on life of Sixth Parliament. Four years ago, both factions, by cheating and announcing the wrong number of eligible voters, claimed they had won the elections and the Islamic Republic was still popular among people. Four years later the same claim is made by both factions. This is while the hard liners have taken the majority of seats by eliminating the rival force this time. As a proof, we can read the interview with Behzad Nabavi, the reformist and vice chancellor of Parliament. He says: "Nowhere in Iran, the hard liners had the courage to participate as hard line candidates. This is a great victory for the reformists". It seems that the difference between hard liners and reformists is not their attitude and policies but only their names! He adds: "Of course, with a positive attitude we can hope, God willing, they have changed their judgment". Thus we have to wait and see how the Press Bill would be ratified by the majority of hard liners this time, though last time the bill was stopped by direct order of the Supreme Leader of the regime and hard liners! Nabavi, in another part of his interview, says that the hard liners are willing to negotiate with US which is actually the reformists' wish in the first place and thus they will support the effort. On this issue, Nabavi does not need a positive attitude; all facts indicate that the Islamic Republic would negotiate with the "Great Satan" in order to save the regime from collapse.

This faction is well aware of the fact that the only way to rescue the regime is to collaborate with the superpower and therefore puts an effort in being the first to connect the regime to US and EU. If that happens before the Islamic regime is overthrown, then the bourgeois opposition such as monarchists and republicans have no justification for their struggle, because they are attempting to gain power by getting support from the same sources.

The Sixth Parliament is over now. That parliament was not only a useless organ that could not fulfil people's needs but also an organ, just like Fifth Parliament, that made anti-worker laws in favour of capitalists. Laws such as removing the right of workers in workshops with less than 5 employees, privatization laws and so on are all the result of the Sixth Parliament. All those laws are against the interest of the working class.

There is no doubt the Seventh Parliament would follow the same path. The new parliament will be an organ which is under the direct rule of the Supreme Leader and a servant for the benefit of capitalists. This parliament would remain a reactionary organ as before. The only difference is that its seats would be occupied by the most reactionary representatives.

No matter which statistics the regime publishes on the number of participants in elections, the majority of people do not have any illusions about the regime meeting their demands and needs. They are well aware of the fact that no matter which faction gains the executive, legislative or judicial organs, there would be no changes in favour of people. People want to overthrow the whole regime. As there was no change in wide spread demonstrations, strikes and other actions taken by people against the regime, while the number of participants in elections for Fifth Parliament was 78% and 68% for the Sixth respectively, there will neither be any change for the Seventh Parliament with a figure of 51%. Since in Iran there is not even the accepted bourgeois norms as in other countries, the numbers say nothing about how the real social situation at election time is.

The task and duty of left and communist forces have become heavier than ever. It is a known fact that the bourgeois opposition accepted the line of boycotting the elections to the Sixth Parliament while this was a line already adopted by the left and communist forces for the elections to the Fifth Parliament. Today, the bourgeois opposition's propaganda is for a referendum to change the regime. They try to postpone a radical change which would take place by overthrowing the regime. But they can not prevent that. We have seen how their attempts to reform the system failed before; this attempt would fail in the same manner too.

For each day that the overthrow of the regime gets closer and closer, monarchists and republicans make more propaganda on how their representatives could decide which kind of regime should be suitable for the country. Left and communist forces should intensify their activities to publicise for a revolutionary overthrow of the regime, destruction of the state organs and all other bureaucratic and military organs. They should intensify publicity for establishment of a soviet state where the congress of representatives of workers and toilers councils is the highest organ of state and thus workers establish a direct and collective democracy, the democracy of soviets.

News from Iran

- Rsht Electric Company workers protested again. They picketed the office of Labour Ministry demanding solution to their problems.

- More than 100 workers of Iran Kanaf plant in Gilan went on strike demanding their delayed wages and social benefits. Officials ignored the action. In response the workers spread their action out of the plant. They blocked the main road between Tehran and city of Rasht. The workers have not received their wages for the last 11 months. Only 100 workers remain employed out of the original 700.

- More than 130 farm workers in Dezfoul, Shoush and Andimeshk picketed the Dezfoul Sugar plant's head office. Social benefits haven't been paid for the last 3 years. In addition, wages have not been paid for the last 6 months. Workers stated that protests will continue if the management did not act immediately.

- 400 municipal workers in Tehran have picketed the municipal head quarters again protesting against lay-offs, compulsory retirements and delayed payment of benefits. The workers are part of the 17,000 municipal workers who lost their jobs through compulsory retirement over the last 8 years. They demand reinstatement.

- Health care workers at Beheshti Hospital in the city of Ghom continue their struggle to receive delayed benefits.

- According to ILNA, Iranian Labour News Agency, Neyshabour based Firouz Electric Company has dismissed 49 workers and hired 30 new workers on temporary contracts. The workers have no rights or job-security. They can be immediately sacked if they demand better working-conditions.

- "Association of Iranian Combatant Students - AICS" in city of Mashhad have condemned the arrest of two students of Mashhad University in their recent communiqué. AICS has called the arrested students, Majid Mazrouie and Hosain Matloubi, "fellow combaters" and asked all revolutionary and radical forces to support these students. AICS also claimed that the whole responsibility for any accidents happening to Majid and Hosain while in custody of Justice Ministry or their expulsion from University lies solely with the "fascist" director of the university.

- Workers of Arak based Chipal plan picketed in front of government offices on 22 February. A worker said he had to sell his household belongings to cover daily expenses of his family. He said the management had only threatened the workers and done nothing to solve workers problems. Workers demanded payment of 9 months delayed wages and social benefits.

- Hundreds of oil-workers at Azadan Oilfield picketed simultaneously while the Japanese ambassador's was visiting the oilfield on 25 February demanding payment of 4 months delayed wages and social benefits.

- 500 workers at Pakris plant picketed in front of the Semnan state building on 26 February. 2 years ago the plant was closed but workers are still waiting for payment of their delayed wages and benefits.

- Protesting against various shortages and shortcomings in delivery of material aid, thousands of people marched through the streets of the earth-quake stricken city of Bam. Almost 3 months after the earth-quake that took more than 40,000 victims, there is still no adequate assistance for the survivors. There are still no water supplies and even government's temporary housing project has not reached sufficient levels.

- There were protests in the city of Neyshabour, at which the catastrophic explosion of more than 40 wagons of a transport train cost thousands of innocent people's lives last February. Demonstrators demanded to know the cause of the tragedy and delivery of material aid as soon as possible.

- Thousands of Islamic saving banks are facing a total bankruptcy. The event has sparked a wave of protests in the whole country. On February 27th, the city of Esfahan witnessed people's discontent and anger. More than 3,000 people marched in streets and gathered in front of some of those banks. Later, protesters marched towards one of the city's main squares. During the march, windows of several banks were smashed.

- According to a government spokesman, while the country needs more than 210,000 nurses, the number of Iranian nurses is only at 90,000. Meanwhile there are 25,000 unemployed nurses in Iran.

- Gilan based Shahd Ark plant has been closed and all its 65 workers have lost their jobs. Protests against the closure of the plant are still continuing with no result. Workers have not been paid for the last 6 months.